

WEEK 4 - The Son

Last week we saw how God worked to rein in man's sinfulness through the law and the prophets. Those things, however, could not solve the fundamental problem of sin on their own.

Q: What would you say was the fundamental problem that needed to be solved? What did humanity need (or lose)?

A: The problem was original sin, the loss of our state of grace back in the Garden of Eden. It wasn't just that people sinned, it was that they were born into a broken state of slavery to sin. That's why we baptize infants, because everyone needs salvation, even if they never had a chance to commit a sin like an infant wouldn't have. We lost our state of grace and needed someone to save us.

Let's read a couple of verses from the Bible that talk about this. Have a couple of people read these two passages:

Isaiah 64:6:

"All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away" .

Romans 3:23:

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" .

Q: If the problem is original sin, passed on from generation to generation, and all of creation is in a fallen state because of it, what might be the remedy? If the Law and the prophets could not fix it, what could?

A: God would have to start over in a sense, and remake creation.

Let's take a look at a couple of passages from the Bible that talk about this. Have a couple of people read the two passages below:

2 Corinthians 5:17:

"So whoever is in Christ is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come"

1 Corinthians 15:20-22:

But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life".

The new Adam, Jesus Christ, would need to do two things:

1. *Make up for the sins of mankind*

2. Destroy the effects of sin, meaning death

Let's read a couple of passages that talk about this. Have someone read this passage from the Catechism:

CCC 457:

"The Word became flesh for us in order to save us by reconciling us with God, who 'loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins': 'the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world', and 'he was revealed to take away sins'".

You can see from that passage how it's talking about Jesus "reconciling us to God", i.e., making up for our sins. Also, the word "expiation" means making amends or reparation.

Have someone else read this passage from the Bible:

John 3:16-17:

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved".

You can see from this passage how it talks about giving us everlasting life, i.e., defeating death.

Q: What qualities do you think this "new Adam" would have to possess?

A: *You can acknowledge that this is an obvious question because the group knows the "new Adam" is Jesus Christ, but it's worth pointing out that the qualities needed would be:*

- *Able to make up for the sins of mankind*
- *Be without sin himself to begin with*
- *Able to defeat death*

Let's see what the Catechism says about this question (the underlining is deliberate to highlight some points):

CCC 616:

It is love "to the end" that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life. Now "the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died." No man, not even the holiest, was ever able to take on himself the sins of all men and offer himself as a sacrifice for all. The existence in Christ of the divine person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible his redemptive sacrifice for all.

There is only one person that can be this new Adam, God himself who takes on flesh and comes into the world, Jesus Christ.

Jesus comes into the world fully as a man and fully God, both at the same time. He dies and defeats death by rising from the dead.

Q: Given all this, do you see any hope for mankind outside of Jesus Christ?

A: It's a simple no but worth reflecting on that truth, that is he in fact mankind's only hope.

Q: God could have waived his hand and saved mankind that way. Why do you think he chose to do it the way that he did, coming into the world as a man, suffering, dying and then rising from the dead?

A: It's purely out of love, he shows us how much he loved us by what he did. It's good for the group to let that sink in, that everything Jesus went through was in fact voluntary. He was not forced to go through any of it. He chose to.

Q: What if you were the only one left on earth, do you think Jesus would have done this just for you?

Q: Imagine yourself at the foot of the cross as Jesus was dying on it, and imagine that he's looking at you. What are you sensing as he's looking at you? What might he be thinking?

Next week, we'll talk about how we become part of God's new creation, how we become sons and daughters of the "new Adam" and receive that everlasting life.