

The Reason for Christmas

*For as in Adam all die,
so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

1 Corinthians 15:21

This is a very personal verse to each of us, more personal than some of us can imagine.

But the theme of this verse is also the most important truth in Scripture.

This verse tells us the history of the Bible in 15 words. It is the reason the Bible is written. It is the main storyline of Scripture. It is Scripture's essential, life-giving message.

Without it, there is no Christmas and no Easter.

Without it, we would be, as Paul says in verse 19, "*to be pitied.*" But we are not. Why?

Because I am not telling you anything new. I am not telling you anything disputable. No one contests the first half of this verse – "*in Adam all die.*" This is nothing fantastical. It is not a fairytale. It is a true, every-day, reality. It is not a 'your truth, my truth' postmodern, questionable statement. It is as factual as a grave, as universal as there are cemeteries everywhere, to remind us of this undeniable, indisputable reality –

First: In Adam all die

At the present time, one person in the United States dies from Covid every 39 seconds. <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2020/11/25/world/covid-19-coronavirus> (Accessed December 2, 2020).

Apart from Covid, 7,778 people die daily in the United States. That's one death every 11 seconds. If it is not you, it is someone you know. It has been too many people that we have known in 2020.

- Heart disease: 655,381
- Cancer: 599,274
- Accidents (unintentional injuries): 167,127
- Chronic lower respiratory diseases: 159,486
- Stroke (cerebrovascular diseases): 147,810
- Alzheimer's disease: 122,019
- Diabetes: 84,946
- Influenza and Pneumonia: 59,120
- Nephritis, nephrotic syndrome and nephrosis (kidneys): 51,386
- Intentional self-harm (suicide): 48,344

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/deaths.htm> (Accessed December 2, 2020).

(See pictorial chart after CG notes)

Speaking of intentional self-harm, more Japanese people committed suicide in Japan in the single month of October than in the entire year of 2020 up to that month: 2,153 vs 2,087; that's six people day (based on the Oct stats).

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/28/asia/japan-suicide-women-covid-dst-intl-hnk/index.html>

(Accessed December 2, 2020).

FYI: Romans 8:38 doesn't qualify the kind of "death" that CAN'T separate us from Jesus.

Do you know anyone who isn't dying?

And isn't the hope of eternal life in our DNA? Let me explain...

Every have a moment, experience, or day that you didn't want to end?

Ever have a moment, experience or day you couldn't wait to end?

You might think those two experiences point to two different conclusions, but they don't.

- One wants to extend life forever and
- The other wants the next life to begin immediately.

Transition:

*For as in Adam all die,
so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

As this verse states, the whole history of the Bible begins with one man, centers on one man and ends with the same, one man. It's the story of the Bible. It's the story of Christmas.

Genesis 2:8 - *And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

Adam was to

- "rule over" (Genesis 1:26),
- "subdue" (Genesis 1:28),
- "have dominion" (Genesis 1:28)
- "cultivate" (Genesis 2:5), and
- "keep" or guard the garden (Genesis 2:15).
- "eat of every tree" or enjoy the garden (Gen 2:16)

With his bride, Eve, Adam was also to

- “be fruitful and multiply and fill”
- not only the garden but the whole “earth” (Genesis 1:28).

Adam and Eve were to faithfully obey their Creator and represent Him and His purposes that in their obedience they were to fill the entire earth with the glory of God (Numbers 14:21; Habakkuk 2:14; Isaiah 6:3). This is our first glimpse of the book of Revelation, of God’s ever-expanding plan for His kingdom on earth.

And as the image of God, Adam was uniquely designed to be the very instrument through which God’s good world would become saturated with God’s presence.

Tragically, instead of serving with and alongside the Creator to represent him faithfully, Adam rebelled and chose his own way instead of God’s. Adam did not *rule over, subdue, cultivate, enjoy* or *guard* what had been entrusted to him.

Instead of partnering together with God to enlarge the borders of the garden and seeing to it that all of creation was immersed in His good glory, Adam becomes the instrument of destruction, death, and separation for himself and all of creation (Ro 8:20).

Adam’s own sin and disobedience hurled creation into a darkness from which it cannot return (Romans 8:20-22), and the curse, which was loosed in the garden, instantly blanketed paradise like a black shroud of death. The Apostle Paul says, “*Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men*” (Romans 5:12).

And so Paul says in 1 Cor 15:22 – “in Adam all die”

But, as you know, that is not the end of the story –

1 Corinthians 15:45 - *The first man Adam became a living being”; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.... 47 - The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven.*

Now let’s read these verses alongside of each other -

Genesis 2:8 - *And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.*

John 20:15 - *Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away."*

But there is no reason to take Jesus away. In fact, as Paul tells us in 1 Cor 15, he has risen from the dead and by his resurrection, taken away our sin.

Christ, the second and last Adam has not listened to the serpent, (remember Jesus in the wilderness) but has crushed the serpent's head (Gen 3:15) and won the victory of forever life for us.

*For as in Adam all die,
so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*

The universality of sin in the OT becomes the particularity of the Gospel in the NT. In Adam all die, but only in Christ, will all be made alive.

Now you more fully understand that without the OT, there is no NT. If all do not die in Adam, there is no reason for Jesus to be born.

And, while we focus on the main parts of this verse – In Adam all die...In Christ shall all be made alive – it is the words "For as" and "So Also" that make both sides of the verse of equal and eternal importance.

Second: So also in Christ shall all be made alive

Paul's argument is "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

His reasoning is that *just as we all die in Adam*, an indisputable fact, so *we shall also all be made alive in Christ*, for Paul, another indisputable fact.

People will dispute the second half of this text because they have no answer for "why," people die? Why do we die? Why don't we live forever? You can list all of the CDC or WHO reasons but really, why? Why do these things exist? What cause causes the reasons we die? Why does anything die; any star, any flower, etc?

Christians say, "*In a world without God, there is no reason for anything to live.*" God is the 'why' of our existence.

But "*in a world without God, there is (also) no reason for anything to die.*" God is the 'why' of our death also.

And now the verse makes complete sense. “*For as in Adam, all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*” No one can contest its second part without contesting its first part which is, incontestable. And if its first part is incontestable, so is its second part.

In other words, without God, the most important question of life, ‘why?’ cannot be answered for either the nonChristian or the Christian.

It is no wonder then, that unbelievers don’t even want to talk about God. The ‘why’ question without an answer, leads to despair, depression, and darkness.

It’s almost unfair to bring up to an unbeliever because once you mention that all die, the unbeliever begins to look for a source for life. And, unless that person looks to Christ, they spend their whole lives looking elsewhere.

ILL – P.L. Travers who wrote *Mary Poppins*.

(See this documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJScqa9jtyA>)

Or this newspaper article for spirituality in *Mary Poppins* - https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/disney-tried-to-erase-mary-poppins-creator-pl-travers-shes-still-more-fascinating-than-fiction/2018/12/13/7e77b6c6-f89f-11e8-863c-9e2f864d47e7_story.html)

(And, as a side-note, it is this question, when unanswered, that drives suicide).

But with God, we understand *why* we all die and *how* we all can live.

Good News.
Great Joy.

Conclusion:

This single verse – *For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive* – is the bad and the good news of the Bible. It is the OT and the NT in a single verse. It is the storyline of the Bible. It is the heart of Christmas.

This verse is the most serious news: *In Adam all die.*

This verse is the most wonderful news: *In Christ shall all be made alive*

Community Groups:

1 – What one or few words could best define your outlook on life now?

2 – Where is your soul most prospering now?

3 – Where is your soul most suffering now?

4 – Give some specific examples of how you are ministering to others.

5 – If someone asked you to define the Bible's central message in one sentence, what would you say?

6 – How could 1 Corinthians 15:21 symbolize the storyline of the Bible?

7 – In your own words, explain the concept that "In Adam all die."

8 – How would you say that God has put eternity in our hearts (Ecc 3:11)

9 – Why did God put Adam in the garden? (Gen 1:26, 28; 2:5, 15, 16)

10 – What was Adam's failure? (Not, what was his sin of eating of the tree).

11 – What is the difference between Adam as a "living being" and Jesus as a "life-giving spirit"? (1 Cor 15:45).

12 – What does supposing Jesus to be the gardener imply for creation and for God's plan to make the whole earth his garden (John 20:15).

13 – It is true that 'in Adam' all die. But how "shall all be made alive?"

14 – How is 1 Corinthians 15:21 "good news?"

HOW MANY PEOPLE DIE EACH DAY?

