

I want to teach you what may be a new word: recapitulation. Re: again, capit: head. Re-head. To head up again. It was popularized as a motif of the atonement by Irenaeus of Lyon in the 2nd century. We have been in a series on the cross of Christ and recapitulation is actually the oldest of the models of the atonement, found all over the church fathers.

Historian J.N.D. Kelly put it this way: “Running through almost all the patristic attempts to explain the redemption there is one grand theme which, we suggest, provides the clue to the fathers’ understanding of the work of Christ. This is none other than the ancient idea of recapitulation which Irenaeus derived from St. Paul, and which envisages Christ as the representative of the entire race. Just as all men were somehow present in Adam, so they are or can be present in the second Adam, the man from heaven. Just as they were involved in the former’s sin, with all its appalling consequences, so they can participate in the latter’s death and ultimate triumph over sin, the forces of evil, and death itself. Because, very God as He is, He has identified Himself with the human race, Christ has been able to act on its behalf and in its stead; and the victory He has obtained is the victory of all who belong to Him.”¹

It comes from Ephesians 1:8b-10: “In all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” This word for “unite” is ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι. *Kephelē* is the Greek word for head. You see that kephalai – cephalic: of or relating to the head.

Other translations: KJV: “he might gather together in one all things in Christ.” CSB: “to bring everything together in Christ.” NIV: “to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.” NLT: “And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.” Or my favorite: His plan was to sum up the whole cosmos in the king – yes, everything in heaven and on earth, in him” (KNT). That’s the plan of God: to bring cosmic harmony through Christ the King. You are part of something so much bigger than you. A smaller self is the key to living large. / God’s plan is to unite all things in Jesus Christ, to sum up all in him, to bring all things to a head (recapitulation) in Jesus, to bring everything under the authority of King Jesus.

The Story of Scripture can then be summarized as Creation to New Creation. God created and through the work of Christ is reversing the curse and bringing new creation. That’s the goal. The end goal is Eden 2.0. Not disembodied spirits going to heaven but resurrection bodies on a new earth. Creation to new creation. / Or from Adam to Last Adam. 1 Cor 15:45 calls Jesus the Last Adam. The first Adam brought sin and destruction and the Last Adam undoes what the first Adam did. Reversal of the curse. What did we just sing? “No more let sins and sorrows grow, nor thorns infest the ground, he comes to make his blessings flow as far as the curse is found.”

Jesus is the new Adam. The Gospel According to Luke tells us who Jesus is what he accomplished. The Gospels are theological biographies meant to tell who Jesus is, what He accomplished, and meant to give us an example. We are to know about him and emulate him. At the beginning of the Gospel According to Luke, he includes a genealogy so we will know the familial roots of this Jesus of Nazareth.

¹ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 376-377.

It starts with Joseph in Luke 3:23 and then ends this way in Luke 3:38: “the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.” So, Luke traces the genealogy all the way to Adam and calls him the son of God. Then we have a chapter break, but the narrative continues right on to the temptation of Jesus. The first son of God was tempted by the devil and failed. The second Adam, the Son of God is tempted by the devil but faithful obeys. On our behalf. As our representative.

Rom 5:12-21 [886] This is the . . . Adam was a type. A type is a person or event or institution that first occurs in the OT, and points forward to its ultimate fulfillment in Christ. So for example the Exodus is a type of the greater redemption, the temple is a type that points to the body of Jesus and the church, sacrifice points to the final sacrifice, kings point to the King of Kings, priests point to the Great High Priest. The OT is filled with typology. Rom 5:14 says Adam was a type of the one to come, an imprint of Jesus. The way the first Adam represents humanity points ahead to the way the Last Adam will represent the new humanity.

There are really only two races in the world at the end of the day, and they have nothing to do with ethnicity or skin pigmentation. All people are either in Adam or in Christ. All people are in Adam by virtue of their physical birth. People are only in Christ by spiritual rebirth. By faith you are transferred from the domain of darkness to the Kingdom of the Beloved Son (Col 1:14).

The NT is full of various contrasts: flesh/Spirit, Law/Grace, Sin/Righteousness, OC/NC, old age/new age. Well, all these are really subsumed under the larger categories of Adam and the Last Adam. In Adam or in Christ. The first Adam brought sin, death, and curse. Creation was ruined. In Adam’s fall we sinned all. Notice the contrasts between these two Adams in these verses: Sin/righteousness: failure/faithfulness, obedience/disobedience. You have the contrast of death/life: 1 Cor 15:21-22: “For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” Condemnation/justification, trespass/free gift, Law/grace. The Last Adam overturns the death and destruction brought about by the first Adam.

When you trust Christ, you are transferred from the headship of Adam to the headship of Christ. You are no longer defined by sin, death, curse, disobedience, failure, trespass, condemnation. Now, you are defined by righteousness, life, blessing, obedience, faithfulness, justification, free gift, grace. / Notice that little phrase in Rom 5:17. Our destiny is to reign in life here and forevermore.

1 Cor 15:47-49: “The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.”

Adam was made in the image and likeness of God. Gen 1:26-28. But then comes Gen 3, where Adam and Eve reject God, redefine good, and seek to live for themselves. The technical word is autonomy: self rule. More like supposed self-rule. Gen 3:5: “For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” Adam and Eve grasped at glory, they wanted to be God, determining good and evil. The Last Adam comes, and as Phil 2:6 puts it, although

he was in the form of God he did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped for his own advantage; rather he obeyed for us and for our salvation.

Now, after the Fall, humanity is still made in the image of God like Adam and Eve were, but that image is now marred. We no longer faithfully reflect God. Think of a cracked mirror. You can see the reflection but with difficulty. But God. He didn't leave us to ourselves but sent his Son, the perfect image of God: Heb 1:3: "He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power." Col 1:15: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Jesus is the perfect image of God.

Christ is the Last Adam. He is undoing what Adam did, reversing the curse. Re-representation, re-heading, recapitulation. In *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Susan asks Aslan what it all means. Aslan replies that the Witch knows the Deep Magic but there is a magic deeper still which she did not know. "Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backward."² A willing, innocent victim, in the place of a traitor and death starts working backward.

The cross brings about new creation. Col 1:19-20: "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross." He reconciles all things. In heaven and on earth. He makes peace by the blood. The death of Jesus has cosmic effects. This is not to say everyone is saved, but that the death of Christ accomplishes the renewal of the world. Phil 2:10 "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father" (Rev 5:13). Notice that Col says all things on earth or in heaven. Philippians says all in heaven and on earth and under the earth. The powers of darkness under the earth are not reconciled but will be subjugated.³ John 3:17 "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." 1 John 2:2 "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." 2 Cor 5:19 "In Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." Curse reversed. All made new.

In Acts 3, Peter is preaching in Solomon's Portico and he speaks of "the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. Restitution or restoration. In Matt 19:28, Jesus speaks of the new world. The Greek word is *palingenesia* – *palin*: again; *genesis*: genesis. The again Genesis. The regeneration. Eden 2.0. NIV says at the renewal of all things. **Rom 8:19-21**. The world will be restored to its original state, when all was good, very good. Eden 2.0. Liberated. Redeemed.

² C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (New York: HarperTrophy, 1950), 163.

³ MacLeod, *Christ Crucified*, 165.

This is why Jesus is called the firstborn from the dead (Col 1:18, Rev 1:5). He is the first man of the new creation. The new Adam, which is why at the end of the gospel of John, on the first day of the week Mary mistakes Jesus for the gardener – wink wink. The new Adam in the garden on the first day of the new creation.

Friends, this should make us a *hopeful* people. A people full of hope. A people oriented toward and aligned with God's coming Kingdom. This is what makes us different. We are distinct from the world because we know this world will one day give way to a new world. True life is eternal life.

This vision of what really matters sustains us as we cope with present suffering. **Rom 8:17-18**. As John Calvin put it, "We are still only *en route* and have not yet reached the goal."⁴ We are an Easter people living in a Good Friday world. We sing, "Do you long to see it all made new? We do." / If you are not a Christian, isn't this a compelling vision? What are you living for? Is there anything beyond your soon and inevitable death? Jesus Christ offers hope: **G**.

New creation is coming, and for now, God is putting us back on track. We are being renewed after the image of God. Jesus is the perfect image of God. **Rom 8:28-30** 2 Cor 3:18: "And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit."

Ok, but how? **Eph 4:21-24**. 3 ways in these verses: put off, renew your mind, put on. First, put off the old self. The word is actually man. Put off the old Adam, the old you, who you were in Adam. Put that person off. You've been made new in Christ. Put off your former ways. When you become a Christian, your ways change. That way was corrupt through deceitful desires. Not just actions, but bad desires, bad feelings, bad thoughts. Notice that your feelings, you desires can be deceitful. They can lie to you. Deceive you. That's why Jeremiah says the heart is deceitful above all things (Jer 17:9). Put off the old Adam and renew your mind. The mind is the battleground. Col 2:8 don't be taken captive by bad ideas rather – 2 Cor 10:5 take thoughts captive to the obedience of Christ. Then put on the new man. Clothe yourself with Christ. Rom 13:14: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

We are being recreated in the likeness of God, the image of God in righteousness and holiness that comes from the truth that is in Jesus. So, in other words, how are we renewed in the image of God? Faith and repentance. Wash, rinse, repeat: daily till the resurrection of the dead.

Col 3 provides three calls to be remade in the image of Christ: look to Christ **1-4**, put sin to death **5-11**, Put on the virtues **12-17**. Renewed in knowledge after the image of the Creator. Salvation is re-humanization. Jesus is the truly human one who restores our humanity and then remakes us in his image. No longer Adam people, but Last Adam people. He is our representative. What's true of him is true of you.

⁴ John Calvin, *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians*, tr. T.H.L. Parker (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 315.

He is bringing new creation, Eden 2.0. Now, our call is to Edenify the world by bringing the rule and reign of Jesus to bear on every area of life. All of life for Christ. Jesus on the cross accomplishes total salvation: a new soul in new bodies in a new universe.⁵ Recapitulation. Re: again, capit: head. Re-head. To head up again.

Let me conclude with this hymn by John Donne: “We think that Paradise and Calvarie, Christ’s Crosse and Adam’s tree, stood in one place. Looke, Lord, and finde both Adams met in me; As the first Adam’s sweat surrounds my face, May the last Adam’s blood my soul embrace.”⁶

Benediction: Now may Jesus, the Last Adam and true image and likeness of God, be near you and work in you as He continues to make you truly human as we patiently wait for the renewal of all things.

⁵ MacLeod, *Christ Crucified*, 167.

⁶ John Donne, “Hymn to God, My God, in My Sickness,” available at Poetry Foundation Web site.