

THE ONE YEAR<sup>®</sup> BOOK OF

Discovering  
**JESUS**  
IN THE Old Testament

**NANCY  
GUTHRIE**



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*The One Year Book of Discovering Jesus in the Old Testament*

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*Jesus took them through the writings  
of Moses and all the prophets,  
explaining from all the Scriptures  
the things concerning himself.*

LUKE 24:27

## INTRODUCTION

I grew up going to Sunday school . . . and vacation Bible school and church camp and training union (which was our Sunday night version of Sunday school). Along the way, I learned my share of Old Testament Bible stories. From the story of Adam and Eve I learned that I should not listen to the devil's lies. From Noah I learned that I should be willing to stand alone against an evil world. From Abraham I learned that I should be willing to sacrifice what is most precious to me. From Jacob I learned that I should expect to experience the consequences of my deceit. From Joseph I learned that I should run from temptation. And it goes on from there.

Most of my life I have read and been taught the Old Testament as a series of life lessons or faith lessons. Its chief characters were held up as heroes to emulate or villains to disdain. I knew that the Old Testament spoke of Christ, but in my mind that was limited to the prophecies about the coming of the Messiah. I did not see that, in fact, all of the Old Testament is preparing us to understand who Christ is and what he came to do. I did not understand that the people in the Old Testament were not true heroes. In fact, the Bible takes care to expose their flagrant flaws. Their imperfections and limitations serve to point to the need for a true hero, a perfect son, a better provider, deliverer, savior, judge, prophet, priest, and king.

What I did not see is that the Old Testament tells a story that only finds its completion in Jesus Christ. I did not see that Jesus is the offspring of the woman who will crush the head of the serpent. Jesus is the ark that protects the faithful remnant from judgment. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the blessings promised to Abraham. He is the greater Isaac, the beloved Son of his Father, offered as a sacrifice, who was not spared from the knife. Jesus is the stairway Jacob saw in his dream on which God comes down to earth. Jesus is the greater Joseph, the One whose suffering put him in place to become Savior to all who come to him for food amid the famine of this world.

And those are just a few highlights from Genesis.

Jesus is the reality to which all of the sacrifices and offerings and festivals point. He is the fulfillment of the Tabernacle and Temple, making his home among us. He is the greater Moses who brings his people out of slavery to sin, the greater Israel who is not disobedient in the wilderness, the greater son of David whose Kingdom will last forever, the greater Solomon who is

the Prince of Peace. He is the weeping prophet, the greater Jonah who runs toward sinners rather than away from them, the Bridegroom, the Branch, Isaiah's child who is born.

Though this is not the way I learned to read and understand the Old Testament—and perhaps not the way you have read and understood it up to now—this is clearly the way Jesus read, understood, and taught it, and therefore the way his disciples began to teach it after his departure.

Jesus often said that he fulfilled specific Old Testament passages. At the beginning of his ministry, he went to the synagogue in Nazareth and stood up to read from the Old Testament scroll of Isaiah:

“The Spirit of the LORD is upon me,  
for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released,  
that the blind will see,  
that the oppressed will be set free,  
and that the time of the LORD's favor has come.”

He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. All eyes in the synagogue looked at him intently. Then he began to speak to them. “The Scripture you've just heard has been fulfilled this very day!” (Luke 4:18-21)

Those who heard Jesus say this were amazed, but ultimately infuriated, because they understood exactly what he was claiming.

Yet according to Jesus, it is not just individual prophecies or passages that point to him. It is the Old Testament Scriptures as a whole. Jesus said to the religious leaders, “You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me!” (John 5:39). Jesus was saying that the entirety of the Old Testament—its history, its promises, its people, its laws, its ceremonies, its songs—all of it is all about him.

Perhaps the clearest and most intriguing thing Jesus said about fulfilling the Scriptures came after his resurrection, as he walked along with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus. They didn't recognize that it was Jesus who was walking with them, and they began telling him how heartbroken they were. They had hoped Jesus was the Messiah, and now, in light of his crucifixion, it seemed their hopes had been dashed.

Jesus said to them, “You foolish people! You find it so hard to believe all that the prophets wrote in the Scriptures. Wasn't it clearly predicted that the Messiah would have to suffer all these things before entering his glory?” Then Jesus took them through the writings of Moses and all the prophets, explaining from all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

When I read this, I am disappointed that the account stops there. This is a conversation I would have liked to have listened in on in full! How amazing it must have been to have Jesus himself walk through Genesis, Leviticus, Judges, Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah, saying, “This is about me. . . . This is about the work I came to do. . . . This is about the mercy I came to lavish on sinners. . . . This is about the sufficiency of my salvation. . . . This is about my deliverance from slavery to sin. . . . This is about the judgment that was poured out on me at the cross. . . .”

Later Jesus appeared to the rest of the disciples and said, “When I was with you before, I told you that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and in the Psalms must be fulfilled” (Luke 24:44). Then, once again, he did what he had done before. Luke records: “Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures” (24:45).

When we read through the sermons in Acts and through the rest of the New Testament, we realize that those who learned how to read the Old Testament from Jesus went on to present the gospel of Jesus in the same manner he did—not beginning with his birth or his teachings or even his death and resurrection, but beginning with the Old Testament. The New Testament writers teach us how to read and understand the entire Old Testament with gospel eyes.

This is how we will seek to discover Jesus through the pages of this book over the coming year. We’re not looking to impose or insert what is not there but to bring to light what is clearly there—though we might have never seen it before. As we move through the books of the Old Testament, we’ll see that they anticipate Christ’s suffering and glory in their own ways. We’ll embrace the story of the acts of God in human history in light of where it leads—to the climactic achievement of Christ.

It is my prayer that you will, along with me, stand back in wonder at the magnificence of God’s plan for redemption and at his providence and power to bring about that plan. I hope that, along with me, you’ll discover more reasons to trust the whole of Scripture and to love the God of Scripture. I hope your mind will be challenged and your heart will be broken by the beauty of Christ on display through the whole of the Old Testament. And I hope that as we look together at how the Old Testament prepares us for the person and work of Christ, we will move closer to worshipping him according to his marvelous and matchless worth.

*Nancy Guthrie*



PENTATEUCH

JANUARY 1

# BEFORE HE MADE THE WORLD

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Usually it makes sense to start at the beginning. But when looking for footprints of the eternal Jesus, we have to start before the beginning—before the “in the beginning” of Genesis 1:1—because the Bible repeatedly speaks of a time before time when God’s plan for the world, centered in Jesus Christ, took shape.

What was the plan God was making before time began? Paul tells us in a letter he wrote to Timothy: “God saved us and called us to live a holy life. He did this, not because we deserved it, but because that was his plan from *before the beginning of time*—to show us his grace through Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 1:9, emphasis added).

Since before time began, God has wanted to show us something—something significant that puts the glory of who he is on display. He has wanted to show us his grace—to shower his forgiveness on people who don’t deserve it. Jesus has always been and will always be at the center of that plan.

The sending of Jesus into our world as a man who died for sin was no afterthought to fix what Adam and Eve ruined. Sending Jesus was no plan B but God’s glorious plan A from before the beginning! “God chose him as your ransom long before the world began,” Peter explained (1 Peter 1:20). Paul put it this way, “Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure” (Ephesians 1:4-5).

Before the beginning, God knew that he would make us and that we would reject him. He knew that we would need a Savior and that the only One who could save us would be his own Son. From eternity past, Jesus has been the center of God’s plan. And into eternity future, Jesus and his work on the cross will continue to be the center of God’s glorious plan.

† *You who loved me before time began, how could I ever question your plans for this world and for my life? Your magnificent plan to display your glory and your loving plan for me began before the beginning, and I am humbled and quieted before such a Sovereign God.*



JANUARY 2

## CREATOR

“In the beginning God created” (Genesis 1:1). How did God create? He spoke each aspect of creation into being. Throughout the rest of the Old Testament, we continue to see the power of God’s creative word as it comes again and again through the prophets: “This is what the LORD says.”

It is no accident that the first words in the Gospel of John are exactly the same as the first words in the book of Genesis. John writes: “*In the beginning* the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He existed in the beginning with God. God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him” (John 1:1-3, emphasis added). This sheds light on the mystery of who the “us” was when God said, “Let *us* make human beings in our image, to be like us” (Genesis 1:26, emphasis added). John tells us, “The Word was with God, and the Word was God.” John wanted us to understand that Jesus is the agent through whom everything created was called into being. He tells us that Jesus is the *logos*, the outward expression of all God is. So every time we read the phrase “then God said” in the first chapter of Genesis, we know that it is Jesus, the living Word of God, accomplishing God’s creative work.

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

He existed before anything was created and is supreme over  
all creation,  
for through him God created everything  
in the heavenly realms and on earth.  
He made the things we can see  
and the things we can’t see—  
such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in  
the unseen world.  
Everything was created through him and for him.  
(Colossians 1:15-16)

If everything was created not only *through* him but also *for* him, that means everything that exists, exists for Jesus. Nothing in the universe was created or exists for its own sake, but rather to make the glory of God more fully known.

† *Creator of all there is, I marvel at what you have made, what you have spoken into being. Seeing you as Creator helps me to see what I was made for. I was made for you, and I am yours.*

JANUARY 3

# HIS SPIRIT FILLS THE EMPTINESS

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God's story begins with God's Spirit hovering, filling what was empty with his own power and life: "The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light" (Genesis 1:2-3).

So from the very beginning, and over and over again in Scripture, we see that this is who God is and the nature of what he does: God, through his Spirit, fills up what is empty to accomplish his purposes in the world. God filled Sarah's empty womb. "It was by faith that even Sarah was able to have a child, though she was barren and was too old. She believed that God would keep his promise. And so a whole nation came from this one man who was as good as dead—a nation with so many people that, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, there is no way to count them" (Hebrews 11:11-12).

The same Spirit who filled the emptiness of earth and the emptiness of Sarah's womb was at work when the angel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born to you will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

This earth was filled with the light of Christ as he walked upon it, and even as he left this earth, he promised the Spirit would still be at work. "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Jesus promised that the Spirit of God would come and fill the emptiness his followers felt at his departure in a way that would comfort them and empower them to impact the world around them (John 14).

† *Spirit of God, how I thank you for coming upon me and overshadowing me, making new life where there was deadness, bringing light where there was darkness. I simply cannot create new spiritual life on my own. I need your power to work inside me so that Christ can be born in me.*

JANUARY 4

## THE TRUE LIGHT

The world began as one huge mass of unarranged material shrouded by impenetrable night. Then, on the first day of creation, “God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. And God saw that the light was good. Then he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light ‘day’ and the darkness ‘night’” (Genesis 1:3-5).

It wasn’t until the fourth day of creation that “God made two great lights—the larger one to govern the day, and the smaller one to govern the night” (Genesis 1:16). Before that, there was light in the world, but no sun in the sky.

John identified the source of this light when he began his Gospel with a poetic tribute to this Light. He recognized Jesus as the Light that penetrated the darkness even before the sun was set in the sky:

In the beginning the Word already existed.

The Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

He existed in the beginning with God.

God created everything through him,  
and nothing was created except through him.

The Word gave life to everything that was created,  
and his life brought light to everyone.

The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness can never extinguish it. (John 1:1-5)

“The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world,” John wrote (John 1:9). This Light is no mere reflector of the sun’s light but is the source of light, the One who spoke the sun into being.

Jesus later spoke of a time to come when “the sun will be darkened, the moon will give no light” (Matthew 24:29). For those who have rejected the true Light, that will be a day of deep mourning. But for those who have embraced the Light, that day will usher in a new way of living in the Light. Jesus himself will be present among his people, and we will live with him in a city that “has no need of sun or moon, for the glory of God illuminates the city, and the Lamb is its light” (Revelation 21:23).

† *True Light, your radiance penetrates the darkest places in the world I live in and the darkest places in my heart. Shine on me now and into eternity.*

JANUARY 5

# MADE IN HIS IMAGE

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The final creative act on day six of creation began with this divine deliberation: “God said, ‘Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us’” (Genesis 1:26).

What does it mean to be made in God’s image? We are in God’s image in our ability to think and feel and love, in our ability to understand right from wrong, and in our ability to make choices. We’re like him in that he is Spirit and we have a spirit. We are patterned after our Maker.

But something terrible happened to that divine image when Adam and Eve sinned. The image of God in humans became distorted and damaged. So now, although we are still in his image, aspects of that image have become twisted, and the sinful nature we inherited from Adam and Eve has been passed from generation to generation. We long for the day when that marred image of God in us will be restored to its original beauty. Yet God has planned to do something even greater than restore what his image in us once was in the Garden. God intends for the original image of God in humankind to be restored and even superseded by the greater glory of becoming a new creation in Christ.

Jesus is “the visible image of the invisible God” (Colossians 1:15), “the exact representation of his being” (Hebrews 1:3, NIV). And “those God foreknew he also predestined to be *conformed to the likeness* of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (Romans 8:29, NIV, emphasis added).

God intends to conform us to the image of Christ—and the completion of this process is still in the future for us, on the day Christ returns and we are given resurrection bodies. Yet we are, even now, being glorified—our inner lives and characters are being gradually changed into his likeness by the sanctifying power of his Holy Spirit. This is not something we do, but something we receive. The righteousness and holiness that are the image of God in us are created in us, not elicited from us. “We are God’s workmanship” (Ephesians 2:10, NIV).

† *I am your child, made in your image, but you have not yet shown me all of what I will be like when you appear. But I know I will be like you, for on that day I will see you as you really are.*

JANUARY 6

## HE FULFILLS OUR DESTINY

God created humanity with a magnificent destiny in mind:

God said, “Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us. They will reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the wild animals on the earth, and the small animals that scurry along the ground.”

So God created human beings in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.

Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.” (Genesis 1:26-28)

Psalm 8 celebrates this magnificent destiny of human beings: “You made them only a little lower than God and crowned them with glory and honor. You gave them charge of everything you made, putting all things under their authority” (8:5-6).

But when we read these verses in Psalm 8, we’re struck that they do not line up with the reality we’re now living in. God made the world and gave it to us to cultivate and nurture. But this was before sin’s ruin entered the world and everything changed. Now nothing is the way it was created to be. Rather than ruling over the earth, we are painfully subject to a cursed creation. Rather than being fruitful, we find ourselves living in futility.

The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 8 and confirms the disconnect between our destiny and our reality when he says, “We have not yet seen all things put under their authority.” Then he points us toward the answer, the ultimate, perfect man who has fulfilled everything God originally intended for humanity: “What we do see is Jesus” (Hebrews 2:8-9).

We know Psalm 8 is not yet fully true of us. But it is true of Jesus. And through our identification with Christ, our oneness with Christ, we also fulfill the destiny originally designed for us.

† *Fulfiller of humankind’s destiny, here I am, living in this in-between time that is marked by tears and pain and death. But as I identify myself with you I can say, “Because I am in Christ, all things will one day be under my authority. I will rule with Christ in glory forever and ever!”*

JANUARY 7

# HE WAS MADE RESTLESS SO WE CAN REST

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Genesis offers us a day-by-day account of the creative work of God in making the world, as well as the rest he enjoyed after that work was done.

God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was very good! And evening passed and morning came, marking the sixth day. . . . On the seventh day God had finished his work of creation, so he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because it was the day when he rested from all his work of creation. (Genesis 1:31; 2:2-3)

God looked over what he had done and saw that it was good, so he could rest. But when we look over the work of our hands, the attitudes of our hearts, the words on our lips, and we realize that they are *not* good, we wonder how we will ever be able to rest.

The writer of Hebrews points the way: “All who have entered into God’s rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world” (Hebrews 4:10). There is only one way we can rest from our labor: by depending on the work of another whose works are infinitely good.

The writer of Hebrews wants us to understand that the reason we can rest is because of the work Jesus has done. When we enter into Christ, we can rest, not because we are good or because what we’ve done is good, but because Jesus is good. He has given us his own goodness as a gift.

Our rest is made possible because of the restlessness Jesus endured on the cross in our stead and the work he accomplished for our benefit. On the cross, Jesus writhed in agony, struggling for breath. But it was not mere physical agony. Jesus was experiencing the restlessness that is continual for those who persist in rejecting God. It was *our* restlessness he took upon himself, not his own. On the cross, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us” (2 Corinthians 5:21, NIV). Jesus experienced the infinite restlessness we deserve so that we can enjoy his all-encompassing rest.

† *Jesus, only in you can I find the rest my soul craves. Only through being united to you can I be confident that God looks at my life and says, “It is good.” You have accomplished the work that I never could. So I choose to rest in you and your finished work, now and for eternity.*

JANUARY 8

## SECOND ADAM

In Romans 5:14 Paul tells us something amazing about the first man, Adam, and about God's purpose in creating him. Paul said that Adam was a pattern or type of One who was to come—Christ. Adam was a real man, and his experiences were real, yet his life was never only about him. Adam was created as a type, or representation, of Christ, the One who was to come. As a type, Adam foreshadowed a greater Man to come.

Why does this matter? It shows us that when Adam sinned, God, though certainly saddened by it, was not surprised. God knew that they would sin, and he had a plan from the very beginning to show his sin-conquering grace through the death of Jesus Christ on behalf of guilty sinners.

Long before Adam sinned in the Garden, God had determined to put his glorious character—his patience and forgiveness and justice and wrath—on display by sending his Son, the second Adam, who would be superior to the first Adam in every way. While the first Adam took something good from us and brought death, the second Adam gives us everything we need to live. “The Scriptures tell us, ‘The first man, Adam, became a living person.’ But the last Adam—that is, Christ—is a life-giving Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45).

From eternity past, God intended that the sin-bringing Adam would serve to point us to the sin-bearing second Adam. “The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:17).

Every one of us lives under an unavoidable eternal reality: either we are connected to Adam and destined to die, or we are connected to Christ and destined to live forever with him.

† *Second Adam who brings forgiveness instead of condemnation and life instead of death, you were there long before we needed you. Your grace in abundance is available to us—grace that is greater than all our sin.*

JANUARY 9

## WITH ME IN PARADISE

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Before earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and human desecration ever began, there was a beautiful place on planet Earth unlike anything our eyes have ever seen. It was indeed a paradise—a garden located in a place called Eden. Adam and Eve lived in this paradise where they lacked nothing and enjoyed everything—including the personal presence of God.

But in the midst of this paradise, Adam and Eve, representing the human race, grabbed hold of something other than God in an attempt to find joy and satisfaction. They opened the door to sin that day, and it came rushing into every aspect of existence, taking away their freedom and unfettered enjoyment of God himself. Into the purity of the paradise God had created, sin brought a poison that penetrated everything. Adam and Eve were sent away from the paradise, banished from the perfection they once enjoyed.

But God, in his mercy, determined that those who are his would not be shut out of paradise forever. He has made a way to enter in. Jesus made it clear to the thief hanging on the cross next to him that he opens paradise to those who turn to him in repentance and faith.

One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”

But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:39-43)

Jesus welcomed this thief—and one day he will welcome all those who come to him—into a paradise even more grand than Eden. He is, even now, preparing a paradise for his people to live in—the new heaven and new earth. The paradise of Eden was just a preview of the paradise to come. Jesus will be there, in the center, to welcome us in.

† *Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom. Remember my sorrowful repentance. Remember your great mercy. And welcome me into the paradise of God.*



JANUARY 10

## TAKE AND EAT

God planted a garden that was the perfect habitation for Adam and Eve. Everything Adam and Eve could possibly want was there. “The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. But the LORD God warned him, ‘You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die’” (Genesis 2:15-17).

God generously provided food and welcomed Adam and Eve to his table to eat—with only one prohibition. Then Satan slithered into this picture, offering his own invitation to eat. He urged Eve to eat freely the fruit of the forbidden tree. And tragically she and Adam indulged their appetite for satisfaction apart from God. Suddenly the joy and peace they had known disappeared. New feelings raged in their hearts—horror, wretchedness, insecurity, remorse, shame. They looked at each other and knew that things would never be the same again. The chill of danger and the fear of darkness swept through Eden.

Through Adam and Eve’s simple act of taking and eating, humankind lost spiritual life. But it is also through the act of taking and eating that spiritual and eternal life is restored. Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you” (John 6:53). “Take and eat” is a sign of restored fellowship with God. Just as taking and eating what was prohibited by God led to damnation, so does taking and eating of God’s provision of Christ lead to salvation. “As they were eating, Jesus took some bread and blessed it. Then he broke it in pieces and gave it to the disciples, saying, ‘Take this and eat it, for this is my body’” (Matthew 26:26).

Was Jesus thinking of his Father’s first invitation to take and eat of his goodness in the Garden? Was he thinking about Satan’s wicked and twisted invitation to take and eat?

When Jesus invited his followers to take and eat his body, he knew what that invitation would cost. It would require the death of his body. But it would also require the resurrection of his body. As we take and eat of both the death and the resurrection of Christ, we proclaim that we truly have life.

† *Feast of heaven, provided generously by God, I come to your table, and by faith I take and eat your body, your life. I find my nourishment—indeed, my very existence—as I feed upon you.*

JANUARY 11

# THE TREE OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

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Adam and Eve were welcome to enjoy all the goodness in the Garden of Eden to their hearts' content. But God's permission was paired with his prohibition: "You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die" (Genesis 2:16-17).

What was this tree of the knowledge of good and evil? To have the knowledge of good and evil means to claim the independent right to decide for oneself what is good and evil (true and false, beautiful and ugly). It was proper for God to have that right, not humans. God knew that it would be utterly devastating for people to cut the cord of dependence from him and claim "the knowledge of good and evil" for themselves. That's why he said, "You must not eat it . . . if you do, you will die" (Genesis 3:3).

But the fruit of this tree looked delicious to Eve, who ate it and then gave some to Adam. And they did indeed attain the knowledge of good and evil, but their new knowledge was from the standpoint of *becoming* evil and *remembering* how good they once were. They traded the freedom of enjoying what is good for slavery to what is evil.

God had told them this would happen, but they didn't believe him. Now they realized that what God had said was true and what Satan had said was a lie. How would Adam and Eve and all those who came after them find a way out of this?

The only way out is by eating the fruit of another tree—the Cross of Christ. On this tree hung the One who restores the knowledge of the good that Adam and Eve lost when they chose evil. No other tree so fully manifests such a vast knowledge of good and evil—the infinite goodness of Christ and the damning evil of those for whom he died. By eating of the fruit of this tree, all those who have descended from Adam and Eve can reclaim the life they lost and restore the relationship of glad dependence and obedience they left behind. "The sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17).

† *I, too, am tempted to seek wisdom apart from your Word, God. I, too, lust after independence from your wise boundaries. But now I take and eat of the fruit of your Cross, and I am sure to live.*

JANUARY 12

## BONE OF HIS BONES

God has always had it in his heart not only to create humanity, but also to become human and to relate with us as one of us. In making man in his image, he made him for relationship.

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." . . .

So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

"At last!" the man exclaimed.

"This one is bone from my bone,  
and flesh from my flesh!

She will be called 'woman,'

because she was taken from 'man.'" (Genesis 2:18, 21-23)

At this point, the biblical writer injects some perspective on what God has done: "This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one" (Genesis 2:24).

Much later, another biblical writer points us to what God did in this union to help us to understand not only marriage between a man and a woman but also the mysterious union between Christ and his church: "As the Scriptures say, 'A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one" (Ephesians 5:31-32).

The joy Adam expressed in this being who was drawn from his body is a foreshadowing of the joy Jesus takes in his church, which is his very body. As the woman came from Adam's side while he was in a deep sleep, so the church came from the bleeding, wounded side of Jesus when he was in a three-day deep sleep of death. "The church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ" (Ephesians 1:23).

The day is coming when Jesus will rejoice over his bride, the church, like Adam did when he shouted, "At last!" Finally Christ's bride will be with him, in his presence forevermore.

† *How is it that I could be united as one with you, Jesus? What a glorious and mysterious work you have done to make me worthy of such infinite oneness!*

JANUARY 13

# HE COVERS OUR NAKEDNESS

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There was once a day when there was no shame because there was no sin to be ashamed of. “The man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:25).

But then came sin, and in came the shame. “She took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves” (Genesis 3:6-7).

Adam and Eve tried to perpetrate a literal cover-up. The shame of what they had done and who they had become was overwhelming. So they tried to close the gap between what they once had been and what they now were by covering up and presenting themselves in a new way. This was the origin of hypocrisy.

But sin is not a problem we can simply cover up by our own efforts. Neither is it a problem that can be solved by a bunch of leaves—but only by pain and blood. “Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness” (Hebrews 9:22). God met Adam and Eve in mercy, providing robes made of the skins of animals to cover their nakedness. The God who made the world with a word could have made garments of cloth for Adam and Eve, but their clothes were made from the skins of animals. In this way he not only provided what they needed to make their way in a new world marked by sin, but he pointed to the day when he would solve the problem of their sin and shame decisively and permanently. He would do it with the blood of his own Son who, “because of the joy awaiting him . . . endured the cross, disregarding its shame” (Hebrews 12:2).

The clothing of Christ is available to all who come to him for it. But many are blind to their own nakedness and suppress their sense of shame. Jesus said to the church in Laodicea, “You don’t realize that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked. . . . Buy white garments from me so you will not be shamed by your nakedness” (Revelation 3:17-18). His offer extends to all who know the shame of sin and desire to be covered in the clothing of Christ himself.

† *Jesus, I am naked and ashamed, and there is nowhere to hide. I’m weary of my hypocrisy and my attempts to cover up. I need your sacrifice to cover my nakedness. I need your grace to take away my shame.*

JANUARY 14

## TEMPTED IN THE GARDEN

When God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he said, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden—except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die” (Genesis 2:16-17). But soon the serpent came along and questioned what God had said: “Did God really say you must not eat the fruit from any of the trees in the garden? . . . You won’t die!” (3:1, 4).

Adam and Eve were put to the test in the Garden by the temptation of Satan. He took God’s words and twisted them, causing Adam and Eve to doubt God’s goodness and provision. Satan suggested that God was withholding something good from them and tempted them to reach out and grab what would make them like God himself. Sadly, Adam and Eve failed the test.

There was only one way to turn the tide of death brought about by the first Adam’s failure when tempted, and that was through the second Adam’s faithfulness when tempted. But while Adam faced temptation in the bountiful Garden, where his every need was met, Jesus was “led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted” (Matthew 4:1). While Adam and Eve lacked nothing when approached by Satan, Jesus was in the last stages of starvation.

Whereas Adam and Eve started questioning God’s words when they were tempted, Jesus met temptation at every turn by quoting God’s sure and certain Word. Whereas Adam and Eve questioned God’s provision, Jesus celebrated it. And whereas Adam inherited shame and alienation from life with God in the Garden, Jesus inherited a dominion and Kingdom that is God’s own Kingdom.

Later Jesus did, however, also face temptation in a garden. It was not the Garden of Eden, but the garden of Gethsemane. He was tempted to avoid the Cross, tempted to turn away from God’s plan and provision for him. But once again Jesus passed the test. Once again he submitted himself to God and entrusted himself to God, saying, “I want your will to be done, not mine” (Matthew 26:39).

† *Tested and proven One, because you have gone through suffering and testing, you are able to help me when I am being tested. And I know that you will not allow me to be tempted beyond what I can stand, but you will show me a way out so I can endure faithfully.*

## SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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In addition, I gained tremendous insights from reading and listening to countless Christ-centered Old Testament sermons by Bill Baldwin, Bryan Chapell, Edmund Clowney, Sinclair Ferguson, David Helm, Tim Keller, Ray Ortlund Jr., John Piper, Wil Pounds, Kim Riddlebarger, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, and Ray Stedman.

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