

## THE OBEDIENT SON

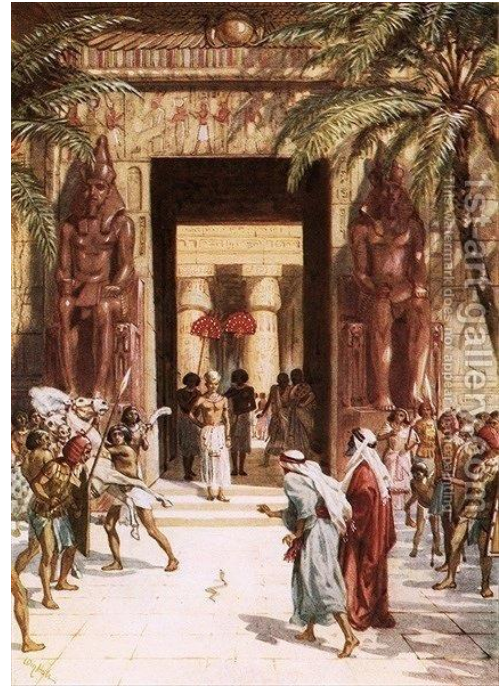
### *First Things: Biblical and Systematic Theology*

#### Systematic Theology:

- The study of Biblical topics.
- “What does the Bible as a whole teach about topic A?”
- “Systematic Theology is the application of God’s Word by persons to all areas of life.”<sup>1</sup>

#### Biblical Theology:

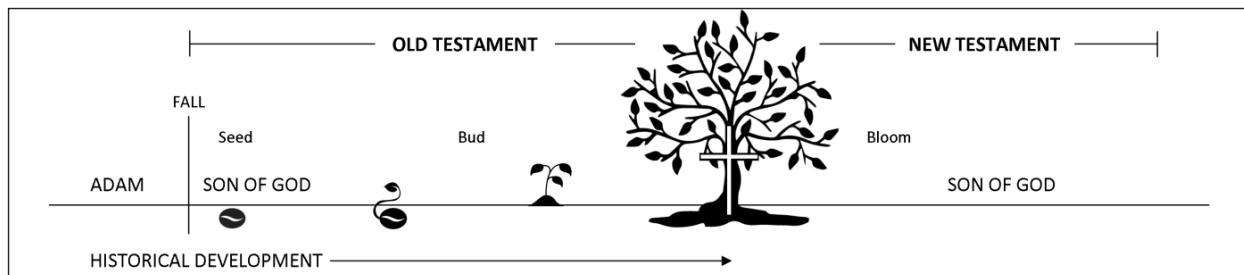
- The unfolding of God’s redemption in the person of Christ throughout history.
- There is this true redemptive-historical context for the Bible that has to inform our study of topics/systems.



*Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh*  
William Brassey Hole, late 19<sup>th</sup> C.

#### Two Pitfalls:

- Historical Abstraction: This is when a topic is removed from its historical setting merely to serve my personal meaning (e.g. David, Ps 37:4)
- Authorial Rejection: Maintain history but reject redemption. These are historical events but they are not the plan of God really unfolding over time to save a people. Topics are then stitched together to give meaning to communities over time - social constructs for an archaic people (e.g. Jesus Seminary, 1985-1991).



- Biblical theology is a line, organically and progressively unfolding of God’s revelation in history.

<sup>1</sup> Frame, *Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, 76.

- Systematic theology draws a circle representing the topical arrangement of that same revelation. Systematic theology is a logical construction.
- At any point in the historical development (God's revelation over time) there is a forming circle of topics: a seed, to bud, to blossom, to full flower
- "...on the line of historical progress there is at several points already a beginning of correlation among elements of truth in which the beginnings of the systematizing process can be discerned" (Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 16).
- When we study any topic, the Bible remains a cohesive whole that tells us God's true history, and through this true history is a story of real redemption.
- "When done this way, theology becomes an exercise of 'faith seeking understanding' that enables us not only to know the real Jesus but also to proclaim and defend him as God the Son incarnate, the Lord of Glory" (Stephen Wellum, *God the Incarnate Son*, 94).

### *Typology*

- Typology is the study of Biblical symbolism set in historical and textual realities.
- Prophetic – God truly giving his word to us.
- Predictive – Truths gradually appear as later texts recapitulate and magnify the original pattern.
- Repetitive – Themes are resisted over time
- Escalate – Themes find their fulfillment later in the unfolding of history. In other words, a type becomes clearer through these intertextual developments across redemptive history, which has its culmination in Christ.

### *Typology and Covenant*

- God covenants with Adam, the first man in the Covenant of Works.
- Here in Genesis we see an immediate or *central* focus on the seed of the woman. This seed would be the offspring (the son) who will deal with the serpent to crush death (Gen 3:15).
- Luke's account, we read the explicit title of Adam in the genealogy of chapter three connecting Adam to Jesus (a major structural feature)

<sup>23</sup>Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli, <sup>24</sup> the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph... <sup>37</sup> the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch, the son of Jared, the son of Mahalaleel, the son of Cainan, <sup>38</sup> the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of **Adam, the son of God** (Luke 3).

### *The Protological Son*

- The first son of God is Adam. He was the first [First: *protos* (Gk)].

- This son was to keep the Covenant God made with him bringing life upon obedience and bearing the weight of death upon disobedience.
- His federal headship would bring about not only the maintenance of Eden (the starting point but a provisional place providing the way for Heaven), but also, Adam's obedience would bring the consummation in a new heavens and a new earth.
- Adam sinned against God and was exiled (Gen 3:8).
- God covenants by grace through faith promising that this mediator would provide the way.
- It is this offspring that becomes the predominant focus of the Old Testament narrative.

### *The Typological Son*

- The history of redemption continues in this second Covenant of Grace.
- Noah, Abraham or David were types within the Covenant of Grace. They all were representative heads for the people of God through the Old Testament with topics or themes in their lives that point us to Christ.
- With regard to the Son of God theme, Moses becomes very prominent in the Old Testament.
- Exodus 4:21-23: Israel a type of Adam, who is God's Son.

"And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'"

- God gives Israel the substance of the covenant at Sinai with the obligations to keep them and receive blessings or break them and receive judgment.
- Israel replicates the sin, fall and exile of the first Son, Adam.
- Deuteronomy 4 (select passages)

"And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments with I teaching you to perform, in order that you may live and go in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you" (v1).

"So He declared to you his covenant which he commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and he wrote them on two tables of stone" (v13).

"When you father children and children's children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger, I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. *You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed.*

*And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you. And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell (vv 25-28).*

- Israel receives a kingdom to uphold God's covenant (a typological Son with a typological kingdom).
- Israel is to have dominion and uphold God's law as they hold forth God's glory to the nations.
- Israel forfeits the land based on idolatry and disobedience.
- Israel, God's Son, recapitulates the first Son's sin, fall and exile. Israel proves to be an unfaithful Son and as a result, they experience death in the form of exile.
- Just as Adam's disobedience involved losing the blessings given him in the Protological land of paradise (Garden of Eden), so also Israel's disobedience involved losing the blessings given to him in the land of Canaan (the typological land of paradise).

NOTE: Eternal salvation is not at stake but typological blessings in the land are at stake.

- As the typological Son of God, Israel underscores that no one can abide by God's commands. The rise and fall of Israel with the unfolding of history invites us to see Israel as God's Son as a theocratic nation, replicating Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden.

### *The Eschatological Son*

- Hebrews 1:1-2

*"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world."*

- Eschatology: *eschatos* ("last") and *logos* ("word/study").
- Eschatology is the study of the last things (end times).
- In a broader sense, eschatology concerns itself with the purposes of Christ for history.
- If we are to understand eschatology in its fullest, we need to concern ourselves with all that entails the coming of the last Son of God and what Kingdom he has established.
- Romans 5:17

*"Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many."*

1. The relationship of death from Adam to Moses sets the structure of the first Son's relationship to the typological Son
2. Israel repeats the temporary setting, sin and fall of Adam.

3. Adam and Moses anticipate of the eschatological coming of Christ. It is no longer death but now “the grace of that one man Jesus Christ”

- The Last Son:

“And behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased’” (Mt 3:17)

“If you are the Son of God...” (Mt 4:1-11). Jesus before the Tempter.

"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16).

“He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him." (Mat 17:5).

"You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (Mt 27:40).

- “Regarding the doctrine of humanity, historic Christianity teaches that we cannot fully understand who we are apart from the identity of Christ as the Son and true image of God, his incarnation into our humanity, his life as the last Adam, and his crucifixion and resurrection for us. And the doctrine of the atonement puts Christ on the cross at the center of the triune God’s work to redeem humanity.”<sup>2</sup>

### *The Pattern we Follow*

- Romans 8.

“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (v14).

“...And if children, then heirs- heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him” (v17).

- You suffer in the already, and will be glorified in the not yet. Believers suffer unto glory in union with Christ because Christ first suffered unto glory.

“For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers” (v29).

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<sup>2</sup> Wellum, 27.

- Paul explicitly speaks about the believer being conformed to the image of the eschatological Son.
  - Paul invokes Christ's firstborn status, which highlights that Christ is the one who occupies unique status in the resurrection order.
  - Paul connects Christ's firstborn status with brothers who share in the likeness of the firstborn, who are being conformed to the likeness of the firstborn.
1. Being conformed to the likeness of Christ cannot be separated from suffering with the eschatological Son in order that we might be glorified with him.
  2. We bear the reproach of the charges against us (v33), and involves everything that produces trial and suffering for the believer (vv35-37).
  3. It is the same eschatological view as Christ the Son Incarnate *but* it is through the cross (v34).
  4. Our labor is not in vain because we are more than conquerors through him (v37)
  5. To conformed to his image = you empty yourself in service. Life comes through death.