The Sanctity of Life, the Two Adams, and Rejoicing in Christ

An ABC Theology Research Note on Self-Destruction, Self-Giving Love, and the Limits of Human Understanding

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Abstract

This revision of the October 8, 2026 note firmly opposes suicide and the deliberate destruction of life while rejecting any claim that our present understanding exhausts the structure and meaning of human life. A purportedly "strict" definition centered on a subjective intention to die may serve limited clinical or legal purposes, but it is a crude and incomplete ontological account. Without proposing a new ultimate definition, this note explores the First and Last Adams, disobedience and obedience, love and death, and the practical obligation to protect people in despair.

1. Method and Epistemic Limits

ABC theology is biblically normative, evidence-constrained, culturally conscious, and practice-accountable. Level I identifies direct scriptural affirmations; Level II develops Scripture-constrained theological constructions; Level III addresses pastoral practice. Human knowledge of biological organization, consciousness, agency, and the total structure of life remains non-exhaustive. An operational definition cannot be promoted into a final metaphysical account of suicide or self-destruction. This critique does not deny the practical importance of assessing intent in clinical care.

2. Life Belongs to the Lord (Level I)

Genesis 1:26–27 affirms the divine image in humanity, while Genesis 9:6 relates the gravity of bloodshed to that image. First Corinthians 6:19–20 calls believers to glorify God in their bodies; Romans 14:7–8 declares that we belong to the Lord in life and death. First Corinthians 3:16–17 primarily concerns the church as God's temple and must not be weaponized to pronounce an individual's eternal fate. Sanctity of life calls not only for restraint from harm but also for nourishment, protection, and care.

3. The First Adam: Eve, Love, and Death (Levels I–II)

In Genesis 2:23, Adam describes the woman as "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," a declaration of intimate relationship. Genesis 2:17 records the divine warning of death, and Genesis 3:6 records Adam's eating. First Timothy 2:14 distinguishes Eve's deception from Adam's not being deceived. These passages establish a serious tension between Adam's action and the warning he had received.

"The First Adam died for one—Eve," and "Adam chose suicide," are proposed here as Level II relational and ontological interpretations. They stress his voluntary choice of a path contrary to the life-giving Lord and leading toward death, rather than judging his conduct by a narrow contemporary criterion of conscious intent to die. Scripture does not explicitly state that romantic love motivated Adam's eating, nor does it call his act suicide. These claims must therefore remain theological hypotheses open to further scriptural testing, not quotations of the biblical text.

4. The Last Adam: Obedience, Self-Giving, and All Things (Levels I–II)

First Corinthians 15:45 names Christ the "Last Adam"; Romans 5:19 contrasts the disobedience of one with the obedience of one. In Luke 22:42, Jesus asks that the cup be removed yet submits to the Father's will. Death itself is not portrayed as his desired end; he willingly bears the cost of the cross in obedience.

John 3:16 says "ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον" ("God loved the world"). Mark 16:15 commands, "κηρύξατε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον πάσῃ τῇ κτίσει" ("proclaim the gospel to all creation"). Mark 16:9–20 belongs to the disputed longer ending, and the breadth of proclamation must not be equated automatically with identical salvific outcomes for every creature. Colossians 1:19–20 provides a more direct cosmic context by speaking of the reconciliation of "all things" (τὰ πάντα) through Christ's cross.

Thus "the First Adam for one; the Last Adam for all" is a suggestive ABC contrast, with important qualifications: the First Adam's alleged motivation of love is inferential; Christ's self-giving is more directly attested; and the scope and manner of cosmic reconciliation require careful exegesis.

5. Nourishing the Body and Self-Giving Love

Ephesians 5:29–33 links nourishing and cherishing one's body with Christ's care for the church, and then invokes the mystery of becoming one flesh. Its immediate subject is marriage and the Christ–church relation. As a Level II application, it supports an affirmative ethic: protect life, nourish life, cherish life. Self-destruction and taking risks for love must not be conflated. Christ's unique redemptive death cannot be turned into a demand that suffering persons prove fidelity by dying.

6. Rejoice Always, Without Condemning the Suffering

First Thessalonians 5:16–18 exhorts believers to rejoice always, pray continually, and give thanks. This is not an order to feel cheerful at every moment or a warrant to shame the ill or despondent. In 1 Kings 19:4–8, Elijah's wish to die is met first with sleep, food, and care. Matthew 12:20 depicts gentleness toward a bruised reed. Opposition to suicide must never become condemnation of persons in despair; final judgment belongs to God.

7. Practice-Accountability

When someone says they do not wish to live or shows signs of self-harm risk, Christians and churches should listen, remain present, and take safety seriously. Ask calmly and directly about thoughts, plans, or preparations for self-harm; involve trusted loved ones and medical or mental-health professionals. Imminent danger calls for emergency assistance; in the United States, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers crisis support by call or text. Prayer and professional care are complementary. Families bereaved by suicide should not be burdened with speculative judgments about salvation.

Conclusion

This note firmly opposes suicide and deliberate self-destruction while rejecting a purportedly strict contemporary definition as the final ontological standard. The First and Last Adams invite further inquiry into disobedience and obedience, death and life, love for one and redemption reaching toward all things. We need not formulate an ultimate definition of self-destruction now. We must, however, act now: protect life, nourish life, cherish life, and respond to despair with truth and mercy.

Scripture Index

Gen 1:26–27; 2:17, 23; 3:6; 9:6; 1 Kgs 19:4–8; Matt 12:20; Mark 16:15; Luke 22:42; John 3:16; Rom 5:19; 14:7–8; 1 Cor 3:16–17; 6:19–20; 15:45; Eph 5:29–33; Col 1:19–20; 1 Thess 5:16–18; 1 Tim 2:14.

Soli Deo Gloria.