

Romans 5:12-21 (NKJV)

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

1

15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.

16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.

2

17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.

3

19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

20-21 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

4

- Romans 5:12-21 – one of the most important sections in the book of Romans (and the NT)
- A resounding conclusion to the first 5 ch., as Paul prepares to make practical application to the Christian life in ch. 6-8
- v. 14 – Paul introduces another OT character who has not yet been mentioned – Adam
- In the first 5 ch. of Romans Paul has primarily targeted the Jewish believers and their reliance on the Mosaic law, thus the patriarch Moses is clearly implied

5

- To broaden the circle to include Gentile believers, Paul steps back further in time, bringing in Abraham as an illustration of living by faith
- God promised to Abraham that he would become “heir of the world” (Rom. 4:13), a “father of many nations” (Gen. 17:5), because he believed God and lived by faith
- Thus, Paul includes all believers – for Abraham is not only the *genetic* father of the Jews, he is also the *spiritual* father of those who believe in Jesus Christ (the church)

6

- Furthermore, he is the father of those believers – Jew or Gentile – who continue believing in Jesus for daily victory – the sons to glory!
- Abraham’s heritage will ultimately extend to the entire world – Gen. 17:5 “ALL NATIONS”; Gen. 12:3 “ALL FAMILIES”
- So Paul steps back from Moses to Abraham, and goes back all the way to Adam, the progenitor of the human race
- For Adam is the father of ALL mankind

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Group	Illustration	Conclusion
Jewish believers	Moses/Law	3:20
Gentile believers	Abraham	5:1-11
ALL mankind	Adam	5:12-21

- Thus, God’s saving plan in sending Jesus is not merely for the Jews or Israel, nor is it merely for those who believe Him for eternal (age-lasting) life (church-age believers)
- It is for ALL MANKIND!

8

• The book of Revelation pictures future universal worship of Jesus around His throne that includes this song:

Rev 5:9 “You are worthy ... for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.”

Rev 5:13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

9

Brief summary of Rom. 5:12-21:

- Through Adam sin entered into the world, resulting in man spiraling downward to death
- Through Christ grace entered into the world, resulting in resurrection and life for all, leading to reigning (v. 17) in His kingdom, for those who appropriate the life

10

Thus we have two kings:

- SIN with its prince of death (represented by the first Adam)
- GRACE with its princes of righteousness and life (represented by Jesus, the last Adam)
- GRACE WINS! (but that is the end of the story – we must start at the beginning)

Rom 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

11

Jan Bonda (1918-1997) – *The One Purpose of God*

Following Augustine, tradition speaks of original sin or hereditary sin. It says: Because Adam sinned, humankind sinned even before birth, and as a result all must die! This line of thinking is at odds with what Paul wrote earlier. All evidence suggests that in speaking about God’s “reckoning” of sins, Paul refers to sins committed by the individual himself and does not speak in terms of hereditary sin as a guilt of the first human, which is “reckoned” as the sin of all his posterity.

12

In a footnote Bonda adds:

The Vulgate renders Romans 5:12 as “in quo omnes peccaverunt” (“in whom all sinned”). Augustine understood these words as a reference to hereditary sin: “in Adam all have sinned.” He taught that because of original sin unbaptized children will be eternally lost; nevertheless they will suffer the lightest degree of punishment.

13

All human beings are ... slaves to sin (Rom. 6:6, 17). They do not commit sin because they are forced to do so; they are the ones who sin and they themselves bear responsibility for what they do. That is the element of truth in the doctrine of hereditary sin. But tradition has burdened this doctrine with other implications. It suggests that, because of this link with our ancestors, hereditary sin is a matter of inescapable fate! And its final consequence will be that the vast majority of humankind will end in perdition. That is the opposite of what Paul is arguing!

14

Zane Hodges, *Romans: Deliverance from Wrath*

The entrance of sin and death into mankind's experience has become universal. And so the result of its entrance through one man is that death came to all men because all have sinned.

This statement is plain and direct. Yet in one of the strangest turns in the exegesis of Romans, this straightforward statement has been made to teach that all mankind sinned in Adam as its seminal head. But no such idea is found here or anywhere else in the Bible.

15

Zane Hodges, cont'd:

Paul's meaning is quite uncomplicated. Death became a universal experience precisely because all human beings have sinned. In other words, “the wages of sin is death”

Paul is not concerned here with the “mechanics” of the transmission of a sinful nature from generation to generation. It is enough to know that what Adam and Eve did in the garden has produced descendants who, without exception, have committed sin.

16

Wm. Barclay, *Commentary on Romans:*

Because of the solidarity of the human race, all humanity actually sinned in Adam. This idea was not strange to a Jew; it was the actual belief of the Jewish thinkers. The writer of 2 Esdras is quite clear about it. ‘For a grain of evil seed was sown in Adam's heart from the beginning, and how much ungodliness it has produced until now — and will produce until the time of threshing comes’ (4:30). ‘For the first Adam, burdened with an evil heart, transgressed and was overcome, as were all who were descended from him’ (3:21).

17

5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

- Sin ENTERED – as if Adam opened the door and Sin (personified) crept in, pervading all of humanity, bringing death in its wake
- If the text were to end here, then the fate of mankind would be dismal indeed, for the King of Sin and Death would win
- But the King of Grace and Life WINS!

18

- Notice the huge parenthesis (vs. 13-17) – skipping that for now, we can see the continuity of the text from v. 12 to vs. 18-19

Rom 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Rom 5:19 For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

19

- Mankind has two problems: sin (singular) and sins (plural)
- Sin (singular) is the natural inclination to commit sins (plural), which put us at enmity with God

James Dunn: "Sin" is ... the force which functions as the antecedent to particular acts of sin, that power which man experiences influencing his desires and choices to act against his best interests as a creature of God (the analysis already provided in 1:18–32).

20

- Sin and death became mankind's universal problem because of Adam introducing it into the world, but it is not passed along in some sort of genetic sense
- Rather, Rom. 5:12 is clear: "death spread to all men, because all sinned"
- Death is the penalty for sin (singular), and the implication is that, apart from some radical solution on God's part, death would be never-ending separation from God
- But Jesus has delivered mankind from sin and death by His redemption

21

2 Tim 1:10 Jesus Christ ... has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light.

Heb 2:14-15 Inasmuch then as the children [i.e., mankind] have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

22

- John the Baptist emphasized that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin (singular) OF THE WORLD
- The Lamb of God imagery implies that He paid the penalty for sin (singular) by His blood atonement – typified by the OT lambs
- Consequently, no one will experience never-ending separation from God
- That is why Jesus is called the SAVIOR OF THE WORLD (John 4:42) and the SAVIOR OF ALL MEN (1 Tim. 4:10)

23

- He has already saved every person from the penalty of sin, which is man's universal problem via Adam, whether the individual realizes it or not
- Incidentally, this is why we know that babies and young children that die will not be condemned
- The penalty for sin has already been paid for ALL mankind
- Jesus is the Savior of ALL men, and that includes babies and young children too

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Rom. 5:18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to ALL men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to ALL men, resulting in justification of life.

19 For as by one man's disobedience MANY were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience MANY will be made righteous.

- *made* (v. 19) = "designated" or "constituted"
- Notice the use of ALL in v. 18 and MANY in v. 19, which refer to ALL HUMANITY

25

The same applies to v. 15:

Rom 5:15 For if by the one man's offense MANY died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to MANY.

26

James Dunn: The "many" would be recognized as an acceptable variation for the "all men" of v 12, since it is humankind in the mass which Paul clearly has in view in both cases ... Paul was viewing the epoch of Adam as a whole, from beginning to end; for though the rule of the present age has not yet finished, in that all have not yet died, nevertheless the fact remains that death is the inescapable bottom line for all without exception, as certain for those belonging to this age now or in the future as it was for those already dead ...

27

James Dunn (cont'd): For the second time in the verse, Paul uses ... "the many," to once again underline the epochal significance of Christ's gracious act: it has affected an epochful of humanity, humankind in that age in the mass; and it has determined the character of that epoch from beginning to end as the age of overflowed grace.

28

We also find this marvelous truth in Corinthians
1 Cor 15:22 For as in Adam ALL die, even so in Christ ALL shall be made alive.

2 Cor. 5:19 God was in Christ reconciling THE WORLD to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them.

- God has already reconciled the entire world to Himself through Christ

29

- Even though ALL mankind has a sin problem that results in sinning ("because all have sinned") and ultimately death (in the sense of never-ending separation from God), Jesus paid mankind's sin penalty
- Consequently, ALL humans have been redeemed by Jesus and reconciled to God and can live righteously

30

- The death of Jesus is both **RETROACTIVE** and **PROACTIVE**
- He is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world
- His death continues to redeem every generation of mankind, reconciling all men to God, prior to His historical death and long after it
- Consequently, all mankind has been saved **IN THIS SENSE**
- This is salvation in the “first degree,” which makes possible salvation in greater degrees

31

- Why is additional salvation necessary?
- Because mankind still has the problem of sins (plural), for which he will be judged
- Unbelievers will give an account at the Great White Throne **AFTER** the Millennium
- Believers (those who are *in Christ*) will give an account at the Judgment Seat of Christ **BEFORE** the Millennium
- That is why Paul proclaimed:

32

Acts 17:30-31 God ... commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.

- Thankfully, the death of Jesus offers greater degrees of salvation which – if received – can result in righteous living and preparedness for meeting Him in judgment

33

- Having understood the big picture of Rom. 5:12-21, we can go on to the parenthesis in vs. 13-17, looking at the important details

Rom 5:13 (For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

Rom 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

34

- Hodges translates **IMPUTED** in v. 13 as **ITEMIZED**

Hodges: Paul’s idea seems to be that in the period before the law a specific list of sins could not be drawn up which had universal application to all men ... Though badly defaced, the law is nevertheless written on each conscience in a way that permits God to judge individuals as individuals ... But the absence of law means that man’s failures cannot be codified into a specific list of infractions.

35

- Despite the imprecision of counting sins before the law was given, man, nevertheless, sinned and was under the sentence of death as in any generation, even those who did not transgress as in like manner as Adam (willful disobedience to a direct command)

36

Why does Paul bother to make this point?

- 1) to demonstrate that humanity from Adam all the way to the end of time, have shared or will share in this inescapable human problem: sin resulting in death
- 2) to announce that Jesus provided the way of escape from sin's reign of death for all mankind (both retroactively and proactively) through Jesus Christ
- 3) to show Israel that because they were given the law, they are all the more culpable

37

- End of v. 14 – Adam is a TYPE of Him who was to come
- In what sense is Adam a type of Jesus, seeing that Adam sinned, but Jesus did not?
- Adam represents the entire human race in his sin and death just as Christ represents the entire human race in His grace and life

38

Dunn: Adam is the exemplar or pattern of Christ in that both are epochal figures: both by one decisive act determine the character of the subsequent epoch for those belonging to that epoch ... As Adam by his transgression determined the character of the present age, so Christ has determined the character of the age to come.

Rom 5:15 But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense MANY died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to MANY.

39

- Man did not DO anything for Christ's redemption – Christ simply offered Himself as a GIFT to mankind
- In v. 15, it seems the "free gift" is not referring specifically to the gift of eternal life
- Rather, it is referring to the GIFT OF JESUS as a sacrifice to redeem mankind in a more general sense
- Adam sinned and thereby gave the "gift" of DEATH to mankind, while Jesus died and gave the gift of His LIFE to mankind – entirely as an act of grace on His part

40

- Notice again in v. 15 the dual usage of the word MANY, which has to mean ALL ...
- Because in Adam the MANY is ALL, thus to be parallel, the MANY must also mean ALL, as noted earlier

Rom 5:16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.

41

- Adam's sin resulted in CONDEMNATION – this is NOT the best translation
- CONDEMNATION (per Moulton and Milligan as quoted in Hodges) = "the punishment following a judicial sentence" or "penal servitude"

Hodges: *The judgment* passed on Adam led to a *penalty*, i.e., *servitude to sin*. Adam was now spiritually dead, and physically dying, and in this condition he fell under *bondage to sin*.

42

- In contrast, Christ's free gift results in "restoration of the criminal, the fresh chance given to him" (Moulton in Hodges)
- The word JUSTIFICATION (in v. 16) doesn't merely mean righteousness; it means *righteous acts*
- It is the same Gr. word translated *righteous act* in v. 18 – referring to Christ's righteous act of dying on Calvary
- And it is the same Gr. word translated *righteous acts* in Rev. 19:8:

43

- Rev 19:8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.
- Jesus REVERSES mankind's slavery to sin (first degree salvation for all), so that man can produce righteous acts (second degree salvation) and avoid the lake of fire
 - When a person believes on Jesus for eternal life, all of their past sins are forgiven (third degree salvation)
 - Thus, they are justified at that point in time

44

- Those who continue, by faith, to live righteously, remain justified, for they will be carrying out righteous acts through Jesus Christ who enables (fourth degree salvation) – this results in reward, as seen in v. 17:

Rom 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

- In contrast to sin's reign of death, we find here grace's reign of life

45

- The word RECEIVE in v. 17 is an active present participle, thus a continuing tense
- It literally translates, "those who ARE RECEIVING abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness [by faith, 3:22] will reign"
- Hodges says, "The future tense in this verse is precisely analogous to the future in 5:9."

Rom 5:9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

46

- Those who are living righteously, by faith, and are therefore, considered justified by God, will be saved from wrath – both NOW in this life and at the Bema Seat of Christ
- That is essentially the same as saying those who are receiving God's abundant grace to live righteously by faith will reign in life – and we know that reigning will happen in the age to come – co-rulership with Christ
- God's grace is ABUNDANT – He gives more grace, whenever we need it and ask Him for it so that we can live victoriously

47

Returning to v. 18 ...

Rom 5:18 Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in *justification* of life.

- The word *condemnation* in v. 18 is the same as in v. 16 and means "servitude to sin"
- The word *justification* (Gr. *dikaiosis*) in v. 18 is a slightly different noun than used in v. 16 (Gr. *dikaionoma*)

48

- In v. 16 it means *righteous acts*
- But in 5:18 and 4:25 the word means *righteous living*, according to Bob Wilkin, thus, he says it should be translated:
5:18b through one righteous action grace came for all men to produce righteous living sourced in [God's] life
- The Christian life is not about praying to ask Jesus to be your Savior so you can go to Heaven when you die – It is believing on Jesus for eternal (age-lasting) life, then appropriating God's abundant grace to live righteously

49

- The purpose of the Christian life is summed up:
- 2 Cor 5:15 He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.
- 2 Cor 5:21b that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
- Just as Adam's sin results in judgment (servitude to sin) for all men, for all have sinned, so Christ's righteous act (crucifixion) results in the free gift to all men unto righteous living which is sourced in Christ's resurrected life

50

- ALL mankind will ultimately be saved and living righteously by the end of all the ages
- For multitudes, it will come after they have spent time in the lake of fire, which is remedial
- But in the end, ALL will be saved – EVERY knee will bow and EVERY tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father – and that includes things in heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth (Phil 2:10-11)
- *Every* means EVERY and *all* means ALL

51

- Rom 5:20-21 Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
- Perhaps for the benefit of the Jewish believers Paul adds: "the law entered that the offense might abound"
 - This must have been shocking news!
- Dunn: Far from being an answer to sin, as his fellow Jews naturally assumed, it increased sin!

52

- Hodges: Sin undergoes "enlargement" through the coming of the law. The law is the divine magnifying glass under which man's sinfulness can in no way be minimized. But in sharp contrast to this grim reality, in which sin has been powerfully magnified by the law, stands God's magnificent grace.
- Where sin abounded grace SUPERABOUNDED
 - Grace always trumps sin, and aren't we thankful for that?

53

- Hodges: God's grace reigns when the believer reigns "in life" through Jesus Christ. That is to say, when the believer gains victory over sin, grace is reigning in his life experience.
- In v. 18 we find the PROVISION for righteous living – it is sourced in God's life, producing soul-salvation
 - In v. 21 we find the REWARD for righteous living – it leads to eternal (age-lasting) life, in the sense of rulership (v. 17)

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2 Tim 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Tim 4:8 Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Rev 2:10b Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Will YOU be rewarded for being faithful and living righteously?