

10. The First and Second Adams

Romans 5:12-21

With Romans 5 we have begun to consider some of the fruits of justification by faith alone, beginning with peace with God, communion with God, persevering faith, Christian character and hope. This hope is strengthened by the knowledge that God saved us when we were His enemies and now that we are His friends our hope is surely sure.

Please Read Romans 5:1-11

The section of Romans that we now consider is a difficult one for many to accept. In it we find that all humanity stands condemned before God because of Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. This understanding of original sin is essential to a right understanding of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ for sinners. In the same way that Adam's sin became the reason for death for all, so Christ's work is the reason for life to all those who believe.

NOTE: INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY QUESTION HERE: Is it fair for Adam's sin in the garden to be put to our account? Explain

Verse 12: In this verse Paul begins a sentence which he doesn't complete until verse 18. Before completing it he is concerned with enlarging upon the universality of sin.

By the historical act committed by Adam in the Garden of Eden, sin entered into the world and affected more than just Adam. Sin comes from outside the world, even from Satan. The one man in this text is Adam (5:14; Gen 2:16,17; 3:1-6), who is responsible for sin entering the human race. Knowing the consequences of disobedience to God he deliberately sinned. The original sin of Adam is put to the account of the entire human race. All humanity was included in Adam, so that when Adam sinned all sinned (5:15; 1 Cor 15:22; cf Gen 9:22-25; Ex 34:6,7; 2 Sam 12:10). All have sinned in Adam, being included in him. This passage is not speaking of our own individual sins, but the sin which Adam committed in Eden.

This is the teaching of the federal/representative headship of mankind. The whole of mankind (hence Adam) is viewed as having been in Adam and therefore of having originally sinned in him. As in Adam all sinned, so in Adam all died, beginning the process of dying for all of humanity (Gen 2:17; 3:17-19; Rom 1:32; 1 Cor 15:22). All this is proven by the fact that all sin individually (Rom 3:23). This Paul will now further explain.

Verses 13,14: Paul now goes off on a tangent to further explain how all sinned in Adam.

Sin was certainly in the world before the Law was given in its written form, for death (the punishment of sin) continued on from Adam to Moses. The sin that all these people from Adam to Moses were punished for was not that of breaking the written Law that was given through Moses for it was not yet given. These died in punishment for the sin put to their account because of Adam, who stood as their representative in the Garden of Eden. The written Law only highlighted the sin and indeed increased it.

The whole reason for this federal headship would seem to be that of Typology. Adam was a type of the One to come, even Christ. This means that Adam foreshadowed a future divine reality. That is, as Adam's sin was imputed to his descendants, so Christ's finished work is imputed to His people (1 Cor 15:45-47). This whole imputation of Adam's sin then was to teach men about the way of salvation in the future Messiah.

Verse 15: However, though both cases (Adam's and Christ's) are parallel they are not exactly alike, for the free gift of justification is far more effective. Adam's sin was the reason for all of Adam's physical descendants dying (5:12; 1 Cor 15:22), suffering the punishment for sin and imputed guilt.

The work of Christ is far greater, for how much more however will we live by the free gift of righteousness in Christ. If sin has been imputed to Adam's descendants, then how much more certainly will the imputed righteousness of Christ deliver those who believe (5:17), that is, the many (Is 53:11; Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45) who belong to Christ. Adam brought destruction, Christ brought salvation and a whole host of blessings.

Verse 16: The gift of justification (5:17) is not like the penalty imposed through the sin of Adam. For in Adam a sentence of condemnation came to all for one sin, whereas in justification we are freely delivered from many sins. The Lord Jesus Christ has done far more (5:15) than remove the curse of Adam's sin, for He procures our justification from our own many sins also.

Verse 17: This verse is connected with verses 15 and 16. The contrast between the sin of Adam and the free gift of justification in Christ is further explored here.

We are all subject to death because of the sin of Adam, even though we were not personally involved in it. Yet much more shall we be delivered from death by the

righteousness of Christ imputed to us, which we freely receive, even to reigning in life by and with Jesus Christ, and all without personal involvement.

Verses 18,19: Therefore on the basis of all that has been explained of justification by faith, there is an analogy between the fall in Adam and our restoration in Christ. All men in Adam received the consequence of Adam's sin, even death. All men in Christ receive the consequence of being in Christ, even life. The thought begun in verse 12 is not completed until here in verse 18, for it was interrupted in order to explain and qualify the analogy in 5:13-17.

The point being made is that we are all under condemnation for the sin of Adam (5:15,17,19), and likewise by one Man's righteousness all men who believe in Christ are justified (1:16,17; 3:21-25; 5:17; 1 Cor 22,23; Philip 2:8). It is important to note that the '*all men*' mentioned in these verses does not refer to all men in the world, but to all men who believe.

Verse 20: With the coming of the written Law, the awareness of sin became more acute. This was in order to show man his true position before God (3:20; 7:7; Gal 3:19), in light of his real sinfulness.

Though the knowledge of sin increased, the appreciation of grace increased also, for the Law showed the need of a deliverance from a source other than self. A far greater power than sin is seen in God's grace, for in Christ sin is forgiven and new life experienced.

Verse 21: The power of sin is clearly seen in the widespread domain of death. Yet the unmerited love of God is abundantly seen in its reigning in eternal life, brought about by the righteousness of Christ. God's grace superabounds over sin. What an assurance of eternal life for those who believe is found in this passage.

QUESTION: How does the superabundance of God's grace over sin manifest itself in our lives?

INDIVIDUAL DISCOVERY

What Should be a Christian's attitude toward sin?

How are we to Reckon Ourselves Alive to God? What Will This Involve?

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