

Start your study here

Read

Read, Record, Reflect, Respond

Prayerfully	Conscious dependence
Reflectively	Constantly
Extensively	Background issues Big Idea Basic structure and flow Broad strokes
Creatively	Imagination and View points
Intensively	Questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, How. . . Repeated Alike Different Accentuated Related
Specifically	Purposefully—with the view of the author in mind
Effectively	By unit of thought— Think Context! Details, ask questions

Romans 5:12-21

- 12 Therefore,
 just as sin came into the world through one man,
 and death through sin,
 and so death spread to all men
 because all sinned—
- 13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given,
 but sin is not counted where there is no law.
- 14 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.
- 15 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.
- 16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin.
 For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation,
 but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.
- 17 If, because of one man's trespass,
 death reigned through that one man,
 much more will those who
 receive the abundance of grace
 and the free gift of righteousness
 reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.
- 18 Therefore,
 as one trespass led to condemnation for all men,
 so one act of righteousness leads to justification
 and life for all men.
- 19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners,
 so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.
- 20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass,
 but where sin increased,
 grace abounded all the more,
- 21 so that,
 as sin reigned in death,
 grace also might reign through righteousness
 leading to eternal life
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. (ESV)

Review: All condemned in sin (1:18-3:20); Salvation is completely (all) a work of God in Christ (3:21-31); By faith alone (4:1-25); With great benefits and assurance (5:1-11)
Observations: 1) words for “sin” 2) “reign” 3) notice the “just as” or “as” and “so also” comparisons
Key Question: How can justification from Christ (one man’s death) affect all?
 Why is Jesus substitution (Christ’s obedience) credited to us? Because that is how we were condemned (by the disobedience of Adam). We do not just do sin, we are sinners.
Point: There can be saved by the death of one man (Jesus Christ) because all are sinners based on the sin of one man (Adam)

Inferential conclusion based on previous section, this section becomes the “basis” for what has been stated

Additional Resources
 Chapter 3 in John Piper’s book, *Counted Righteous* (starting on p. 82)
http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/OnlineBooks/ByTitle/1592_Counted_Righteous_in_Christ/
 Two additional resources
http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=2345
http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=1155

Romans 5:12-21

12 **Therefore,**

just as sin came into the world through **one man**,
 and death through sin,
 and **so** death spread to all men
 because all sinned—

Thought started

13 for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given,
 but sin is not counted where there is no law.

See 4:15 and 5:20 sin present but not law breaking

14 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.

Example or pattern for Christ—reasons, so we better understand what Christ did in comparison with Adam

15 **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**.

Justification is not limited to a people group, or time—it is for all mankind at all times

16 And the free gift is not like the result of that **one man’s sin**.
For the judgment following **one trespass** brought condemnation,
 but the free gift following **many trespasses** brought justification.

17 If, because of **one man’s trespass**,
 death **reigned** through that **one man**,
much more will those who
 receive the abundance of grace
 and the free gift of righteousness
reign in life through the **one man** Jesus Christ.

Thought concluded

18 **Therefore,**
as one trespass led to condemnation for all men,
so one act of righteousness leads to justification
 and life for all men.

Implications: This keeps us from try to “work” our way to salvation. We can not be good enough, because we are condemned in our nature not just our actions.

19 **For as** by the **one man’s** disobedience the many were made sinners,
so by the **one man’s** obedience the many will be made righteous.

v 17 “those who receive” Paul has established the need for faith in chapter 4; A point also made in 3:22, 26, 28; 5:1, 2

20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass,
 but where sin increased,
 grace **abounded all the more**,

superabounded

21 **so that,**
as sin **reigned** in death,
also grace **might reign** through righteousness
 leading to eternal life
 through Jesus Christ our Lord. (ESV)

Implications:
 Root problem: sin—all are condemned for sin, rooted in Adam
 The condition of sinning is deeper than my own sins—I am bound to Adam
 Jesus is a Great Savior
 Jesus’ salvation is meant to be shared to all mankind (universally Savior)

Working Idea (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

This passage will seek to explain why the benefits identified in 5:1-11 are possible and why justification is needed. It also serves to transition to the next major section where Paul will deal with how the justified ought to live.

In a real way, this passage picks up two key thoughts (Genesis 2:4 and Matthew 1:1), the first Adam and the ultimate Adam.

Key Issues

Sin Nature

v. 16, 18 imputed sin=condemnation

v. 19 made sinners

What is man's condition in Adam? Not just following his example. ON what basis are individuals condemned?

1. Could be because of sin nature—all are condemned in Adam
2. Or because of active sin—individually judged for sins

What does 5:12-21 point to?

Condemnation in Adam—Imputed

Judgment as seen in 1:18-3:20 was for sins committed.

However all are condemnable because of their relationship with Adam

Justification in Christ—Imputed

Main idea:

Sin, death, judgment, and condemnation came through Adam, whereas God's grace, the gift of righteousness (justification), and reigning in life—indeed eternal life, came through Jesus Christ.¹

The Power of Christ's act of obedience to overcome Adam's act of disobedience is the great theme of this paragraph. . . .The universal consequences of Adam's sin are the *assumption* of Paul's argument; the power of Christ's act to cancel those consequences is its *goal*.²

Teaching idea:

This passage will challenge peoples "fairness quotient". So you might as well raise it as a teaching tool.

Wolfgang Pannenberg, a German theologian stated bluntly, "It is impossible for me to be held jointly responsible as though I were a joint cause for an act that another did many generations ago and in a situation radically different from mine."³

Key issues—we must allow the Bible to *form* our belief system; worldview and theology do not simply *inform* our presuppositions. Scripture teaches things that are not difficult to understand (though it does do that), but difficult to accept.

No matter how our fairness quotient or index reacts to this passage, "no explanation ultimately removes the problem. "Original sin" remains an "offense to reason."⁴

You will need to go slowly through the logic Paul develops in order not to lose people or lose the primary points.

Two key points are made:

In Adam all have sin, therefore all die

In Christ all can be saved, therefore all can have eternal life

¹ Greg Herrick, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Righteousness*, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1999-2002.

² Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996) p. 315.

³ As quoted in, Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 329.

⁴ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 329.

Introduction



(Teacher—you could bring a current issue from the news related to how “messed-up” the world is OR an illustration from the news showing the courts doing something that seems unfair.)

Isn't it unfair?

What are some of the most “unfair” events, situations and rule you have experienced? Why did they seem so “unfair”? How is “fairness” determined?

We have a natural “fairness quotient.” When we think something unfair is happening (particularly towards us) we instinctively want to see “fairness” restored.

The passage we will be looking at will make your “fairness quotient” uneasy. But don't jump to conclusions too quickly—we must allow Scripture to *form* our belief system and even our “fairness quotient.”

But also, remember that there are two sides to fairness.

Paul will show us a benefit that is not fair—but we will not want to complain about it.

We live in a messed-up world. No one would argue with that. The controversy arises over *how* the world got messed up in the first place. The Bible gives us a clear answer: “sin entered the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all people because all sinned.” Adam messed everything up, and we've succeeded at keeping it in that condition.

Is there any hope for our world? The Bible provides another clear answer: “those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness [will] reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ!” Jesus will set everything right again.⁵

Review

All condemned in sin 1:18-3:20

God has revealed Himself but mankind has chosen to ignore that revelation and exchange for idolatry, immorality and all forms of sin (wickedness).

God's wrath is on all who suppress the knowledge of Him and replace it with idolatry, immorality and any sin. This judgment is true of Jews as well as Gentiles. God is impartial in judging all based on their works not heritage, religious rights or religious rites. No one is immune from judgment for God is just.

All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God—all are justly condemnable and separated from God because of sin.

Salvation is completely (all) a work of God in Christ 3:21-31

By faith alone 4:1-25

With great benefits and assurance 5:1-11

Overview / Preview

In a passage that rivals 3:21-26 for theological importance, Paul paints with broad brush strokes a “bird's-eye” picture of the history of redemption. His canvas is human history, and the scope is universal. We hear nothing in this paragraph of “Jews” and “Gentiles”; both are subsumed under the larger category “human beings.” The perspective is corporate rather than individual.⁶

⁵ Jeff Miller, Trinity Bible Church, Richardson TX, Audio available at Bible.org.

⁶ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, pp. 314-315.

This passage shows why those who have been justified and reconciled can be so certain that they will be saved from wrath and share in the “glory of God”: it is because Christ’s act of obedience ensure eternal life for all those who are “in Christ.”⁷

Amplification and Application of Justification 5:12-21 (Hinge)

Looking Back:

How can it be that the death of one Man could provide a substitution for all?

5:1-11 The Benefits *Through* Christ

5:12-21 The Benefits *in* Christ

Teaches the sufficiency of Christ’s death

Deals theologically with

Original Sin

Imputed Sin

Imputed Righteousness

In contrast to what man can have in Christ, it shows what man has in Adam

5:12-21 Summary

Adam → Man’s Condemnation 1:18–3:20

Christ → Man’s means of Justification 3:21–5:11

Basic Outline

1. Under new headship
2. Act of *one* many affected
3. Through death to eternal life

This difficult portion of the Epistle, packed with close reasoning and theological terminology, stands at the very heart of the development of Paul’s thought. He has presented all men as sinners and Christ as the one who has died to redeem them. Now he delves into the question **How does it come about that all men—with no exception but Jesus Christ—are in fact sinners?** In answer, he goes all the way back to the first man Adam to affirm that what he did has affected the whole of mankind, involving everyone in sin and death. But over this record of disaster and loss he puts the countermeasures taken on behalf of the race by another man, Jesus Christ, of which all are potential beneficiaries.⁸

In our text, Paul shows just how great the impact of Adam’s “fall” has been upon mankind. Paul stresses this impact to demonstrate that in spite of the curse, which Adam’s sin brought upon the human race, God has provided a cure in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

To the unbeliever, this passage promises and offers not only the forgiveness of sins, but a new beginning, in Christ. To the Christian, there are no more encouraging words than those found here. These words speak not only of the salvation which God has accomplished for us, in Christ, they also lay the foundation for the next section of Romans in chapters 6-8, for the basis for sanctification is found in the truths which Paul expounds here. The words of our text are words of life and hope for all mankind.⁹

The discussion of “union” between Christ and mankind and particularly with the believer sets the stage for the discussion in chapters 6-8. “In this passage the union of the people of Christ with him, as over against their former union with Adam, furnishes the needed context for the development of the various aspects of sanctification.”¹⁰

The Structure of the argument

The argument in 5:12a is the protasis (if) and 5:18b is the apodosis (then)¹¹

Read 5:12 with 5:18

⁷ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 316.

⁸ Everett F. Harrison, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, The Pradis, p. 61.

⁹ Robert Deffinbaugh, ©1996 by Community Bible Chapel, 210 Abrams Road, Richardson, TX 75081, <http://www.bible.org>.

¹⁰ Everett F. Harrison, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, The Pradis, p. 55.

¹¹ Harold W. Hoehner, (Unpublished class notes, DTS, 206 Exegesis of Romans, 1991).

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. (ESV)

2. 5:12a—states that by one man sin entered the world and sin brought death (protasis) **If**
 - a. 5:12b (because all sinned)—is the continuation of the argument (i.e., not the apodosis of 5:12a)
 - b. 5:13-17—parenthesis which gives further explanation of the protasis 5:12a
 1. 5:13-14—continued the thought of 5:12b, viz., all have sinned in Adam because of this, death passed upon all.
 2. 5:15-17—gives the vast dissimilarities between the 2 Adams
3. 5:18a—repeats the original protasis
4. 5:18b—completes the thought, and summarizes the contrast—by one righteous act leads to righteousness for all men (apodosis).

Or put another way

The evidence from Romans 5:12-19.

The incomplete sentence of Romans 5:12.

The clarification of “all sinned” (verse 12) in Romans 5:13-14.

How Paul deals with possible objections.

The principle of no transgressions where there is no law.

Absence of law raises the legal issue of the death sentence for all men.

Why did Paul introduce the Adam-Christ connection at this place?

The contrast between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:15-17.

The crucial contrasts of Romans 5:18-19.

Does Christ’s “one act of righteousness” refer to his life of obedience?¹²

	Adam	Jesus Christ
Their relationship to God v.19	were made sinners	will be made righteous
the extent of their actions v. 15	affected all men	affected all men (available to all men)
the result of their actions vv. 16, 18	brought condemnation based on the one sin of Adam (imputation)	brought justification in spite of many transgressions (imputation)
what reigns by their actions vv. 17, 21	death	grace

Catch Phrase / Key Phrase:

Outline

Amplification and Application of Justification 5:12-21 (Hinge)

The acts of the representative head brings consequences upon the many under the head.

Imputation of Sin 5:12-14

The link between Adam and man and Adam and Christ

Proposition Commenced 5:12

Sin’s entrance into the world by Adam resulted in death for all men

Imputation of Righteousness 5:15-21

Distinctions between Adam and Christ 5:15-17

Christ’s work, man’s sin, and the Law 5:18-21

We can therefore summarize the structure of our text as follows:

¹² John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ*, (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2002) p. 19

- (1) The link between Adam and Christ (verses 12-14)
- (2) Distinctions between Adam and Christ (verses 15-17)
- (3) Christ's work, man's sin, and the Law (verses 18-21)¹³

Exposition / Key Exegetical Issues to be aware of



I take this to be a hinge section, meaning that it tied up the previous section, yet introduces the next. Because it is a hinge, some make it tied closer to 6:1–8:39 (see below) or as I do, as the conclusion to 3:21–5:21.

Having established the basis of God's pleasure in us, viz., the *imputation of righteousness* (or forensic justification), Paul now discusses the *impartation of righteousness*, or sanctification (5:12–8:39). This is the third major section of the epistle. In some ways there is a neat trilogy found in these first eight chapters. The apostle first discusses *justification* which is salvation from the *penalty of sin* (3:21–5:11). Then he deals with *sanctification* or salvation from the *power of sin* (5:12–8:17). Finally, he addresses *glorification* which is salvation from the *presence of sin* (8:18-39).¹⁴

Paul lays out his views on sanctification using the twin themes of reigning and slavery. He begins by contrasting the reign of grace with the reign of sin (5:12-21). Although many NT students would place 5:12-21 under the second major section (i.e., under “Justification”), “the words ‘just,’ ‘justice’ and ‘faith’ coming from the first part of the quotation [Hab 2:4 in Rom 1:17] as given by Paul, are of very frequent occurrence from 1:17 to 5:11, and almost entirely absent thereafter. On the other hand, the terms signifying ‘life’ (and ‘death’) occur regularly in chapters 5:12 to 7:1.”¹⁵ Thus the apostle seems to be signaling that he is now picking up a new topic.

In 5:12-21 Paul moves beyond the legal issue of justification. What is essential to get here is that *imputed righteousness addresses the condemnation of the law while imparted righteousness addresses the inability of the flesh*. That is to say, justification is forensic, stating emphatically that our *position* before God is one of righteousness. But justification, like the Law, can do nothing against the flesh. That is why Paul now turns to imparted righteousness and gives the basis as our union with Christ. Our union with Christ is more than forensic; it is *organic*.¹⁶ As Adam was our representative in sin, bringing death to all (5:12), so also Christ is our representative in righteousness, bringing life to all (5:18).¹⁷

5:12-14

As a result of Adam's sin, sin and death entered the world, even before the law was given, and even over those who did not sin in the same way as Adam, who is a type of the coming one (5:12-14).¹⁸

“therefore”

since all are sinners and condemned (under God's wrath)

since salvation (justification, reconciliation) is by God's grace through faith in the cross work of Christ.

Issues related to Sin and Condemnation 1:18–3:20

Why are all men sinners?

How did all become sinners?

Issues related to Salvation 3:21–5:11 (and 6:1-8:39)

How sufficient is Christ's death?

Was Christ's death enough for all?

¹³ Deffinbaugh

¹⁴ In our outline, we have put these last two segments together, for glorification is seen as the goal of sanctification and is very much tied to it in chapter 8.

¹⁵ M. Black, *Romans* (New Century Bible Commentary), 26.

¹⁶ This is not to say that 5:12-21 favors the seminal headship view, because the route to our organic union with Christ is still through justification (so 5:18: “the result of one act of righteousness was justification *that brings life* for all men” [NIV]).

¹⁷ Daniel B. Wallace, *Romans: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*, bible.org

One proof that Paul is addressing the inadequacy of the flesh more than the condemnation of the law is the fact that he is contrasting Christ with *Adam*—one whose act applies even to those “who did not sin by breaking a commandment” (5:14), precisely because “before the law was given, sin was in the world” (5:13).

¹⁸ Greg Herrick, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Righteousness*, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1999-2002.

How can one Man’s death benefit the many?
 What kind of benefit did it provide?

This verse also seems to recall the condemnation section 1:18–3:20 particularly 1:32 the only previous mention of death in the epistle (other than to the death of Christ 5:10).

Romans 1:32 Though they know God’s decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (ESV)

just as sin came into the world through one man,

Observation: Paul follows the pattern of using the generic “man” before identifying Adam (v.12 then 14) and Jesus Christ (v. 14 then 15).

Two key Pauline references to Adam

1 Timothy 2:14 and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. (ESV)

The point being—Adam was not deceived he sinned knowingly/deliberately.

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (ESV)

The point: sin and death entered the world through **one man**, with the result that **death** permeated the whole of mankind.¹⁹

What he *has* made clear is the causal nexus between sin and death, exhibited in the case of Adam, has repeated itself in the case of every human being. No one, Paul makes clear, escapes the reign of death because no one escapes the power of sin.²⁰

Reasons why people are lost and in need of salvation²¹

1. They are lost because of their rejection Of biblical revelation.	Rom. 1:19-20	Acts 14:17; Ps. 19:1
2. They are lost because of disobeying their own conscience.	Rom. 2:14-16	
3. They are lost because of their relationship to the world.		Eph. 2:2; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-17; 5:19
4. They are lost because of their relationship to Satan.		John 8:42-44; 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:13; 1 John 3:10; 5:19
5. They are lost because of their relationship to sin/Adam.	Rom. 5:12	Gen. 2:17; Job 14:4; Jer. 17:19;; 7:14; Eph. 4:18
6. They are lost because of their relationship to God.		Eph. 2:12; 1 John 5:12; Jude 1:19

Sin—ἁμαρτάνω [*hamartano*] □– to miss the mark 5:12-13, 21

This word could be translated, “transgression.” Or more general see 5:14

Paul personifies sin. The image is of “sin” as holding the power over the world outside of Christ.

Other key words used

παράβασις [*parabasis*] —Transgression, going aside 5:14

παράπτωμα [*paraptoma*]—Trespass, a false step 5:15-18, 20

παρακοή [*parakoa*]—Disobedience 5:19

Death through sin

Death came to all

¹⁹EBC, Harrison, p. 61.

²⁰ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 323.

²¹ Adapted from H.L. Willmington, *Willmington's Book of Bible Lists* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 1987). 299.

Death

Death in verse 14 seems to be physical, but because Paul also contrasts death with eternal life in verse 21—it is probable that Paul has in mind both physical death and spiritual separation as a whole (one issue) or “total death.”

Key Interpretive Problem: “Because all sinned”

Why Does Paul break off the discussion and move into a parenthesis?

In 5:19 He states what one might expect in 5:12 that all sinned in Adam.

Romans 5:19 For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. (ESV)

In Romans 5:12-21 Paul’s emphasis is original sin and the connection between Adam as the representative head of the race bringing condemnation (sin and death) on the race. But in verse 12, it seems he does not want to remove human responsibility, which he developed in 1:18–3:20.

People are convicted (1:18–3:20) for their sins and the resulting guiltiness for their own sins. Here (5:12-21) Paul seems to be developing the idea that mankind is also condemnable for sin in Adam.

The result of sin and death are seen in 5:18—condemnation to all men.

We note in this verse first that the phrase *ep ho* should be interpreted casually in the sense of ‘for this reason’ or ‘because’ (cf. 2 Cor. 5:3). And second, the constantive aorist *hemarton* signifies the particular historical event in which humanity sinned collectively in the primal sin of Adam. Further, verse 19 states, ‘Through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners.’ The aorist passive of *kathistemie* (‘appoint,’ ‘make’) may simply mean ‘because.’ . . . The meaning is that ‘as the many became sinners through the disobedience of the one man, so the many become righteous through the obedience of the one.’²²

The phrase **because all sinned** does not mean just that “all have sinned” sometime in their lives, thus referring to individual sins. Paul takes his readers back to the beginning of human history, to the one sin that brought death upon us all. The unity of the human race is demonstrated here. In Adam, we all sinned (see 1 Cor. 15:22). The result is physical and spiritual death for everyone. From Adam we inherited {Romans 5 though is about imputed sin} a sin nature. Furthermore, as a result of our sin in Adam, we face a common judgment—death.²³

If Paul had stopped with the observation that death came to all men because all sinned, we would be left with the impression that all sinned and deserved death because they followed the example of Adam. But subsequent statements in the passage make it abundantly clear that the connection between Adam’s sin and death and what has befallen the race is far closer than that. Paul can say that the many died because of “the trespass of the one man” (v. 15). Clearly the gist of his teaching is that just as mankind has become involved in sin and death through Adam, it has the remedy of righteousness and life only in Christ.²⁴

See also *New Bible Dictionary* article at the end of notes.

We could paraphrase the transition at 5:12 as follows: “in order to accomplish this [namely, that God has promised to save all those who are justified and reconciled through Christ], there exists a life-giving union between Christ and his own that is similar to, but more powerful than, the death-producing union between Adam and all his own.”²⁵

²²Gordon Lewis and Bruce Demarest, *Integrative Theology*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990, Vol. 2) pp. 201-201.

²³*The Nelson Study Bible*, Earl D. Rodmacher, General Editor, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997) p.1887.

²⁴EBC, Harrison, p. 61-62.

²⁵ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 318.

Implications/Application



In Adam our world got messed up (all our world, mankind and all creation)

Does it appear unjust of God to condemn man for the sin of Adam? Does it seem unfair that man should be born with a sin nature because of what Adam did?

Does it appear unjust of God to forgive, justify, and reconcile men because of what Christ did?

2 Corinthians 5:19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (ESV)

Modern readers are often disturbed or even offended at the idea that Adam, millennia ago, might have done something to affect all people who have lived since him. The Christian philosopher Pascal called this idea—“original sin”—an “offense to reason.” However, while it does not necessarily remove all the offense, it is helpful to remember that ancient people—and Jews in particular—had a strong notion of “corporate solidarity.” Jews believed that people were bound to one another in various relationships and that the actions of one person could have a determinative influence on all those to whom they were related.

The classic Old Testament example is Achan, whose sin in keeping for himself some of the plunder from the battle of Jericho is also said to be “Israel’s sin” (**Josh. 7:1, 11**) and the reason why God’s anger burns against Israel as a whole (**5:1**). Some scholars have taken the notion too far, suggesting that Hebrew thinking merged individuals into a corporate personality. But the importance of corporate thinking for ancient Jews is generally acknowledged and should correct the tendency in the modern West to look at such texts from too “individualistic” a perspective.²⁶

5:13-14

Parenthesis Considered

*The effects of Adam’s act is **surpassed** by the effects of Christ’s act.*

5:13-14 Explanation of the effects of Adam’s sin

The effects of Adam’s sin was that death reigned even before the time of the Law and even though no one sinned in the likeness of Adam’s sin.

The effects of Adam’s sin prior to the Law 5:13

Before the Law was given there couldn’t be Law breaking, there couldn’t be condemnation for Law breaking, but judgment was being received.

Because of the connection with Adam, men were condemned

Likeness of Adam’s Sin 5:14

“sinning” ἁμαρτάνω [*hamartano*]– to miss the mark

παράβασις [*parabasis*] –Transgression, going aside

Transgression, going aside, stepping over (5:14). In the New Testament it is the word used specifically to denote sin in relationship to the law.

So before the Law, people missed the mark. That is, they did not match up to God’s standard. But the standard was not clearly given until the Law was given. After the Law, man not only missed the mark, but were considered rebellious because of transgressing, stepping over the boundary that had been revealed.

Death

²⁶ Douglas Moo, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Volume 3* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002) p. 31.

Death ruled from Adam to Moses

All, even those who didn't sin in the likeness of the transgression of Adam (breaking a commandment)

The fact that they died was an indication that mankind was being punished.

Why? Because of their connection to Adam.

Again 5:18 helps clarify this, “as one trespass led to condemnation for all men” (ESV)

Comparing Translations

Romans 5:14 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. (ESV)

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (NASB)

Romans 5:14 Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. (NIV)

5:15-21

The gracious gift is not like Adam's transgression, for the latter brought death, judgment, condemnation upon all and made sinners of all, while the former brought overflowing grace, justification, and the opportunity to reign in life through Jesus Christ (5:15-19).²⁷

The law came in so that transgression may increase, and it did, but just as sin reigned in death so also grace multiplied all the more and continues to reign through righteousness to eternal life (5:20-21).²⁸

5:15-17 Explanation of differences between Adam and Christ

*The abundance of grace **surpasses** the **devastating** effects of Adam's sin.*

παράπτωμα [*paraptoma*] trespass, a false step 5:15-18, 20

States Results: Fall verse Standing 5:15²⁹

One man's Fall → many died

God's grace and gift → cause many to abound

Grace and Gift

“But the gift is not like the transgression” –we get more

Suggest “that the work of Christ not merely canceled the effects of Adam's transgression so as to put man back in to a state of innocence under a probation such as their progenitor faced, but rather gives man far more than he lost in Adam, more indeed than Adam ever had.”³⁰

The Gift includes: righteousness (5:17), life (5:18); and is eternal life (5:21).

As illustrated by Wayne Stiles³¹

The reward of such faith is the gift of righteousness and the privilege to “reign” (*basileuvsousin*—future tense) with Christ in eternal life. Adam's sin is reckoned to be sin to all, but Christ's righteous act is reckoned to be righteousness to all “*who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness*” (see figure 1).

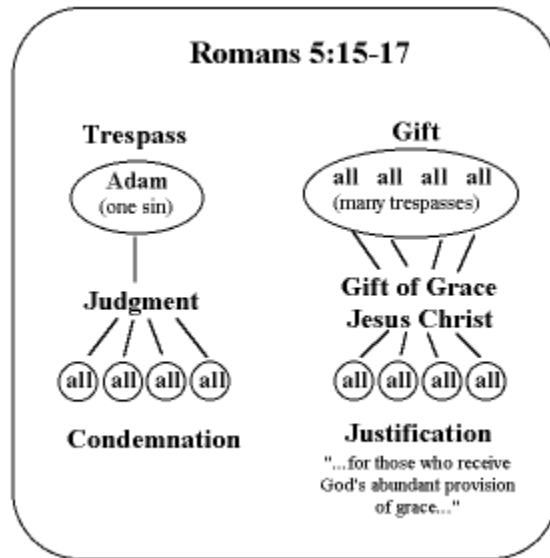
²⁷ Greg Herrick, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Righteousness*, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1999-2002.

²⁸ Greg Herrick, *Romans: The Gospel of God's Righteousness*, Biblical Studies Press, www.bible.org, 1999-2002.

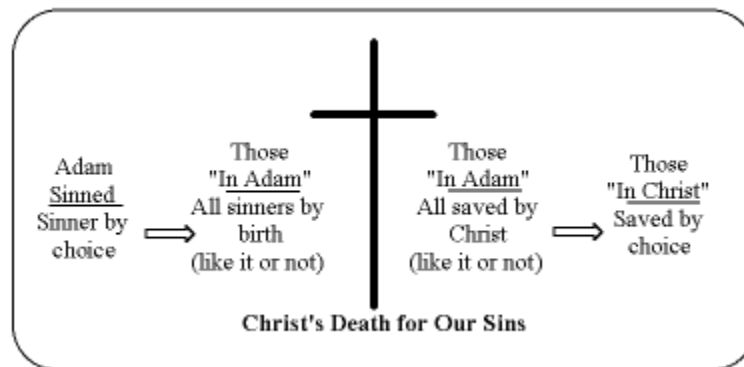
²⁹ These conclusions from Dr. Harold W. Hoehner's outline (DTS, Spring 1991, Exegesis of Romans 206, unpublished class notes)

³⁰ EBC, Harrison, p. 63.

³¹ Wayne Stiles, *I'm Fallen and I Can't Get Up* (An Exegetical on Romans 5:12-19), www.bible.org



It could be asserted that this doctrine is clearly unfair. One might say, "I was born a sinner, not of my own choosing, yet I am required to receive Christ in order to be righteous?" The same could be said of Adam. Adam could say, "I was made perfect, not of my own choosing, yet I am required to sin in order to be a sinner?" Man was created to be right with his Creator, so because man willfully chose to sin, God graciously made provision for man to be reconciled and righteous. It can be demonstrated through figure 2.



5:16-17 Positional Effect: Condemnation or Righteous Standing
 Judgment of one → results in state of condemnation (judicial sentence)
 "brought condemnation"
 See also 5:18

Free gift following many trespasses of the many who Fall → results in state of righteousness (judicial sentence)

"in Christ not only is the hold of death, established by Adam's sin, effectively broken, but because of Christ's redeeming work the believer is able to look forward to reigning in life through Christ. This, of course, implies participation in the resurrection. Believers will have a share in the Lord's kingdom and glory."³²

The actions of Adam and Christ, then are similar in having "epochal" significance. But they are not equal in power, for Christ's act is able completely to overcome the effects of Adam's. Anyone who "receives the gift" that God offers in Christ finds security and joy in knowing that the reign of death has been completely and finally overcome by the reign of grace, righteousness, and eternal life (cf. vv. 17, 21).³³

³²EBC, Harrison, p. 64.

³³ Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 315.

Natural verse / Supernatural Way

One man's fall → death reigned

God's grace and gift → recipients shall reign in life

5:18-19 Proposition Completed

The **representative** act of one brings **consequences** on all

“Consequently” – by way of summary

Trespass–παράπτωμα [*paraptoma*], a false step, indicates a deliberate breaking of a command, “The basic meaning of the word. . . is to convey the idea of falling aside or going astray. ‘It refers directly to the disruption of man’s relation to God through his fault.’”³⁴

Condemnation

κατάκριμα [*katakrima*]—penalty, condemnation, occurs only three time in NT all in Romans 5:16, 18 and, 8:1; “the punishment following a judicial sentence.” (1:18 has the idea, but uses “wrath.)

παρακοή [*parakoa*] disobedience (5:19)

the many were made sinners

“made sinners”

ἀμαρτωλοὶ κατεστάθησαν (aorist passive indicative) –καθίστημι [*kathistami*]—make, cause, appoint, –stand constituted as

the many will be made righteous

Does not teach universalism

Paul has established in chapter 4 the need absence of work and the presence of faith for salvation.

A point also made in 3:22, 26, 28; 5:1, 2

That righteousness, Paul says in verse 18, "resulted in justification of life to all men." That righteousness of Jesus became the basis of our acceptance with our Maker and our Judge. Christ's righteousness is counted as our righteousness because we are connected to him. We are in him (see 2 Corinthians 5:21). That's what justification means.

Verse 19 supports this by saying it another way to make sure we get the main point: "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous." The difference here from verse 18 is that the word "obedience" is used instead of the word "righteous act." This is to show that the nature of the righteousness we are talking about in verse 18 is compliance with the will of God. Adam did not comply and we were counted or appointed sinners in him. Christ did comply with his Father's will and we are counted righteous (obedient) in him.

So you see the point: **Our righteousness before God, our justification, is not based on what we have done, but on what Christ did. His righteous act, his obedience is counted as ours. We are made or counted or appointed as righteous in him. It is a real righteousness, and it is really ours, but it is ours only by imputation – or to use Paul's language from earlier in the letter: We are "reckoned righteous."**

Who Is This "We?"

Now a concluding word on who this "we" is. And here you should ask: Am I included in this justification? In verse 19 those who are "made righteous" are called "the many": "so through the obedience of the One *the many* will be made righteous." In verse 18 those who have "justification of life" are "all men." "Through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life *to all men*." Who are these "all men"? Does it mean that every human being who is in Adam will also be justified so that no one will be lost and there is no such thing as

³⁴EBC, Harrison, p. 64.

eternal punishment for anyone? This is called universalism.

I don't think so, for several reasons.

1) Verse 17 speaks of "*receiving*" the gift of righteousness as though some do and some don't. Verse 17: "For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more *those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness* will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ." That does not sound like everybody does receive it.

2) "Justification of life to all men" in Romans 5:18 does not mean all humans are justified, because Paul teaches clearly in this very book and elsewhere (2 Thessalonians 1:9) that there is eternal punishment and all humans are not justified. For example, in Romans 2:5 he says, "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," and then in verses 7 and 8 he contrasts this wrath with "eternal life" and so shows that it is eternal wrath, not temporary wrath. So there will be some who are not justified but come under the wrath of God forever and others who have eternal life.

3) "Justification of life to all men" in Romans 5:18 does not mean all humans are justified, because in all of Romans up until now justification is not automatic as if every human receives it, but it is "by faith." Romans 5:1, "Therefore, having been *justified by faith* . . ." Romans 3:28, "For we maintain that a man is *justified by faith* apart from works of the Law."

So here is the message for us this morning: Killers and thieves and liars and fornicators and adulterers and coveters and blasphemers, that is, all human beings, whatever you have done, may be put right with God, not on the basis of your own righteous acts, but on the basis of Christ's righteous act, not on the basis of your own obedience, but on the basis of Christ's obedience, and not because you are human, but because you believe.³⁵

Proposition Completed Romans 5:18-19 <i>Consequently Therefore</i>		
Potential: All (v. 18) objective		
Representative Acts	Range in Design	Results in Eternity
through one transgression	to all men	Condemnation
through one righteous act		Righteousness of life
Actual: Many (v. 19) subjective		
Moral Dispositions of the Agents	Range	More Immediate Effect in Time
through the disobedience of one	the many	constituted sinners
through the obedience of One		constituted righteous

5:20-21 Problem Considered

*The entrance of the Law revealed the **sinfulness** of man's sin but this is **surpassed** by the **sufficiency** of God's grace and results in eternal life.*

Purpose of Law: to reveal sinfulness of man's sin 5:20

The Law pointed to the need for redemption because it revealed sin. (Paul will deal extensively with this in chapter 7)

positive benefits 7:12, (also: restrain evil 6:15; 1 Timothy 1:9-11)

“came in” –pointing to the temporary nature (see Galatians 3:19)
increase=superabounded

³⁵ John Piper, sermons *Adam, Christ, and Justification, Part 4*
http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/BySeries/2/24_Adam_Christ_and_Justification_Part_4/

Purpose of grace: to reveal sufficiency of God’s grace 5:21
 reign

Same word used in Romans 6:12

	Condemnation	Justification
Source (Person)	Adam	Christ
Extent	Total	Total
Cause	Imputed Sin	Imputed Righteousness
Nature	Depraved	Depraved
Result	Sin reigns	Grace reigns

Key Point

Sin affects **everyone** and **everything**

Justification is available to **everyone**, **everywhere**



What do we learn
 About God

Gracious
 Just



Act on it

This passage challenged our sense of fairness, but in the end, this passage and the doctrine of original sin not only are the best explanation for the biblical teaching on the universal nature of human sinfulness but also provides the best explanation for the observation of the history of mankind and our experience.

Mankind, as a whole are bound to sin’s control.

But this is not a passage of “bad news” but of great news. Yes, mankind is bound to sin, but the power of sin is not as strong as the power of God’s ability in Christ’s cross work to break the bonds of sin and provide complete salvation.

If we do not like the doctrine of the imputation of Adam’s sin on us, then what right do we have to claim the imputation of Christ’s righteousness on us?

Boasting With Respect to the Past: Exchanging our Identity (See more in next lesson)

I have always been amused by the eagerness of the Jews of Jesus' day to identify themselves with Abraham, to be viewed as his children. I have noted that none of these Jews ever wanted to be identified with Jacob (whom God named Israel, Genesis 35:10). Paul has shown in chapter 4 that any Jew or Gentile can be identified as a son of Abraham, but only by faith and not by works. Now, Paul turns to the matter of one's identity and shows that it is a matter of one's choice between two individuals, Adam or Jesus Christ, the "first Adam," so to speak, or the "last" (see 1 Corinthians 15:45).

Did the Jews wish to boast in Abraham as their father, in such a way as to set themselves apart and above others? Let them go all the way back, to their first father, indeed, to the father of all men. Our righteousness cannot be derived from one of our forefathers, like Abraham, but sin is a different matter. The sinfulness of all mankind, Jew or Gentile, shows us that the problem of sin must be traced back to its roots. The roots of sin and death are to be found in our first father, Adam. It was his one sin which has resulted in the sinfulness of the race, and in death for all men. All men, by virtue of their birth, are the "children of Adam." As such, they are under the bondage of sin and are subject to death.³⁶

The gospel is good news because it offers men an exchange of identity. The federal government has a witness protection program. Those who enter into this program are offered a new identity, with their past wiped out. They can start life all over, regardless of what they were before. God has a far better offer: men may change their identity, from being a "son of Adam," under sentence of death, to being a "son of God," destined for eternal life. Men are what they are--sinners, subject to death--because of who they are, the sons of Adam. But no one needs to remain a son of Adam. By faith in Jesus Christ, any man, woman, or child can renounce their old identity in Adam, and become a son of God through Jesus Christ. This is the good news of the gospel.

Adam's sin, and its consequences, were, in one sense, a type of what would happen in Christ, the "last Adam." But on the other hand, his sin and its consequences were quite different in two ways. First, the work of Christ was much greater than that of Adam. Second, the work of Christ on man's behalf was for man's good, while Adam's act was destructive. Adam committed one sin, and this brought sin and death on the whole race. Jesus bore all of man's sins, and as a result He made salvation and life possible for all men, through faith in Him. Adam's sin brought misery and death; Jesus' sacrifice brought with it life and hope of the glory of God.

The Law had a role in all of this. The sins of men could only be "prosecuted," as it were, if they were defined as sin. The Law was given to define sin, to cause it to be clearly seen, and thus even to increase. The increase was not to promote sin, but to deal it a death blow, through the work of Jesus Christ.³⁷

Imputation (New Bible Dictionary) The first sin of Adam had unique significance for the whole human race (Rom. 5:12, 14-19; 1 Cor. 15:22). Here there is sustained emphasis upon the one trespass of the one man as that by which sin, condemnation and death came upon all mankind. The sin is identified as 'the transgression of Adam', 'the trespass of the one', 'one trespass', 'the disobedience of the one', and there can be no doubt that the first trespass of Adam is intended. Hence the clause 'because all men sinned' in Rom. 5:12 refers to the sin of all in the sin of Adam. It cannot refer to the actual sins of all men, far less to the hereditary depravity with which all are afflicted, for in v. 12 the clause in question clearly says why 'death spread to all men', and in the succeeding verses the 'one man's trespass' (v. 17) is stated to be the reason for the universal reign of death. If the same sin were not intended, Paul would be affirming two different things with reference to the same subject in the same context. The only explanation the two forms of statement is that all sinned in the sin of Adam. The same inference is to be drawn from 1 Cor. 15:22, 'in Adam all die'. If all die in Adam, it is because all sinned in Adam.

According to Scripture the kind of solidarity with Adam which explains the participation of all in Adam's sin is the kind of solidarity which Christ sustains to those united to him. The parallel in Rom. 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:22, 45-49 between Adam and Christ indicates the same type of relationship in both cases, and we have no need to posit anything more ultimate in the case of Adam and the race than we find in the case of Christ and his people. In the latter it is representative headship, and this is all that is necessary to ground the solidarity of all in the sin of Adam. To say that the sin of Adam is imputed to all is but to say that all were involved in his sin by reason of his representative headship.

While the imputation of Adam's sin was immediate according to the evidence of the relevant passages, the judgment of condemnation passed upon Adam, and hence upon all men in him, is in Scripture seen as confirmed in its justice and propriety by every man's subsequent moral experience. Thus Rom. 3:23 'all have sinned' is amply

³⁶ That we are subject to death because of Adam's sin is seen by the fact that all men from Adam's day to the time the Law was given through Moses died, and yet the Law was not in force and thus they could not be indicted for their sins. The only sin of which they could be guilty was to disobey the command given Adam, not to eat the forbidden fruit--and none of them sinned in this way. See Romans 4:15; 5:12-14.

³⁷ Robert Deffinbaugh, ©1996 by Community Bible Chapel, 210 Abrams Road, Richardson, TX 75081, <http://www.bible.org>.

proved by reference to the specific, overt sins of Jews and Gentiles (Rom. 1:18-3:8) before Paul makes any reference whatever to imputation in Adam. In similar vein Scripture universally relates man's ultimate judgment before God to his 'works' which fall short of God's standards (*cf.* Mt. 7:21-27; 13:41; 25:31-46; Lk. 3:9; Rom. 2:5-10; Rev. 20:11-14).

Rejection of this doctrine betrays not only failure to accept the witness of the relevant passages but also failure to appreciate the close relation which exists between the principle which governs our relation to Adam and the governing principle of God's operation in salvation. The parallel between Adam as the first man and Christ as the last Adam shows that the accomplishment of salvation in Christ is based on the same operating principle as that by which we have become sinners and the heirs of death. The history of mankind is finally subsumed under two complexes, sin-condemnation-death and righteousness-justification-life. The former arises from our union with Adam, the latter from union with Christ. These are the two orbits within which we live and move. God's government of men is directed in terms of these relationships. If we do not reckon with Adam we are thereby excluded from a proper understanding of Christ. All who die in Adam; all who are made alive are made alive in Christ.

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