

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

March 8, 2023

Series - *The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul*

The Letter to the Romans

The Righteousness of God

Text – Romans 5:12 - 21 – *The Offering vs the Offence*

Introduction

In this second half of chapter 5, a thorough comparison and contrast is made between the offence of Adam and the offering (the sinless life and sacrifice on the Cross of Calvary) of Christ.

In Romans 5:14, Adam is called “the figure of Him that was to come.” Adam was a type, or picture, of Jesus Christ. Adam came from the earth, but Jesus is the Lord from heaven (1 Cor. 15:47). Adam was tested in a Garden, surrounded by beauty and love; Jesus was tempted in a wilderness, and He died on a cruel cross surrounded by hatred and ugliness. Adam was a thief and was cast out of Paradise; but Jesus Christ turned to a thief and said, “Today shalt thou be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). The Old Testament is “the book of the generations of Adam” (Genesis 5:1) and it ends with “a curse” (Malachi 4:6). The New Testament is “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ” (Matthew 1:1) and it ends with “no more curse” (Revelation 22:3).¹

While considering this section, pay careful attention to the following words and phrases:

“one” – used eleven times.

One man – Adam – adversely affected every other human being on the planet, including future generations. Christ also, as one man, impacted the entire human race – past, present, and future. Note – I am identified with both Christ and Adam.

Preaching Point – One man’s life impacts many others.

This may seem like a trite point compared with the magnitude of the subject that we are dealing with, yet it is true, nonetheless.

“reign” – used five times – the idea here is that both Adam and Christ reign over a kingdom. Adam is the federal head of fallen man, and Christ reigns over all the redeemed.

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 530). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Adam was given a kingdom and lost it because of his sin. Christ is the King over a new Creation.

“much more” – used also five times

The idea of this passage is that there was a lot of damage caused to all of Creation, and mankind in particular, because of the offence of Adam; but the offering of Christ regained what was lost and gave us so much more. One man messed things up badly, but another Man came along and made things right. By the way, don't be too hard on Adam, because you or I would have done the same thing.

In this portion there are also many other words that are repeated often: sin, death, Law, judgment, and condemnation, which are all associated with the offence of Adam. On the other side of the balance sheet, we see many words and phrases that are associated with Christ: free gift, grace, righteousness, justification, eternal life.

I. Adam Brought Death; Christ Brings Life (vs. 12 – 18)

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" (Romans 5:12)

Adam introduced sin to the world, and with sin came death (“for the wages of sin is death”), and then death was passed on through Adam’s sin nature to every one of his descendants. The death spoken of here was not just a physical death, but also an eternal separation from God ultimately in the Lake of Fire.

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death." (Revelation 20:14)

Note – “for that all have sinned”. Men are classified as “sinners” because they have an inherent sin nature, passed down from Adam:

"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." (Psalms 51:5)

But men can also be called sinners because they sin by their own volition or choice. Thus, men are sinners because they sin, but also men sin because they are sinners. Someone once said, “dogs bark, cats meow, and sinners sin”. The sin referred to here, however is the sin of Adam, which was imputed to the accounts of all men. It is not our sin nature or

our individual sins that condemn us initially, but rather our sin in Adam; that is Adam's sin transferred to us. Babies die, not because they have committed sin, but because they are guilty in Adam.

J. Vernon McGee said this regarding man and sin:

You and I are sinners, as we have said, in four different ways. (1) We are sinners because we commit acts of sin. Also, (2) we're sinners by nature (sin doesn't make us sinners, but we sin because we have that nature). (3) We are in the state of sin. God has declared the entire human family under sin. (4) Finally, you and I are also sinners by imputation. That is, Adam acted for the human race because he was the head of it.²

McGee's fourth point above can also be seen in Hebrews 7:9 & 10:

"And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him." (Hebrews 7:9-10)

Hebrews tells us that Abraham's tithe to Melchisedec was imputed to Levi generations later. The same thing is true of Adam's sin; it was imputed to all of Adam's descendants. Adam was a representative of the entire human race. "Levi payed tithes in Abraham", and I sinned in Adam.

A. Sin Predated the Law (vs. 13 – 14)

*"(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
(Romans 5:13)*

Verses 13 – 17 are parenthetical describing how it was that all men were considered guilty because of Adam's sin. More importantly, however, the parenthetical statement goes beyond explaining the offence of Adam and contrasts it with the offering of Christ and the life that became available through it.

"until the law" – Before there was a law, there was still sin. The Law did not produce sin, it just exposed sin. Dr. Bob Gray used to say, "Rules don't make rebels, they just expose rebels." Cain killed his brother, but there was no law at the time that stated, "Thou shalt not kill". In Noah's day the earth was filled with wickedness, but nobody had broken the

² McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Epistles (Romans 1-8)* (electronic ed., Vol. 42, p. 96). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Ten Commandments because there weren't any Ten Commandments yet, but there was still sin.

"sin is not imputed". This does not mean that people who have no laws are innocent, it just means that the introduction of Law brought about a reckoning, or an accounting of sins, increasing the awareness of many sins.

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude (ὁμοίωμα – homoiōma) of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." (Romans 5:14)

"Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses" – Even without the Law, there was still sin, and sin brings death.

The word "similitude" means type or likeness. We haven't done the same thing that Adam did, but we have sinned, nonetheless.

Adam is a "figure" of all human beings because his sin was imputed to us all, and his sin nature was transmitted to us all.

Adam is also a "figure" or type of Christ in that he was born without a sin nature, and he was a federal head of all who are born in the human race. Christ is the federal Head of all who are born-again through faith in Him.

Note this comment by Warren Wiersbe about Federal Headship:

Skeptics sometimes ask, "Was it fair for God to condemn the whole world just because of one man's disobedience?" The answer, of course, is that it was not only fair; but it was also wise and gracious. To begin with, if God had tested each human being individually, the result would have been the same: disobedience. But even more important, by condemning the human race through one man (Adam), God was then *able to save the human race through one Man (Jesus Christ)*! Each of us is racially united to Adam, so that his deed affects us. (See Heb. 7:9–10 for an example of this racial headship.) The fallen angels cannot be saved because they are not a race. They sinned individually and were judged individually. There can be no representative to take their judgment for them and save them. But because you

and I were lost in Adam, our *racial* head, we can be saved in Christ, the Head of the new creation. God's plan was both gracious and wise.³

B. Christ Pre-empted the Law (vs. 15 – 18)

Sin brings death, but Christ gives life to those who receive His gift of redemption.

"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." (Romans 5:15)

Notice the phrase - "but not as the offence, so also is the free gift." This phrase would not make any sense at all in any other context. It doesn't sound like the phrase "Not as" should ever be used with "so also", but here it makes perfect sense. In one sense Christ's gift is absolutely nothing like Adam's offence – they are completely opposite; but in another sense, Christ's gift was like Adam's offence in that they were both acts committed by individuals that affected countless multitudes. Adam's offence brought death to many, and Christ's gift brought life to many.

"And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Corinthians 15:45-49)

"And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification." (Romans 5:16)

Here we see "not as" with "so is". Adam's one offence brought judgment and therefore condemnation. Christ one act brings justification from many offences.

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)" (Romans 5:17)

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 528). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Because of Adam's sin, death reigned, but now because of the gift of Christ, those who believe will reign:

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

(Romans 8:37)

"abundance of grace" – unmerited or undeserved favor, and lots of it.

*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt!
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilled.
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within;
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin.*

"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."

(Romans 5:18)

One of the tenants of Calvinism is that man does not have a free will, which means that God chooses some for salvation and some for damnation. There are many verses in the Bible that refute the idea that God is somehow willing that some men should not come to repentance and thereby perish, but I think this verse is one of the best. Notice that "all men" were condemned by the sin of Adam, but also the gift came upon "all men" by the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Whatever is meant by "all men" in the first part of the verse, must be what is also meant in the second part of the verse. The Calvinist would claim that "all men" regarding salvation would mean only the elect, but then that would also mean that the "all men" who were condemned because of Adam's sin were only a select few, which doesn't make any sense at all.

This does not mean that "all men" will be saved, but it does mean that the free gift came upon all men, meaning it is available to all men; but they must receive the free gift as stated in v. 17.

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:13)

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1:12)

II. Adam's Disobedience Made Me a Sinner; Christ's Obedience Made Me Righteous (v. 19)

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

Notice the parallelism used in these verses: one with one; many with many; all with all.

III. The Law Brought More Sins; Christ Gives More Grace (vs. 20 – 21)

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:" (Romans 5:20)

The Law caused the number of sins committed by each of us to abound, at least as far as our knowledge of them; but with all those sins came more grace:

"But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4:6)

As we will see in the next chapter, this does not give us liberty to sin willfully. Sin is still sin, and God hates it. Why would we want to continue sinning when we know that God hates it, and Christ had to die for it for us to be forgiven from it.

"That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 5:21)

Grace will reign victoriously over sin!

You cannot help *being* "in Adam," for this came by your first birth over which you had no control. But you can help *staying* "in Adam," for you can experience a second birth—a new birth from above—that will put you "in Christ." This is why Jesus said, "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7).⁴

⁴ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 530). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.