

Lesson 9 - Romans 5:12-21

PART 2: JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN THE GOSPEL 1:16 - 11:36

COMMENTS ON CHAPTER 5:12-21

JESUS AND ADAM

The balance of this chapter consists of a comparison of Adam’s sin verses Jesus’ death on the cross. It has truly said that Adam is a type of Christ, although they are most striking in the points of contrast.

| Adam | Christ |
|---|---|
| 1. Father and Head of the Human Race | 1. Spiritual head and progenitor of the saved. |
| 2. Brought Shame and Death upon mankind | 2. Made possible life and glory for mankind |
| 3. Bride was taken from him in sleep | 3. Christ’s bride was purchased from him in his sleep of death. |
| 4. One recorded sin brought him ruin | 4. Christ’s sinless life made a way for him to die for mankind. |
| 5. Death followed Adam act | 5. Life followed Christ’s death. |

12 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:

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 them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Through Adam’s first transgression sin and death was passed upon mankind. Because Adam sinned all mankind was cut off from the tree of life and thus everyone after Adam became subject to physical death. We have suffered the consequences of Adam’s sin, but we have not inherited the guilt of Adam’s sin. Sin entered the world through Adam, but it was each man’s decision to rebel against God that causes us to be lost. What is significant about this is that all mankind who is in a position to commit sin have fallen into its grip. Babies and small children have no understanding of sin thus cannot be sinners, neither can adults who lack the mental capacity to understand sin. (Ezekiel 18:20; 1 John 3:4)

Death referred to here is spiritual death. The latter part of verse 12 shows spiritual death passing upon all men who sin.

We need to keep in mind that Paul has been talking about the position of the Law of Moses in the scheme of redemption. This shows that there was a law in effect before the Law of Moses. It was a “patriarchal system, God spoke to mankind through their heads of households the fathers and received the worship of mankind through sacrifices. There was a clear moral law in place. Examples of this, Noah was warned about taking innocent human life, Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed for wickedness, and Joseph understood that he would be sinning against God if he committed adultery with Potipher’s wife in Genesis 39.

Even though there was no written law, men continued to sin against God. God gave com-

mandments personally through the fathers, prophets, and priests. Men continued to sin, and as a punishment were cut off from God. Only a small handful or remnant, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and etc., were saved because of their faith in Jehovah. Adam as shown in the above chart is an anti-type or shadow of Christ. This term type or shadow is a printer's term you had the type that was kept in cases the lowest case had the small letters or lower case while the case above had the capital letters or was the upper case. When you looked at that type you had a reversal of what would show up on the paper when printed what you had on the paper was the anti-type and what you would see on the type. Just as Adam's one sin brought sin and death (separation from God) into the world, the righteous act of one man, Christ would bring many back to spiritual life.

15 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.

16 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.

17 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.)

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.

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

Christ's sacrifice is different from Adam's sin. Paul is going to emphasize the nature of grace in this section. Adam got what he deserved, justice. He was warned by God, "in the day you eat of it you shall surely die." (Genesis 2:17). God's punishment was just. Christ's sacrifice epitomizes the grace (unmerited favor) of God. It provides what mankind desperately needs, an escape from the penalty of sin, but could never deserve that escape.

Verse 18 is what is characterized in the legal realm as a *qal vahomer* ("arguing from the lesser to the greater"). Paul is saying Adam's sin produced such a terrible penalty that the much greater act of redemption that Christ gave on the cross has even a far greater effect. The result garnered by Christ's sacrifice makes it qualitatively far superior to the destructive power of Adam's sin. Paul then says that the justification gained through the death of Jesus is far greater than the condemnation that was wrought by Adam's sin. It is a general principle that it is easier to destroy than to rebuild. The fact is that it was a simple matter for Adam to make a conscience decision to rebel against God. It then took an act of intervention by Jehovah God to make a way for mankind to return to God without the stain of sin.

Verse 19 Paul repeats the same argument. Just as through one man, Adam, many were made sinners (because sin was released upon the world) by one man's act, Christ, many would be made righteous (because a way of justification was given to the world.)

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

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

Why was the Law of Moses given in the first place. Two possibilities. 1. The sheer number of commands in the Law of Moses would obviously cause more sins. 2. The Law was given to show the awful nature of sin in the eyes of God. It would show us just how bad sin was to God. (Romans 7:13)

Among those who have little awareness of sin there is little appreciation for the greatness

of God's grace. Those under the Law of Moses should have understood keenly the inability to conform to God's law perfectly, thus loving and embracing the grace of God on the Cross. Just as sin was a tyrant, condemning all who committed to it separation from God, grace would be a loving ruler, granting eternal life to all those who would come to Christ.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR ROMANS 5:12-21

I. ANSWER THE QUESTIONS GIVING SCRIPTURE REFERENCES.

1. What entered into the world by Adam's transgression? _____

2. What was Adam a figure of? _____

3. What abounded through the law? _____

4. Are we guilty of Adam's sin? _____

5. What do we suffer as a result of Adam's sin? _____

6. Who will be raised from the dead at the judgment day? _____

7. God has made provision for the salvation of who? _____

8. What does grace reign through? _____

9. What was the purpose of the law? _____

10. __ What is the death of 5:12-14? _____

II. DEFINE THESE TERMS:

1. Death _____

2. Eternal Life _____

3. Free gift _____

4. Condemnation _____

5. Transgression _____

III. RESEARCH

In what way are Adam and Christ alike? In what ways do they differ? _____

IV. THOUGHT QUESTION

What things can justification be attributed? List as many as you can.. _____
