

ROMANS 5:12-21 "For As In Adam All Die, So In Christ All Will Be Made Alive."

Romans 5:12-21 ¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so 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 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. ¹⁵ But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many. ¹⁶ The gift is not like *that which came* through the one who sinned; for on the one hand the judgment *arose* from one *transgression* resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand the free gift *arose* from many transgressions resulting in justification. 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. ¹⁸ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. ¹⁹ 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. ²⁰ The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, ²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

After reading a passage like this, one may ask the question: What did he say?

And yet this is one of the most important passages in all of scripture. And so it's imperative we understand it and embrace it.

If you or I were writing an explanation of an important topic we might be given points off if we were to write such a paragraph the way Paul does here. Not only is it a run-on sentence, it has a parenthesis in the middle of the thought which seems to be taking us in a different direction until it finally comes back to the main point.

This has a tendency to add to the confusion. But, remember, this paragraph is inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. There is no mistake here; no points to be taken off.

In fact, it was Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God who wrote in 2Ti 3:16-17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

What may seem somewhat confusing to we English speaking Christians was not confusing to the Greek speaking people of Paul's time. *Koine* Greek was the language of the N.T. It was the common Greek which all understood.

And so what we must do when coming to a passage like the one before us is to go slowly and methodically to arrive at the thought which is intended by the Holy Spirit.

Actually the main idea is quite simple. There are two main points:

- 1) In Adam all men are sinners, separated from God.
- 2) In Christ all who believe are reconciled to God.

This is shown in Rom 5:18 "Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men."

That's where the simplicity ends and the profound plan of God's grace opens up new horizons for everyone who understands and places his or her faith in this truth.

This is basic truth upon which our eternal existence stands or falls. By basic I don't mean it is the most easy to fully comprehend, because it is spiritual and eternal, but rather it is the basic or foundational doctrine without which salvation could not be possible.

Let's start with Rom 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--" and then you jump to verse 19 which then gives the antithesis..... "so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."

What goes on between verse 12 and verse 19 adds to the discussion and broadens the scope of this truth.

With that as our starting point let's look closely at this truth. We're told that sin entered the world through one man, who is Adam. This doesn't mean that sin didn't exist during the time of Adam's innocence because sin existed the moment Satan chose to rebel against God, which, in all likelihood, happened shortly after the creation of Adam, since up to that point on the sixth day all was deemed very good by God.

Genesis 1:31 ³¹ God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

When it says, in verse 31, God saw all that He had made, this includes everything He created, including the angel sometimes known as the "Morning Star" or Lucifer, later to be known as Satan after his rebellion.

And so, on day six and presumably day seven, all was well in God's creation including all the angels He created for our good and His glory.

But sometime after day seven, subsequent to Adam's rebellion after being tempted by Satan, all of mankind was to be affected by the sin of this one man. The question is how did Adam's sin effect you and me?

This is very important because it allows us to see that sin had actual consequences attached to it. And by the way, what is being said here, and is taught elsewhere, is that it was one sin, not the collective sins of Adam which brought these consequences.

That one sin was taking of a fruit which was forbidden by God.

Gen 2:15-17 "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.

Eve had not yet been created when the command was given to Adam. She would learn of it later, but the burden of responsibility fell upon Adam.

We know the rest of the story. Eve was tempted by Satan who embodied the serpent. She partook of the fruit and then gave it to Adam who ate willingly.

But despite her act God's word clearly tells us it was through the disobedience of the one man who was responsible for mankind. And so for the first time in human history sin entered mankind and the result was just as God spoke of it in Gen.2:18..... Death.

This death was two-fold. We know this by the very nature of what transpired after the sin of Adam. He did not finally die physically, but his relationship with God was cut off and therefore death must also be understood as a cutting off in a spiritual sense.

It wouldn't be until 930 years later that the body of Adam would cease to exercise life. (Gen.5:3-5) And so death is not only seen as a cutting off of spiritual life it is definitely a cutting off of physical life.

Sometimes there's the confusion of thinking that from the day Adam was created by God from the dust of the earth that his physical body was prone to die. This isn't the case.

Had the first man and woman passed the test, by obeying God, they would not have suffered the penalty of death. They would have lived forever and their offspring, which would include you and me, would have lived forever in a state of true holiness apart from ever sinning.

This is why I have said before that the expression: "Death is a natural part of life" is false. There is nothing natural about death. Death is an intrusion on life which is one reason people fight so hard to keep it.

To say that death is a natural part of life is to miss the horrendous tragedy of what sin accomplished. Sin necessitated death. The wages of SIN is death.

This is why, when someone dies, grief is so natural. It's the acknowledgment that the penalty of sin is still in existence because of the sin of one man. Grief acknowledges that the cutting off of life is anything but natural.

Keep in mind that God created us for life, not death. And so death, which escapes no one, cannot be overcome. That's the grief of it all. Knowing that death could have been avoided; it didn't need to invade and cut off life.

But God is just and He set down one simple rule for Adam and Eve, and since Adam represented you and me we receive the penalty of his disobedience as well.

Rom 5:12 "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned--"

Death has come to all of us because of sin. The last part of verse 12 might give us the impression that it was our own personal sin which has brought death upon us..... " because all sinned."

However, this cannot be since it would deny the point of what Paul is saying from verses 12 to 21. Now I don't mean to suggest that we aren't personally responsible for our own sin or that we won't be held guilty of our own sin which deserves death.

But Paul is raising a much bigger issue here. He is talking about how death actually did enter the world and would affect every person after that. It was through the sin of one man that you and I are declared guilty, because we now receive a sin nature which sins.

It's a term which is known as "original sin". This sin of Adam has been placed to our account because he was our legal representative. We come into this world as sinners, despite the fact that we do not sin as new born babies, for example.

That's what it means to be born with a sin nature. And that's what it means to be under the same sentence Adam was because of the sin he committed on our behalf.

Charles Hodge makes this comment: "It is not true that all die because all personally sin; death is more extensive than personal transgression."

What he means is that death entered the world apart from us personally sinning. This is why for example an infant can die. That infant didn't commit any sin to deserve to die for its personal transgression. The infant died because of an existing penalty and curse on all mankind because of the sin of one man.

All of this has to do with imputation which is just a fancy way of saying that something has been placed to our account. By the way, many Bible believing Christians hold to the teaching that infants will be covered by the blood of Christ and will have eternal life, if they die in infancy.

And they will point to such passages found in 2Samuel when King David's child was born to Bathsheba who then became sick and David pleaded for the child's life.

2Sa 12:16-23 "David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground. 17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. 18 On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate." 19 David noticed that his servants were whispering among themselves and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked. "Yes," they replied, "he is dead." 20 Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate. 21 His servants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!" 22 He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23 But now that he is dead, why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? ***I will go to him, but he will not return to me.***"

Therefore, many believe that David has since gone to meet his child with the Lord in heaven. But the fact remains that death is still the result of the sin of one man and we are all under that death sentence because of it.

Paul goes on to explain why in Rom 5:13-14 "for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 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."

This is not double-talk. Paul is proving how you and I can be guilty of sin and actually be sinners based on the sin of one man thousands of years ago.

He says, "before the law was given, sin was in the world." He's talking about the Mosaic law. Before the law was given to Moses, people were already sinners. And yet Paul then goes on to say that "sin is not taken into account when there is no law."

The logical conclusion could then be stated this way. If sin is not taken into account if there is no law, then prior to the Mosaic law people were not guilty of sin.

That's the logical progression of what Paul says in verse 13. But Paul isn't finished.

Rom 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."

If sin is not taken into account if there is no law; and if the Mosaic law was not in effect, why then did people die, which was part of the penalty of sin, if the Mosaic law was not in effect?

Good point! Nevertheless, the people between Adam and Moses did still die. Therefore, as Paul surmises, a law of some sort must have been in effect. It was the law of imputation. We were imputed or had the sin of Adam put to our account.

It was the law he broke that placed the guilt of sin to our account. Even though we didn't sin in the way Adam did, we still get the penalty of sin he got because we are sinners with a nature like his. The law or covenant which God made with Adam was such that he was a type of Christ or as the NIV says, "he was a pattern of the one to come."

What that means is that God chose Adam to represent the entire human race. Therefore whatever he did, we did, by way of him being our representative. It's similar to the way we view representation today. If your football team is the Miami Dolphins and they beat the Buffalo Bills, what do you tell people? '**We** beat the Bills!'

Your team, in a sense, represents you even though you didn't dress out for the game or play a role in a direct way of going out onto the field to abuse your body. Someone did it in your place and you get to take the credit. '**We** won!'

That's the positive side. But if the Miami Dolphins lose, you lose by way of representation. Of course the analogy breaks down in the sense that you can't get traded if your team loses and you don't get paid 6 figure incomes if someone on the team does.

But in the real world of God and His representative for us we really do reap everything our representative has acquired for us. Our representative rebelled, therefore we rebelled in him. Our

representative was found guilty, therefore we are found guilty in him.

Our representative was sentenced by God to death, both physical and spiritual. Therefore, in Adam, our representative, we are sentenced to death by God, both physically and spiritually.

It's usually at this point that someone begins thinking to himself, 'That's not fair! Why should I have to suffer for the sin of a man I never knew?' But that question should never be asked for this reason. God is the one who chose Adam for us to be our representative. Is God unfair?

May it never be! As I've said before, if you were going to choose someone to represent you before God, you would have chosen Adam. Why? Because he was created by God perfect, without a sin nature.

Being the representative of all mankind, Adam was a type of Christ. The word type in the Greek is *typos* and it means a print or model, or an impression made by a blow.

If I were going to build a model of an F-16 fighter jet I would go down to the hobby store and buy the kit to make the model which looks just like the real thing despite the fact that it's not.

It accurately represents many things about the real jet and conveys to you what this jet looks like but it's only a model. In that way Adam is a type or model of Christ.

He models Christ, as one who represents a group of people, and then puts to those people's accounts what he did on their behalf. The first Adam gave us death. As our representative death hangs over our heads together with God's redemptive favor being withdrawn from the entire human race at the moment of Adam's rebellion.

That's what we have to look forward to in Adam. What's a person to do? What kind of life is that where the only thing I can look forward to is physical death and spiritual death, where I've been separated from my Creator because of what my representative did?

Praise God for the last Adam, our new representative!

Rom 5:15 "But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!"

Though Adam is a type of Christ there are differences. For one, the result of the trespass is not like the gift given to mankind in response to the penalty of the trespass of Adam.

In the trespass of Adam men die; in the obedience of Jesus men live. This is what Paul is saying in Rom 5:16 "Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification."

One man sins and all mankind is declared by God, guilty. This is what Paul means by the phrase, "judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation". But it's also true that we are judged by God for our own personal sin, thus the phrase in that same verse, "but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification."

Yes, we're personally guilty for our own sin, but we were guilty from the start apart from personal sin because in Adam we are guilty and the judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation.

But here's the beauty of our second legal representative, because as the one sin in Adam brought condemnation to all, the gift of Christ took care of all sin from Adam onward and brings justification to all of God's people. And as the scriptures teach, justification is where we are declared just and righteous before God based, not on anything we could do to earn God's favor, but totally on the obedience of our new representative, Jesus Christ, who earned salvation for us.

In that sense we are imputed with His righteousness. Just as before, in Adam, guilt was put to our account; by faith in Christ righteousness is put to our account. And that's why Paul would write in Rom 8:1 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..."

Rom 5:17 "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ?"

You don't like the idea of having Adam as your representative and suffering the consequences of sin which is death? Either do I. I don't like the idea of death and sin reigning and ruling in my life.

Only by the grace of God do I choose to embrace the last Adam, a perfect representative who didn't fail the test. In fact, God gave us

a representative who would not fail. He gave us Himself; the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

In Christ, it's not as though we've simply had the first Adam's sin erased. In Christ we have life, whereas before we had death.

Rom 5:18-19 "Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."

Christ met all the demands of the law. Unlike Adam, who only had to obey one simple command, not to eat of the fruit, Christ obeyed every command given to men from God through Moses.

And because of His obedience we are given His righteousness. We don't have a righteousness of our own that we can present before God, but by faith in our new representative, Jesus Christ, we have a righteousness of His put to our account. And you can take that to the bank.

Rom 5:20-21 "The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Adam's sin was sufficient to condemn all of us. But to show us the sinfulness of sin the law was added. But not even the overabundance of sin can thwart the grace of God. Sin reigned in death, but the grace of Christ reigns supreme for all who would believe and receive eternal life from our second Adam, our second representative, who is Jesus Christ.

Paul makes this whole teaching very clear when he states in 1Co 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

But we're given life for a purpose.

2Co 5:14-15 "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."

Col 3:1-3 "If, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of

God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3
For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God."

We've been purchased at a great price. Christ came to set us free from the bondage of the sin Adam gave us, and He came to give us eternal life.

Let's continually seek the power of His Spirit who enables us to walk as free men and not people who are in bondage to the penalty of sin, nor its power.

Consider the love Christ has freely given us and then consider what Paul says.

Eph 5:1-2 Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children
2 and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God."