

Bible Study of Romans
Romans 5:12-21

Below is an outline of this passage. The thoughts are complicated to follow because Paul digressed for a few verses from where he started in verse 12. To make it even more complicated, he in some way digresses in the digression as well to make it clear what he meant. These Pauline digressions are always enriching but they can be confusing when we miss the connection of the truths.

So in vs. 12 Paul begins a comparison (**as by one ...**) which he doesn't finish until 18b (**even so by ...**). From verse 13 to 17 we have his digression. Notice our translators put it in parenthesis. Vs. 18a is a brief recap vs. 12.

In 'visual outline' form, vs. 12-19 look like this

- A. vs. 12: First part of the comparison
 - 1. vs. 13-14: explanation of 12b **that all have sinned and why death passed on all men**
 - a. vs. 15-17: expansion on vs. 14: **who is the figure of Him that was to come**
 - 2. vs. 18a: recap of vs. 12
- B. vs. 18b: second part of the comparison begun in vs. 12
- C. vs. 19: recap of vs. 12 & 18
- D. vs. 20-21: expansion and enrichment of the truth of Christ's representation

In preparation for our next discussion, consider the following questions

1. The section of vs. 12-21 is related to the previous section of chapter five with the word 'wherefore.' What is (are) the connection(s)?
2. Vs. 12 **Wherefore, as by one man Adam sin** with all its destructive power **entered into the world, and death by sin** as result of God's judgment upon sin; **and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned** for the entire human race was included in Adam, he being our representative head.
 - a. Are there other passages in Scripture which sets out the representative character of Adam?
 - b. How do we define death that passed upon all men?
 - c. How does Paul in this chapter strengthen the teaching that the universal death is due to the single sin of one man?

3. **Vs. 13** (For from Adam **until the law** given in Moses' days **sin was in the world**: which is evident from the fact that people were dying **but sin is not imputed** in order to punish them with death for their sin **when there is no law**, for that would be unjust.

- a. What verses in Romans 2 touch on the fact that there was a law even though the Ten Commandments were not yet given?
- b. What law was that then?

4. **Vs. 14** **Nevertheless death reigned** (people died) **from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude** or likeness **of Adam's transgression**, who sinned consciously and willfully against a clearly defined and revealed commandment, **who** (Adam) **is the figure of him that was to come**, namely the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

- a. Who are they who have not sinned after Adam's transgression and yet died?
- b. It is sometimes said that we have 'become Adam before God.' What is practically meant with this?
- c. How is Adam the figure of Christ Who was to come?
- d. Infants do die as well millions are killed in the womb. Is there anything to say about the eternal destiny of these children?

5. **Vs. 15.** In vs. 15-17 Paul expands the thought of the previous verse, "who is the figure of him that was to come." Paul explained that though there is a likeness between Adam and Christ, there no exact correspondence between the sin of Adam and the work of Christ.

But not as the offence of Adam which brought death, **so also is the free gift** of God through Christ. The intent of this sentence is to say that the free gift is not like the trespass.

For if through the offence of one many (all of mankind) **be dead much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many** (all God's chosen represented by Christ).

- a. Paul is not just repeating himself in these verses. He is highlighting the different angles at which to consider Adam and Christ. To what aspect is Paul drawing attention in this verse?

6. **Vs. 16** In this verse Paul added a second contrast between Adam and Christ.

And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift of God in grace: for the judgment was by one single sin of one man to condemnation, but the free gift is of or follows or took account of many offences unto justification.

What is the exact point of contrast stated in this verse?

7. **Vs. 17.** In this verse Paul added a third contrast between Adam and Christ.

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.

- a. What is the point of contrast between Adam and Christ in this verse?
- b. It is easy to see how sin *reigns* unto death' but how does 'the gift of righteousness (grace through righteousness in vs. 21) *reign* unto eternal life?

8. **Vs. 18-19.** In the first half of this verse, Paul restated what he wrote in vs. 12 and then brings the comparison to a striking conclusion.

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation (the recap of vs. 12) ; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. Vs. 19 For as my one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

- a. Verse 18, if read in isolation, could teach 'universalism' which means that as Adam died for all men so Christ died for all men. How must we answer this interpretation?
- b. Adam's sin that brought death upon all men was one act of disobedience. Was Christ's act to bring salvation to His people also one act of obedience? If so, what act was it?

9. **Vs. 20-21 Moreover the law entered** as God gave it on Mt. Sinai, **that the offence might abound** as by the law is the knowledge of sin. **But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.**

- a. How can it be that the law makes the offence (trespass) abound?
- b. How has God's grace in Christ much more abounded than the sin in Adam? In other words, did Jesus provide full compensation for the offence Adam committed or did He do more than that?

10. How has this chapter affected your understanding of the glory and joy of salvation through justification by faith only?