

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

INTRODUCTION

A. Outline of Romans

1. Introduction (1:1-17)
2. The need for God's righteousness (1:18-3:20)
3. The provision of righteousness from God (3:21-5:21)
 - a. A description of justification (3:21-26)
 - b. Introductory comments on justification by faith in Christ alone (3:27-31)
 - c. A defense of justification by faith from the Old Testament (4:1-25)
 - d. Peace with God (5:1-11)
 - e. Death and Life (5:12-14)

B. Notes on outline of Romans 5:12-21

1. 12: the protasis which is the first part of a conditional clause, containing the condition, the similarity between Adam and Christ.
2. 13-14: an expansion of Paul's note that *all sinned* at the end of verse 12.
3. 15-17: emphasizes the dissimilarity between Adam and Christ.
4. 18-19: the apodosis which contains the conclusion of the conditional clause, the conclusion of their similarity.
5. 20-21: the role of the law in magnifying sin and thus grace.

ROMANS 5:12-21, DEATH AND LIFE

A. The similarity between Adam and Christ introduced - Sin came into the world through one man and spread to all men because all sinned (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—*

1. *Therefore*
 - a. In verse 11, Paul emphasizes that through Christ reconciliation is received.
 - b. In this section, Paul shows that just as Adam's sin affected all of humanity, Jesus' obedience has affected all believers.
2. *sin came into the world through one man*
 - a. That *one man* is Adam.
 - b. Paul is looking at the one sin of Adam, the Fall, which brought sin into the world.
 - d. God held Adam responsible for the sinfulness of the race instead of Eve because he was the person in authority over and responsible for Eve, note Genesis 2:18-23.
 - e. Douglas Moo, ... *for it was Adam's sin that corrupted human nature and made individual sinning an inevitability.*
3. *and death through sin*
 - a. The result of sin is death.
 - b. Genesis 2:16-17, *And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."*
 - c. Genesis 3:21, *And the LORD God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins and clothed them.*
4. *death spread to all men because all sinned*
 - a. Death is universal because sin is universal.
 - b. *all sinned*
 - 1) This is the key verse concerning imputation, how sin was ascribed or counted to humankind.
 - 2) The issue is, how was the sin of Adam imputed? How can all mankind be responsible for a sin nature due to the sin of Adam?
 - 3) There are numerous views concerning *all sinned* which center on imputation (sin ascribed to man's account).
 - a) Two popular views that do not qualify since they do not represent Paul's statements in this section.
 - 1] Pelagian View
 - a] Adam's sin only affected himself.
 - b] Every soul is created innocent and the only sins imputed to a person are those which they consciously commit.
 - c] The only affect of Adam on mankind was a bad example.

- 2] Arminian View
 - a] Mankind is without original righteousness and unable to attain it without divine aid.
 - b] The evil tendency in man is called sin but does not involve guilt or punishment.
 - c] Only when a person chooses to sin does God impute sin.

 - b) Two which warrant consideration
 - 1] The Federal or Representative View
 - a] This views Adam as the representative of the entire human race so that when Adam sinned it brought condemnation on all of humanity.
 - b] Tom Constable, *A federal head is a person who acts as the representative of many others and whose actions result in consequences that the individuals he represents inevitably experience.*

 - 2] The Seminal or Augustinian View
 - a] This view sees Adam as containing the seed of all his posterity so that when he sinned, all mankind sinned.
 - b] Charles Ryrie, *Mankind was not merely represented by Adam but was actually organically joined to Adam.*

 - 4) In Romans 5, Paul's focus was not on solving questions that may arise from various views on imputation but he obviously uses the Hebrew concept of the solidarity of the race.
 - a) Note Joshua 7:16-26, where Achan's entire family was destroyed for his sin.
 - b) Also, Hebrews 7:9-10, where Levi was counted as one who paid tithes through his ancestor Abraham.
- B. Death reigned from Adam despite the fact there was no law (13-14)
1. Sin was in the world before the Law but was not fully charged to man's account (13-14a), *for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam,*
 - a. *for*
 - 1) It refers to verse 12.
 - 2) Verses 13-14 develop Paul's view on Adam.
 - 3) Paul will not continue the comparison begun in verse 12 until verse 18.

 - b. Why was sin in the world when there was no law?
 - 1) There is no transgression where there is no law, note Romans 3:20, *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*
 - 2) But, sin was present before the Law.
 - a) This fits with the Federal and Seminal view of imputation.
 - b) Sin was in the world because of Adam's sin.
 - c) There was no law to define sin but sin was present.

 - c. It is obvious that sin was in the world because death reigned even before the Law.
 - 1) Death is the penalty for sin.
 - 2) Mankind died because of the sin of Adam because *all sinned* in and through Adam who represented the human race.
 - 3) Douglas Moo, *By using the image of death "reigning," Paul emphasizes that death was both universal and inescapable.*
 - 4) Tom Constable, *The idea that people should involuntarily suffer punishment because of the sins of another is repugnant to us. Nevertheless as the head of the human race, Adam's actions resulted in consequences that his descendants had to bear. . . We have all been born sinners because of Adam's sin. Some people rebel against God because of this. However, God has promised not to reckon our sins to us if we will trust in His Son (2 Cor. 5:19). He has provided a way to secure pardon.*

 - d. The sins of those from Adam to Moses were unlike that of Adam.
 - 1) Adam broke a specific command of God, note Genesis 2:17, *but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*
 - 2) Adam's descendants did not break specific commands of God until the Law was given, yet, they were sinners, evident in death.

2. Adam was a type of the one to come (14b), *who was a type of the one who was to come.*

a. *Type*

- 1) It is a mark left by a sharp blow as a stamp made by a die.
- 2) Grant Osborne, *For the church a type in this sense denoted an Old Testament person or event that prefigured Christ or a New Testament reality.*

b. Adam was a type of Jesus Christ.

- 1) Adam and Christ both had universal impact.
 - a) Adam's impact brought death but Jesus' impact brings life.
 - b) C. E. B. Cranfield, *Adam in his universal effectiveness for ruin is the type which—in God's design—prefigures Christ in His universal effectiveness for salvation.*
- 2) They were similar yet dissimilar.
 - a) John Witmer, *A parallelism exists between Adam and Jesus Christ as heads of groups of human beings (cf. 1 Cor. 15:45–49), but the parallelism is more contrastive than comparative.*
 - b) The dissimilarities between the first and second Adam are noted by Warren Wiersbe, *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' (Gen. 5:1) and it ends with 'a curse' (Mal. 4:6). The New Testament is 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ' (Matt. 1:1) and it ends with 'no more curse' (Rev. 22:3).*

C. God's gracious gift through Jesus Christ is superior to Adam's sin (15-17)

1. Jesus' free gift is different in degree to the trespass of Adam since it not only cancels the affects of Adam's sin but provides what man never possessed (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.*

a. *But*

- 1) Paul looks back to verse 12 which deals with the similarity between Adam and Christ.
- 2) Here, Paul declares that there are differences between Adam and Jesus Christ.
- 3) What Jesus gives as a *free gift* is different from Adam's trespass.

b. *free gift*

- 1) It means *a favor given freely and generously*, here, *the gracious gift of redemption given by God*, the Greek word is *charisma*.
- 2) Romans 6:23, *For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

c. *trespass*

- 1) It means *false step, transgression, sin against God*.
- 2) Ephesians 1:7, *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,*

d. *abounded*

- 1) It means *available in great abundance, given in large measure*.
- 2) 1 Thessalonians 3:12, *and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you,*

e. *much more*

- 1) The difference in degree is raised at this point.
- 2) Many died through Adam's sin, the entire human race except Enoch and Elijah.
- 3) But, God's grace and His free gift of righteousness abounded for many.
 - a) The free gift is righteousness as noted in Romans 5:17, *For 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.*
 - b) The many are those who responded by faith to the work of Christ which is sufficient for all but efficient for those who believe.

- 4) The difference in degree is seen in Adam's failure and Jesus' success.
 - a) Adam's failure brought death but Jesus' success defeated death and provides righteousness.
 - b) Jesus' death brings spiritual life which mankind never had (only Adam had it until he sinned).
 - c) 1 Corinthians 15:21, *For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.*
 - d) Grant Osborne, *The trespass of Adam is countered by the gift of Christ; so the grace-gift of God in Christ is greater than Adam's sin.*

2. Jesus' free gift is different in result to the trespass of Adam (16-17)
 - a. Adam's trespass brought condemnation but Jesus' free gift brings justification (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.***
 - 1) Paul states that there are differences between the actions of Adam and Christ evident in different results.
 - 2) Adam's sin brought judgment resulting in condemnation.
 - a) *Judgment*
 - 1] It means *judicial verdict*.
 - 2] Romans 11:33, *Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!*
 - 3] Adam's one act of disobedience brought God's judgment upon all mankind.
 - b) *Condemnation*
 - 1] It means *to render a verdict of guilt*.
 - 2] Romans 8:1, *There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
 - 3] Here, it infers *punishment following sentence which is death*.
 - 4] There is a play on words in the Greek between judgment (krina) and condemnation (katakrina), *judgment and according to judgment or under judgment*.
 - 3) Jesus' free gift which followed many trespasses results in justification.
 - a) The word for *justification* here emphasizes the result of justification, *having a right standing with God*.
 - b) Paul reminds the reader that the one sin of Adam which brought condemnation is contrasted to the many sins which were removed by the work of Christ.
 - c) C. E. B. Cranfield, *That one single misdeed should be answered by judgment, this is perfectly understandable: that the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift, this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension.*
 - b. Adam's trespass brought death but Jesus' free gift brings life (17), ***For 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.***
 - 1) *For if*
 - a) *For* looks back to verses 12 and 14 which declare that sin came through Adam.
 - b) *If* introduces a first class conditional clause where the first part of the clause is assumed to be true, resulting in the second part to be true, as well.
 - c) *If* may be translated *since* based on the conditional clause.
 - 2) *Reign*
 - a) It means *to rule, especially a kingly rule*.
 - b) It is used twice in this verse.
 - 1] The result of Adam's sin is that sin rules humanity, Hebrews 2:15, *and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*
 - 2] The result of Jesus' free gift is that Christians will rule (this verb is in the future tense) with Christ, Revelation 22:5, *And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*
 - 3] The future tense does not preclude the view of reigning over death in this life with a view toward reigning with Christ in the future life.
 - 4] John Stott, . . . *he delivers us from the rule of death so radically as to enable us to change places with it and rule over it, or reign in life. We become kings, sharing the kingship of Christ, with even death under our feet now, and one day to be destroyed.*

- 3) Paul reminds the reader the conditions for receiving Christ's blessings.
 - a) It demands receiving the abundant grace of God through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
 - b) It results in a declaration of righteousness.
- D. Paul summarizes his conditional clause which he began in verse 12, concerning the similarities of Adam and Jesus (18-19)
1. Paul completes his thought which began in verse 12 (18), ***Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.***
 - a. *Therefore* reintroduces Paul's thought in verse 12.
 - 1) Verse 12 reads, *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—*
 - 2) In verse 18, a briefer statement is given which will lead to the completion of the conditional clause.
 - b. *so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all*
 - 1) This is the actual continuation of the clause.
 - 2) The one sin of man brought death. Now, Paul declares that one act of righteousness leads to life.
 - 3) The one act is Christ's death on the cross which leads to justification and life, Philippians 2:8, *And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*
 - a) Of course, Jesus lived a sinless life and fulfilled the Law as no other man could.
 - b) Also, He loved the Father fully and His neighbors sincerely.
 - 4) *all*
 - a) As noted in verse 17, Jesus' work is sufficient for all but efficient for those who receive.
 - b) John Witmer, *The provision in the one righteous act, therefore, is potential and it comes to the entire human race as the offer and opportunity which are applied only to "those who receive."*
 - c) Douglas Moo, *This point is that there can be an assurance of justification and life, on one side, that is just as strong and certain as the assurance of condemnation on the other. Paul wants to show, not how Christ has made available righteousness and life for all, but how Christ has secured the benefits of that righteousness for all who belong to him.*
 2. Paul continues his thought presented in verse 18 (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.***
 - a. Verse 19 succinctly explains what Paul declares in verses 12 and 18.
 - b. *made sinners . . . made righteous*
 - 1) *Made* means *to cause someone to become*.
 - 2) Adam caused humankind to become sinners which is in the past tense.
 - 3) Jesus causes many to be made righteous which is in the future tense. The emphasis is not on justification alone but the whole process, including sanctification and glorification.
 - 4) Douglas Moo notes an important distinction, . . . *while our solidarity with Adam in condemnation is due to our solidarity with him in "sinning," our solidarity with Christ in righteousness is not because we have acted righteously in and with Christ.*
- E. A purpose of the Law concerns sin and grace (20-21)
1. The Law identifies the sinfulness of mankind and magnifies grace (20), ***Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,***
 - a. Trespass is increased by the Law which identifies it as sin against God.
 - 1) Romans 3:20, *For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.*
 - 2) Tom Constable, *One of the purposes of the Mosaic Law was to increase the sinfulness of people. It did so at least by exposing behavior that was until then not obviously contrary to God's will. God did this to prove man's sinfulness to him.*
 - 3) Douglas Moo gives an added purpose of the Law, . . . *the Law reveals the desperate situation of people apart from grace.*

- b. Grace abounds where sin increases.
 - 1) *Abounds means to be present in greater abundance. It carries an emphasis of degree not quantity.*
 - 2) It may be said that the greater the sin, the greater is the appearance of grace. The cross is a clear picture of increased sin due to the treatment of Messiah. But, how magnificent was God's grace which has transformed sinners in every century because of that day of abounding grace.
 - 3) John Witmer, *No matter how great human sin becomes, God's grace overflows beyond it and abundantly exceeds it.*
 - 4) Warren Wiersbe, *Grace was not an addition to God's plan; grace was a part of God's plan from the very beginning. God dealt with Adam and Eve in grace; He dealt with the patriarchs in grace; and He dealt with the nation of Israel in grace. He gave the Law through Moses, not to replace His grace, but to reveal man's need for grace. Law was temporary, but grace is eternal.*
- 2. Paul's conclusion of his argument found in Romans 5:12-21 (21), ***so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.***
 - a. *so that* starts verse 21 by declaring the purpose of abounding grace in verse 20.
 - b. The purpose of grace is in contrast to sin.
 - 1) Sin reigned in the domain of death.
 - 2) Grace reigns in the domain of life.
 - c. The reign of grace is described in three parts in this verse.
 - 1) *Through righteousness* as God justifies mankind by grace.
 - 2) *Leading to eternal life* which is the result of the reign of grace.
 - 3) *Through Jesus Christ our Lord* Who established and sustains the reign of grace, note John 1:14, *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
 - d. The importance of grace (*unmerited favor*).
 - 1) John Stott, *For grace forgives sins through the cross, and bestows on the sinner both righteousness and eternal life. Grace satisfies the thirsty soul and fills the hungry with good things. Grace sanctifies sinners, shaping them into the image of Christ. Grace perseveres even with the recalcitrant, determining to complete what it has begun. And one day grace will destroy death and consummate the kingdom. So when we are convinced that 'grace reigns', we will remember that God's throne is a 'throne of grace', and will come to it boldly to receive mercy and to find grace for every need.*
 - 2) Hebrews 4:16, *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

CONCLUSION

Paul's clause is complete as verse 12 and 18b-19 summarize the amazing work of Christ on behalf of sinful mankind,

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—so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 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.