

## Adam Versus Christ

Turn in your Bibles to Romans 5 and we'll read verses 12-21. Here we will see the great contrast that there is between the first man, Adam and our Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul shows that there is an incredible difference between the actions of Adam and the actions of Christ. But not only this, he tells the Roman Christians in this passage how there is a vast difference between the results of these actions as well. Try to pay attention to these contrasts as I read these verses and the point of what Paul is saying will be clearer. It is easy to get lost in this passage, but if you keep in mind the contrasts that Paul is making it is easier to understand. **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 mans 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.**

Let's pray before we get started.

### Iron Curtain

Here in our passage today we find a great contrast between two different men who lived on the earth. One of these men disobeyed God and the disastrous consequences of sin and death ensued. The other obeyed God even unto death, and He set the stage for great happiness and everlasting life. This is reminiscent of the world after the devastation of **World War II**. After the Allied troops had defeated the Germans it quickly became apparent that the Soviet Union had no intention of leaving the countries that they had driven the Germans out of. They did not restore the governments that the people had before the Germans came, in fact they set up their own similar to the way the Nazis had. They did not restore freedom to the people; in many cases they made things worse. Things were no better in the Far East where they took countries from the Japanese. In Korea the Soviets treated the people in the northern half of the country far worse than the Japanese did, which was quite a feat. The situation was so bad that Winston Churchill

said that an Iron Curtain had descended between the two halves of Europe. The eastern half of Europe was controlled by the Soviet Union, and the western half was controlled by the Allied nations, of the US, Britain and France. As time went on the world became dominated by two superpower nations, the US and the USSR. These two nations were a study in contrast. One was dominated by oppression, distrust and fear. The other was guided by freedom, opportunity and liberty, at least in principle anyway. The USSR was a horrendous place to live with limited food, clothing and heat in the winter. People would risk their lives to escape from the countries dominated by the Soviets for the opportunity to live as free people in the West. The people could not even have Bibles in the East, as the Communist governments tried to enforce their atheistic beliefs on the people. Meanwhile in the West, the countries were prospering, and people had the freedom to travel, work in the jobs they chose, and importantly the freedom to worship God. Now, of course the West and the USA in particular, was not perfect. But, the difference between existence in the US and the USSR was profound. This contrast is made strikingly clear in the life story of Andrew van der Bijl, a missionary who was active in this time period of the Cold War, as it was known. He is better known as Brother Andrew. His ministry was one of smuggling Bibles behind the Iron Curtain, even into the Soviet Union itself. He is an amazing man who still is active in missions. When you hear his story the difference between the East and the West is brought out clearly, just like when you read about the sin of Adam and the obedience of Christ here in chapter 5 of Romans the difference between these two is obvious. Today we will see the contrast between Adam, who brought sin, misery and death into the world, and the forgiveness, happiness and life we have in Jesus Christ.

### **The Gulf**

Miles Stanford said that there is an enormous gulf between verse 11 and verse 12 in chapter 5. We see that Paul begins talking about sin differently than he has been throughout this letter. Before it was almost all about the actual committing of sins, like I said last week, he has been emphasizing the verb to sin, and now here in verse 12 he starts talking about the noun sin. There is only one other use of the word *sin* as a noun so far in the letter. We saw that in chapter 3 and verse 20. **because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.** Other than this one reference the concept of sin is seen as committing sins. Paul has so far in the letter been talking about how we are saved through faith in Christ and His shed blood. Then in the first 11 verses of chapter 5 we saw the blessings that come about as a result of our justification. This transition that we see here in verse 12 is absolutely critical, that's why I have been mentioning it as we go along. If we don't progress past verse 11 in our lives then we really have not fully grasped what it is to be a Christian. God does not just take us out of this world when we put our faith in Him. We saw that earlier when Paul talked about the trials of life and their purpose. He talked about the trials as if they were a foregone conclusion. Well, here we see if we don't realize the nature of our sin, and just how pervasive it is within us, we are doomed to continue living as if the salvation we have through faith in Christ is of no effect. A major factor in living the Christian life faithfully is realizing how deeply we are affected by sin and the sin nature that we all have. This is Paul's goal here in verses 12-21. He wants us to see that not only do we all commit sins, but also he wants us to see that we all have a

sin nature and this sin nature effects us to our very core, and it must be overcome if we are to live faithfully as God would have us to live.

### **Genesis 3 The Fall**

The first thing that we see in our passage is that sin entered into the world through one man. (Verse 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** — This one man mentioned here, is of course Adam. It is his sin in the Garden of Eden that brought sin into the world. Now, you may be thinking that it was Eve who ate of the tree first, and then she gave the fruit to Adam, so Eve is really responsible. You can turn back to Genesis 2 and we will see that God gave the command to Adam to not eat of the tree.

Gen 2:15 says **Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.**

Notice then in verse 18 that God says it is not good for the man to be alone. Eve wasn't even created when God told Adam to not eat of the tree. God gave this command directly to Adam. Now, the word doesn't say this, but it was most likely Adam's responsibility to teach Eve not to eat of the tree, and in this he failed, as we see in chapter 3. This is probably one of the saddest events recorded in the Bible, especially in light of all the pain and suffering that sin has caused in the world in the intervening years. Keep in mind that Adam lived over 900 years in total. He was alive when Noah was alive. Adam certainly saw the consequences of his sin, and the degradation of the world after God had created it "very good." Here in chapter 3 we see the fall of mankind, and the entrance of sin that Paul speaks of in Romans 5:12. In Gen 3:1 we see the first mention of the Devil in the Bible, and here he has the appearance of a serpent. It says that he was more crafty than any other beast of the field, and we see that he was certainly more crafty than Adam and Eve as well. This is a thing to remember as we go about our day. The Devil is wily, he is a liar, and he is good at it. He can dupe people into thinking that they are something special, or that a particular sin is just little and won't hurt anyone. Here we see that he led Adam and Eve right into sin. Notice that the first thing the Devil does as he is leading them into sin is to question God's Word. **And he said to the woman, Indeed, has God said, You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?** Did God really say that you couldn't eat from any tree in the Garden? That's crazy, why would He say that? But the Devil probably knew exactly what God said to Adam, but he was calling into question God's word. Eve's response shows that she didn't have exactly what God said memorized either, and this is probably because Adam didn't do a good enough job of telling her what God said. She got the general gist of it, but she did not mention the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, she just said they couldn't eat of the tree in the middle of the garden. Then Satan just outright lies, and says in verse 4 and 5 **You surely will not die! 5 For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.** You're not going to die, the fruit isn't poisonous, you'll be fine. Adam and Eve probably had no real concept of what death was at this point. The world was still in the state that God had created it in. There was no sin, and therefore there was no death. But, experience is not necessary to know that something is bad. God had said that they were not to eat of the tree or the result

would be death; that should have been good enough. For the kids here, this is like the word of your parents. If they tell you not to do something, that should be enough. You don't have to do the thing they told you not to do to see if it's really as bad as they say. And for the rest of us, when God's Word tells us to do something, or to not do something, we need to obey, just because that's what it says, if for no other reason. Notice another part of verse 5, "you will be like God". What a statement that is! This has been Satan's goal from the beginning like it says in Isaiah 14; Satan wanted to lift himself up above God. And really this is what every philosophy does that doesn't acknowledge God. Anyone who does not put God in His proper place is replacing God with something else, and most of the time they are replacing God with themselves, they are trying to become like God. Then Eve gives the fruit to Adam and he eats it. Verse 6 says **When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.** So, that was it; that was the sin that started the world down the path of degradation that it is on. Even though Eve ate first, it was not her eating that is recorded as the fall of mankind, it was Adam's eating. This is because God specifically told Adam to not eat of the tree and he disobeyed a direct command from God. It is through this one sin, that death came to Adam, and through him to all mankind. Just what God said would happen happened.

### **The sin nature**

We can flip back to Romans 5 and we see in verse 12 that death came to Adam through the sin, and then death spread to all mankind, because all sinned. There are three verbs in that sentence: *entered, spread and sinned*. Sin entered, death spread, all sinned. The key to understanding our relationship to Adam is that phrase "all sinned." This includes everyone; every person from Adam until now, and into the future is included in this. All people are counted as being present at the time of Adam's sin because he is the father of us all. We see that because it says that all sinned. This, like the other verbs in this sentence, is in the aorist tense; that is that snapshot of time tense that we have talked about. These events happened in the past in a moment of time, without any kind of process, they just happened at the moment of Adam's sin. Sin entered into the world, death spread to all men because all men sinned with Adam at the time of his sin. Adam wasn't just our representative then. We were physically present with him since he is the father of us all. If the person we elect to go to Congress commits a crime we, the people he represents, don't pay the penalty for the crime. We were not present with him when he committed the crime. The congressman is our representative, not the head of our family. Adam was the head of our family when he sinned, and this had an effect on all of us. This is similar to my ancestors. They lived in Germany a long time ago, then my great-great-grandpa decided that he wanted to move to America, so he took his family at the time and left Europe and came to America. I then became an American because of his action hundreds of years ago. What Paul is talking about here is similar to that. We all sinned with Adam at the moment of his sin. Adam's nature was changed by that sin. When God finished His creation, He said that it was "very good." I think we can conclude from that that Adam did not have a sin nature. He didn't have a sin nature until after he had sinned, and his nature was changed by the effects of sin. The effects of that one sin are so far reaching as to be almost incomprehensible. Adam's nature was

changed by the sin, and he passed that changed nature on to all of us. Sin brought death according to Romans 5; this is a literal death. Adam was created very good. He was created to live forever. However, he sinned, and this sin brought death, and the death passed to all men.

### **The parenthetical contrasts**

Beginning in verse 13 Paul interjects a parenthesis. If you have a KJV or a NKJV you see the parenthesis there around verses 13-17. If you have a more modern version you probably just have a dash. Nevertheless that is to signify that Paul is interrupting what he was saying to add another thought. What he does here is give more of an explanation of what sin is, and what its effects are. So, in order to give a deeper explanation about what sin is, he relates it to the Law. Paul has spent a lot of time talking about the Law in this letter so far, specifically that following it does not save a person. The Jews had a great advantage from receiving the Law, but it did not save them. So, here are verse 13 and 14:

**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.**

Sin was in the world before the Law was given. We know that from a myriad of places, Gen 3 we just talked about for one, we know that God destroyed the earth with a flood because the sin of the people was so great, and also that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, and God oppressed the Israelites during the time of the Judges because of their sin; all of these events are before the Law. The effects of sin were also evident, namely that people died. But, notice that it says that sin is not imputed when there is no law. Does that mean that it doesn't count? It's not really sin? No, not at all. Sin is still sin, no matter if the Law is in place or not. We still sin today even though we are not under the Law. People sinned before the Law, and it was still sin. Here is an example. Let's say that my son Stockton is driving down the highway at an excessive rate of speed. Now, this is just hypothetical of course. And let's say that as he is driving too fast, little does he know that I am driving in a different car in front of him. Stockton is going so fast that he doesn't realize that his Dad is in the car right in front of him, and he blows past at 90 mph. Do you think Stockton would be in trouble when I saw him go flying past me? Yes he would. But, I am not the Law, I could not pull him over and give him a ticket. Now, I may be able to punish him when we get home, I could change the circumstances of his life; make it so he couldn't drive; take away some other privileges, or just give him a good talking to, but I could not give him a ticket and send him to court. Now, if we change the story a little bit, and say that Stockton is driving down the highway at an excessive rate of speed and doesn't notice the State Trooper parked behind the overpass, do you think he will get a ticket? Absolutely, then the Law will be imputed. He will get the ticket, and he will have to go to court. Is he going to be in trouble with his Dad when he gets home? Yes, he will. This is what Paul is saying here. When there was no Law people still sinned, they just weren't subjected to the punishment of the Law by the government set up by the Law, but it was still sin, and still disappointed their heavenly Father just the same. I would be just as upset at Stockton for doing 90 past me, as I would be if he got a ticket for doing the same thing when I wasn't there. Verse 14 says, that even if the people didn't sin the way Adam did by directly disobeying God, it was still sin. And, also we see that Adam was a "type" of him who was to come. This

means that he was like the one who was to come, but not the same. At Southwest we fly 4 different types of 737. They look a little different if you are familiar with airplanes, but they all basically fly the same way. They are all versions of the same basic thing. This is not what Paul is saying here. What Paul is describing is more like the impression that a rock would leave in the mud. When you pull a rock out of the dirt it leaves behind an imprint of the rock, it shows exactly what the face of the rock is like, except that it is the opposite. This gives a better idea of what Paul is saying. Adam wasn't a different version of Christ. He was the exact opposite of Christ in his actions, and now Paul is going to explain those differences.

### **The free gift versus the transgression**

The first comparison that we see is the free gift versus the transgression, and that is in verse 15. From the context it is obvious to see what Paul is getting at here; the free gift is the salvation we receive through the grace of God. And the transgression is the sin of Adam that we have been talking about. In verse 15 we see the comparison, **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.** The free gift of salvation through faith is not like the sin of Adam, because death was brought into the world through the sin of Adam, and the gift of God abounded to the many through the grace of Jesus Christ. So, death went to all men, but we see that phrase "much more" again here in verse 15. This is the third use of much more in chapter 5, and it denotes here that the grace of God is superior to the death from the transgression. God's grace is greater than the death brought on by sin; it is able to make us alive.

### **The two groups**

Now we need to define the two groups of people mentioned in this verse, and throughout the whole passage. It says "For if by the transgression of the one the many died." This group is all mankind, and we see that in verse 12 where it says that death spread to all men, because all sinned. The second group is a subset of the first. The end of verse 15 says, **much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.** This "many" is the group that Paul was addressing in verses 1-11. We see that in verse 8, "while we were still enemies, Christ died for us." The many that the grace is abounding to is the "us" from verse 8. So, we were enemies of God, included in the people who die because of sin, but when we receive the gift of God we receive His grace through Christ. Paul will expound on this later as well. So, the first group of "the many" is all of mankind, and the second group of "the many" are people who have been justified by faith in Christ.

### **The contrasts of the results**

Now, in verse 16 we see the results of the transgression and the results of the gift. The ESV shows that this is speaking of the results of the action better than the NASB or KJV does. The ESV is closer to the way it reads in the Greek also. If you have the NASB you may see a few words in italics, which means that those words don't appear in the Greek; the translators added them to attempt to make the meaning more clear. Many versions of the Bible will use this technique, you will see it in the KJV as well. Translators do this

because languages don't overlap perfectly. Verse 16 in the ESV reads, **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.** We see that judgment was the result of the transgression, and justification comes from the free gift. So, one trespass brought condemnation to the all of mankind, and then one act of righteousness, after thousands of years of sins brought justification. Now, we know that this justification is not automatic, and we see that in verse 17. All of mankind was condemned in the sin of Adam like we saw in verse 12. Here in verse 17 though Paul makes it clear that the free gift does not go to everyone. It says **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.** First we see another contrast between the transgression and the gift of grace; it is that the transgression caused death to reign in the earth, but the gift of righteousness causes life to reign through Jesus Christ. But notice that Paul says "much more those who receive the abundance of grace." Once again we see the "much more", so the gift is greater than the transgression, in that life in Christ is greater than death, and we see that this gift only goes to those who believe, those who put their faith in Christ, just like Paul has been talking about throughout this letter. This word "receive" is a verb, obviously, but not only that, it is in the present tense, and active voice. This is a very important distinction. It means that the people have to actively receive the gift. The word in the Greek is **λαμβάνοντες**, and it literally means to take hold of, or to grasp. John Walvoord puts it this way in the Bible Knowledge Commentary, **"The fact that it is "those who receive" God's grace and gift, emphasizes that the provision made for all in Christ's sacrificial death and offered to all by God must be appropriated by an individual by faith to become effective."**<sup>1</sup> And we see in verse 18 that the provision was made for all, where it says **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.** Here again we see that the transgression results in condemnation, and the one act of righteousness leads to justification of life to all men. Now, if we just take that verse out of context, and look at it by itself we would conclude that all people are saved. But, we can't just do that, we can't just take a verse out of a passage and interpret it by itself, or even compare it to another verse that is not of the same type, and it is clear from this letter that Paul is not teaching universal salvation. Verse 17 just said that the gift is only effective for those who receive it; that means that those who do not receive it do not get the benefits of justification. But, what does Paul mean by **even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men?** Well, we can look at John 12:32 to see that, and we can compare these two verses because they are talking about the same thing, the one act of righteousness, Christ's death on the cross. So, in John 12:32 Jesus said that, **if I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to Myself.** So, Christ, when he was lifted up on the cross, drew all men to himself. He made the gift available, but only those who receive it reap the reward of justification. Another interesting thing about this verse 18 in Romans 5 is

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<sup>1</sup> John F. Walvoord, Roy B. Zuck and Dallas Theological Seminary, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), Ro 5:17.

that in the Greek there are no verbs. It literally says that all men are “into” condemnation because of the transgression, and all men are “into” justification of life because of the one act of righteousness. The fact that there are no verbs here shows that we have to look somewhere else to see what must be done to be put in one of the two categories, either the category of condemnation or the category of justification, and we see that in verse 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.** The many were made sinners by Adam’s disobedience, and we know, again from verse 12 that this “many” is all men; everybody. And we see by Christ’s obedience the many will be made righteous, and we know from verse 17 that this “many” is those who receive the gift. Here also we see the idea of sanctification that Paul is getting to; the many **will be made righteous.** This is in the future tense. Through the process of sanctification, dealing with this sin nature that we all have from Adam, we will be made righteous, in the future. We are positionally righteous right now, if we have received the gift of salvation, but in the future, through sanctification, we will become actually righteous. That is the goal of the Christian life, to be more like Christ, as Christ was without sin in His life. This points to the hope that Paul was talking about earlier in the chapter. One day we will be given our new bodies, and those will not have the sin nature. We will be like Him, in that we will have a glorified body that is not affected by sin and the sin nature. We see that in 1 Corinthians 15, which is also another place in Scripture that Paul contrasts Adam and Christ. We long for the day when Christ will give us our new bodies, and we will be with Him in heaven for eternity. But, we still have life to live here on earth in the meantime, and that is what Paul is going to talk about in chapters 6-8, and 12-16. We need to live our lives according to His word, and not as if we are subjects of our sin nature, but as if we our subjects of our King, Christ Jesus.

### **The Law versus grace**

Now we see one more contrast in verses 20 and 21. **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.** Here again we see the purpose of the Law was so that our knowledge of sin would increase. God didn’t make the Law so that people would commit more sins. He hates sin, and making people sin more would be contrary to His nature. But he did want people to have a greater knowledge of what sin is, so that we would know that we need a Savior. If people are just left to their own devices they are not going to see their need for a Savior. This is the way it was before the flood. People did what was right in their own eyes, and it was a disaster, so bad that God had to destroy the world. So, He gave the Law so that people would have a tangible example of what sin is and what its punishment is. Kind of like when you see the policeman on the side of the road it makes you very aware of what your speed is. When we see the Law of God, we know what sin is. But, verse 20 says where the sin increased; the grace abounded all the more. This word for abounded all the more is great; it means that God just lavishly gives out grace that is far more than what is needed; He just piles on the grace, giving us more than could ever be used, and more than is necessary to cover the sin. We aren’t just barely saved by His grace. He gives us enough grace to secure our salvation for eternity when we receive the gift like it says in verse 17. What a



wonderful picture that is of the salvation that we have in Christ. He saves us with so much grace that we cannot possibly lose the salvation that we have in Him; we are secure in His hand when we receive His grace. We see how great this gift is in the words of John the Baptist, in John 1:29 **“Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”** Jesus Christ’s death on the cross was so great that it takes away all the sin of the world. The problem of sin was dealt with by the death of Christ, so now we need to live our lives like it has been taken care of. He died for our sins, and He died to eliminate sin from the world. This is what we look forward to in the future, a life without sin, but we are to live as subjects of Christ now, in this life, and that is sanctification, being conformed to His image. Basically, it is living life without being under the power of sin, as God would have us to. We are to be obedient to His Word, and Paul is going to show how to do that in the next chapters.

So, that is chapter 5. In a nutshell, the first 11 verses are the benefits of the justification that we have through faith in Christ. Verses 12-21 show that not only are we justified, but Christ has taken care of the problem of our sin nature as well. Through the sin of Adam we were all made sinners, we all have a sin nature. But through the death of Christ we can have life, if we accept the free gift of grace. Hopefully we are all motivated by this truth to live a more holy life when we see what Christ has done for us on the cross, and the benefits that we have from being justified by Him. Not only that, but Christ has taken care of our sin nature as well. He does not take us immediately to heaven when we believe in Him, and He does not take away our sin nature either. We are still left with that propensity to sin and disobey Him, but if we are daily conformed to His image through prayer and study of His Word we can be more like Him. We will see in the coming weeks just how that is, but for now, I would just implore you to read this Bible that has been preserved for us, and apply it to your life. Live like you are a child of the King who gave so much for you. Don’t live like you are a child of the Devil who just wants to deceive, kill and destroy. Stay as far away from the one who lied to Adam and Eve as you can. Run from the Devil and sin, resist the Devil and he will flee from you, draw near to God, and He will draw near to you. In this life we should strive to be like the people who escaped from behind the Iron Curtain during the Cold War. They risked their lives to get as far away from their oppressors as they could. We should do the same thing, and run as far away as we can from Satan and the oppression that comes from sin.

Let’s pray