

Romans

Romans Chapter Five

Romans 5:12-21

February 7, 2010

This is lesson number 27 in our exposition of the Book of Romans.

The Theme of the Letter

“For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**, for it is the **power** of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the **righteousness of God** is **revealed** from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ ” Romans 1:16-17

Title: “The One Offense of the One Man”

The main point of Romans 5:12-21 is the **comparision of Adam and Christ**.

We are dealing with the **Doctrine of Representation**. If we miss the significance of this teaching we will not have a correct understanding of sin and atonement.

We will discuss the ways in which Adam is a type of Christ.
Adam is a type in **similarity** and **dissimilarity**.

The **Doctrine of Representation** says that God only considers two men in history: Adam and Christ. That does not remove personal responsibility.

What it teaches is that men are condemned in Adam and justified in Christ.

We are **passive** in both cases; yet we either suffer the consequences or enjoy the benefits of what each of these two men did.

What Adam did and what Jesus Christ did is imputed {charged} to those whom they represented. What they each one did had a profound effect on the people they represented. Adam, as their Real/Federal Head, represented the entire human race. Jesus Christ, as their Real/Federal Head, represented those given to Him by the Father.

We will now look at how Adam is a type of Christ in **similarity** and in **dissimilarity**..

In this comparison of Adam and Christ we will see: sin and righteousness; sinners and righteous people; condemnation and justification; death and life; Adam and Christ: *“Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”*

Romans

If the main argument in this passage is to show that Adam was a type of Christ: What then is the comparison?

When we consider the unspeakable ruin brought on the human race by Adam and the incomparable beauty of Jesus Christ, you might wonder how these two can even be named in the same sentence.

What the apostle is doing is showing that what is seen in our relationship to Adam, should also be seen in our relationship to Christ.

But while there are similarities there are also dissimilarities.

First, what are the similarities?

One beautiful lesson of John Chapter 6, with Jesus the feeding of the 5000, is that while God sent manna to feed the children in the wilderness, and while Jesus multiplied the fishes and the loaves, that Jesus is the **Sent One of God**.

Jesus was sent into the world for a specific purpose.
In other words, as a Representative.

So both Adam and Christ were appointed by God.

In the next place, each one represent a **specific** number of people.

Adam represented the human race with the exception of the virgin-born Jesus. Those people Adam represented, while a vast number, had a limitation.

Jesus represented a body of people, the invisible church.

Jesus represented the true church, made up of all believers of all time, from every kindred, tribe and tongue.

Please listen carefully to this analogy. The caution is that we must not make the willful choice of Adam into a thing of honor. But there is this. When Adam saw his bride, Eve, in sin, he voluntarily took her place and made her sin his sin. When Jesus saw His bride, the church, in sin, He voluntarily took her place and made her sin His own sin.

Romans

The Scripture is very precise when it comes to words and phrases.

In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul writes about the first Adam and the last Adam; the first man and the second man.

1 Corinthians 15: 45 And so it is written, "The **first man Adam** became a living being." The **last Adam** became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 The **first man** was of the earth, made of dust; the **second Man** is the Lord from heaven.

Why is Jesus Christ called the "last Adam?" He is the "second Man," but the "last Adam," what is the distinction? The reason is that there will never be another. There was not a third, fourth, five millionth, etc. man. There was only a second Man who is the Last Adam.

There are only two representative heads of a body of people; the first man was Adam and second Man is the last Adam - Jesus Christ.

He is the last Adam.

Why is that so important?

There will never be a successor to Jesus ; not Sun Yung Moon and not Mohammed, only Jesus Christ!

We must tell our friends and family that Jesus is the only way to God.

The final point of similarity is that Adam and Christ each passed on to his seed the effects and fruits of his work. 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.

Adam's sin and its consequences was passed on to all he represented without exception: Christ's obedience and righteousness is passed on to all who believe in Him.

The emphasis of Romans Chapter Five is Assurance.

Does it not give you peace to know that the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed freely? To know that you did not have to earn it? Indeed, to know that you cannot earn it!

Romans

We have followed the Apostle Paul through the declaration of the **wrath of God** against everyone - Gentile and Jew. We looked closely at how God justifies the ungodly as Paul described how Abraham was justified - his works of obedience having absolutely no part in his justification.

We need to keep in mind that justification is always the antithesis of condemnation. The legally guilty and condemned sinner is declared just by a Holy God. Justification is based solely on the eternal purpose and good pleasure of God in Jesus Christ.

In Chapter Five, verses 1-11, Paul begins the description of the **effects** of having been justified by faith:

We have peace with God;
Not only that, we glory in tribulations;
Much more then, having been justified by His blood,
we shall be saved from wrath through Him...

Do we really appreciate what God has done for us who are, in fact, justified?

Think of it! Ungodly! Sinners! And enemies of God are called, justified, regenerated, being sanctified, and are sure to be glorified!

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.”

In 5:12-21 - this passage on Adam and Christ, or the Doctrine of Representation, we have the solid ground of **assurance**. The work of Jesus Christ super-abounds over the sin of Adam to the benefit of those for whom Christ died.

We discussed how Adam is a type of Christ in **similarity**.

Both Adam and Christ were both **appointed** by God.

They were appointed to represent a specific body of people.

Adam and Christ each passed on to their seed the effects and fruits of their work.

Romans

When we began our study of verses 5:12-21 we pointed out in that the apostle interrupts his “just as - even so” comparison of Adam and Christ at the end of verse 12 with a parenthesis which he picks up at verse 18.

In fact, at verse 18, he restates the “just as - even so” comparison. But there is a parenthesis within the parenthesis at the end of verse 14 - verses 15-17- in order to show that while the main point of the entire passage is the direct comparison of Adam and Christ, there are differences. These differences in no way remove the comparison.

Read Romans 5:12-14 & 15-17

Having considered points of **similarity** between Adam and Christ, we will look at points of **dissimilarity** between Adam and Christ.

“But yet the resemblance betwixt the first and the second Adam is not so exact as to admit of no difference; differences there are, but they are to great advantage on Christ's part.” {Matthew Poole}

One obvious difference that may not be immediately recognized, is that our relationship to Adam is **physical**. We are all of “one blood,” there is one race, the human race. The relationship we have with Christ is **spiritual**.

We are not “in Christ” by natural birth. We have been “chosen in Christ from before the foundation of the world,” but we are not born as Christians.

When we study the Old Testament we will see that blessing was often equated with physical and material things. The number of camels, sheep, cattle, and children was thought to be a sign of God's blessing. One aspect of God's promise to Abraham: “I will make you the father of many nations.”

Even being fat was thought to be a sign of God's blessing. Physical signs.

The Hebrews were included in the nation of Israel by their natural birth. They were given the physical sign of circumcision. But in the New Testament you will find almost the opposite. What really matters is our spiritual life. The New Testament sign is not baptism, which is physical, rather it is regeneration - circumcision of the heart, which is spiritual.

Romans

In the New Testament we learn that the “Israel of God” are the spiritual children of Abraham. The true children, or seed of Abraham, are those who have the faith of Abraham, those who believe God.

The reason for so much confusion about eschatology is the blindness to see that there are two Israel’s. There is the nation of Israel, Israel after the flesh, which forfeited the blessing of God through idolatry and unbelief.

Then there is the “Israel of God” to whom the eternal aspects of the promise of blessing apply. In a previous study we looked at the three aspects of God’s promise: many children; a special Seed; and a land.

The promises to the physical nation Israel was fulfilled and/or forfeited. The promise to Christ is being fulfilled in Christ and His church - the “Israel of God.” Israel after the flesh and spiritual Israel - two Israel’s.

Failure to understand that there are two Israel’s leads to all kinds of interpretation of current events. In every generation and world crisis men come forth who are certain that they can see the fulfillment of prophecy in current events. Hitler and WWII, the Soviet Union, and now the terrorist attack on America are seen to be directly related to Bible prophecy.

Fictional novels about being “left behind,” all focus on a physical nation in the middle east which is **not** the “Israel of God.”

And so it is that our relationship with Jesus Christ is spiritual and not physical.

Romans 5:15 But the free gift is **not like** the offense. For if by the one man's offense {the} many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to {the}many.

"But the free gift is not like the offense."

The main contrast here in verse 15 is between “the free gift” and “the offense.”

When you hear the name “Adam,” the first thing you should think of is “the offense.”

When you hear the name “Jesus,” the first thing you should think of is His “free gift.”

Romans

This reminds me of Isaiah 53:10-11

Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him;
He has put Him to grief.
When You make His soul an offering for sin,
He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days,
And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.
11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied.
By His knowledge My righteous Servant **shall justify many**,
For He shall bear their iniquities.

“... much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to {the}many.”

“The greater abounding cannot possibly be to a greater number of individuals benefited. None are benefited by Christ but those who were ruined in Adam; and only a part of those who were ruined are benefited. The abounding is evidently in the gift extending, not only to the recovering of what Adam lost, but to blessings which Adam did not possess, and had no reason to expect.” {Haldane}

We could, and perhaps should, stay here until midnight and just count the blessings that abound to us through Jesus Christ. The “not only so’s” and the “much more’s.”

Were you, like the beggar in John 9, once blind and now you see?
Do you know the pit from which you were digged?

Are you included with those who, “When we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”

Romans 5:16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from **one offense** resulted in **condemnation**, but the free gift which came from **many offenses** resulted in **justification**.

Romans

In verse 16 we have two contrasts: between “one offense” and “many offenses,” and between “condemnation” and “justification.”

The first contrast in this verse is evidently between the “one offense” and the “many offenses.” If all are condemned for the one sin of Adam, then all must be made guilty by it. Can God impute to any man anything that is not true? If Adam’s sin is not as truly ours as it was Adam’s sin, could God impute it to us? If Christ’s atonement is not truly ours, could God impute it to us?

. . . The just God could not deal with men as sinners on any account which did not make them truly sinners. . . . However, it is not our sin in the same sense.... It was his personally; it is ours because we were in him. Adam’s sin, then, is as truly ours as it was his sin, though not in the same way.” {Haldane}

The contrast between “one offense” and the “many offenses” is very important.

One offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift covered not only the one offense of which we are all guilty, but all the sins of all of Christ’s people.

A good test of the Pharisee is to talk about his guilt and condemnation and the freeness of the gift. The proud man doesn’t think of himself as being “without strength,” helpless, in the matter of being justified before God. He will not agree that the gift of grace is free apart from any cooperation on his part. He wants to tell you about his “free will,” and how God will save you if you will just give Him your permission.

The contrast in verse 16, that we must always keep straight, is that justification is always the opposite of condemnation. Condemnation is a legal term and so is justification. God condemns and God justifies - and He does it on His own terms.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convince and convict a man of his just condemnation. And if it has pleased God to justify the ungodly, the Holy Spirit quickens the dead sinner and they are born again.

We must not confuse **justification** and **regeneration**.

“Though they are inseparably connected, effectual calling or the new birth and justification are quite distinct.” {Pink}

Romans

Justification waits on faith. What does that mean? It means that while we are chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, we are not justified until we believe in Christ. We are justified by faith.

Justification is **objective**: as is the atonement of Christ. Objective means outside of us, we can only perceive or receive the truth of it.

But we can not believe in saving faith until we are quickened in the new birth, and yet regeneration is not the ground of justification.

Regeneration is **subjective**. While a man cannot initiate his regeneration, he definitely knows **when** his mind and heart has been renewed in the image of Christ.

We need not set a time line as to the instantaneous elements in our justification and regeneration. One cannot be true apart from the other.

What comes first? The bullet or the hole?

Justification is objective and regeneration is subjective. We do need to keep our thinking clear in the cause and basis for our being justified.

God justifies the ungodly, He does not make us godly so that He may then justify us.

Let me give an illustration:

Think of the two thieves crucified with Christ.

Consider two lost men; both are guilty and condemned by God.

Someone proclaims the truth that they, indeed all men, are guilty before God. They are both under God's righteous wrath. They deserve to be in hell.

The message of the cross of Jesus is proclaimed. Jesus died for sinners and sinners they are. The only requirement is that they look only to Jesus and believe that Jesus' blood has propitiated the wrath of God against sin. They need not walk an aisle, go into a baptistery, join a church - just believe that what Jesus has already done is **sufficient** to appease the wrath of God for them as an individual.

Romans

Behold, one of the two men actually believes in Jesus! He is stirred in his soul; he repents of his sin; he commits his life to the service of his King, nothing else will ever be more important to him than Jesus - not his wife and children, nor his mother, or even his golf and fishing . He believes, he is justified, he is regenerated, he repents, and for the rest of his life he trusts Jesus.

But there was the other man who heard the same message. He even felt a twinge of guilt but he thinks, "I am not so bad that God would send me to hell." "Besides, I have this favorite sin of mine, that no one else knows about, and I just won't give it up." "I will become a Christian when it is a more convenient time."

Both men die.

One man belongs to Christ, adopted into the family of God; the other man remains a child of the devil.

They both heard the Gospel of blood redemption.

Why did one man believe and the other man not believe?

1 Corinthians 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

John 10:14 I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. 15 As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

John 10:26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. 27 My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. 28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. 30 I and My Father are one."

Don't ever use the excuse that you wanted to trust Christ, but you didn't believe that you were one of His chosen ones. A man will not come to faith in Christ faith because he doesn't want to come.

John 5:40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Romans 5:17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

Romans

“It is said here that death reigned by the offense of the one man; consequently every one over whom death reigns is involved in that one offense of that one man ... Instead of dying for their actual sins, death is to all men the penalty of the one sin of the first Adam.” {Haldane}

“The righteousness possessed by the redeemed is better than that which in innocence was possessed by Adam; for theirs is the righteousness of Christ, the righteousness of Him who is God. To this the righteousness of Adam and of angels cannot be compared.” {Haldane}

What has Christ done for His own?

Revelation 1:4 John, to the seven churches which are in Asia:

Grace to you and peace from Him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven Spirits who are before His throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler over the kings of the earth. To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, 6 and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Revelation 5:8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. 9 And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll,
And to open its seals;
For You were slain,
And have redeemed us to God by Your blood
Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,
10 And have made us kings and priests to our God;
And we shall reign on the earth."

The progression of the apostle Paul in these three verses {15, 16, 17} is marvelous.

In verse 15, he says that the the result of the one sin is that **the many died**.

In verse 16, he adds that the one sin led to **judgement**, and the judgement was to **condemnation**.

In verse 17, he goes on to say not only does sin lead to judgement, and judgement to condemnation, but that the condemnation is ‘death.’

“Death reigned.”

Romans

But the main contrast is that those who receive abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

* * * * *

One of the issues raised by verses 5:12-21 deals with of the **intent** of the atonement.

The question to be answered is that when Christ went to the cross and died in the place of sinners was it God's **intent** to make salvation *possible* for everyone or to make salvation *certain* for the elect only.

Even this passage, that deals so directly with the representation of Adam and Christ, presents a problem for some because the words "many" and "all" may seem to be general or universal when really they are not.

If because of the one sin of the one man everybody is guilty before God, why doesn't the perfect parallel of Jesus with Adam as the type make the work of Jesus apply to everybody? If Adam's sin condemns everybody, why doesn't the righteousness of Christ justify everybody?

There are those who teach that God will ultimately save everyone, that there is no everlasting hell. But the same Bible that they use to prove the extension of eternal life to all men, clearly teaches that not all men are saved. It was Jesus who said: 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' 23 "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Matthew 7:21-23

So in these verses, does "the many" mean the human race in every instance?

For reasons unclear to me, the translators omitted the definite article "the" in two phrases in verse 15 and in two phrases in verse 19. I will read these two verses and include the definite article, "the", where it has been omitted.

Romans

Romans 5:15

But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense {the} many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to {the}many.

Romans 5:19

For as by one man's disobedience {the} many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience {the} many will be made righteous.

What difference does this make?

The definite article sets a limitation on “the many” in both cases.

The “those who receive abundance of grace . . . “ in verse 17 limits the application.

The work of Christ for the church is a mystery. In Scripture a mystery is something that was once hidden and now revealed.

There is the mystical union of Christ and the church.

Ephesians 5:25-32

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as **Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her**, 26 that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. 28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, **just as the Lord does the church**. 30 For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." 32 **This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church**

That “great mystery” is the mystical union of Christ and the church.

From “Adam and Christ”, by W. C. Wines:

"It is true, that in both cases the terms employed are unlimited; yet in both there is a limitation. All men are not brought into a state of condemnation - not the man Christ Jesus; and all men are not brought into a state of justification by the righteousness of the second Adam - not unbelievers. The condemned through Adam, and the justified through Christ cannot be coextensive; for such a doctrine would lead to blank universalism, and overthrow the plainest truth in all the Bible. Two consequences, abhorrent alike to reason and Scripture, would be involved in such an interpretation; first, the Lord Jesus Christ would have

Romans

been born under condemnation; and, secondly, the salvation of the whole human race would be not only possible, but certain.

What the apostle teaches, and all that he teaches, is, that as on account of the sin of Adam, all connected with him by ordinary generation are condemned, so on account of the righteousness of Christ, all connected with him by faith are justified.

The passage, therefore, affords no support to the doctrine of indefinite atonement, or universal redemption. On the contrary, so far as it bears upon the point at all, it is opposed to that theory...."

Do you see that "the many" and "all" in each comparison, are both limited. Adam represented all men except Jesus, therefore the limitation; Christ represented those who believe in Him. The alternative is universal salvation, i.e. no hell. The result will explain the purpose. Whatever the number of the saved are is the same number that God purposed to save.

God does not purpose to save a man AFTER faith, but BEFORE faith!

When Jesus died on the cross as the atonement for sin, was it the intent {purpose, desire, will} of God to make salvation *possible* for all men, to be decided by man's choice to allow God to save him, or was it the intent {purpose, desire, will} of God to make salvation *certain* for all those given to Christ by the Father before the foundation of the world?

If the atonement only makes salvation possible, then it is possible that no one would be saved. If you believe that it is God who determines who will be saved, you must believe in particular redemption.

We will conclude this discussion on the intent of the atonement with a brief comparison of this text and one which we have previously studied:
Romans 3:21-26.

Romans

Considering Romans 5:12-21, which teaches representation in Adam or in Christ, and in the context of Romans - going back to Romans 3:21-26:

"21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

An actual atonement was made for a particular people, namely the Old Testament saints who died in faith, that God "might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." The phrase "that He might be just," refers to those people who died in unbelief who were already in hell and who had a legitimate claim that God was not just because Abraham and many others were not in hell and their atonement had not been made. If then, the intent of the atonement was universal, those very people who were already in hell, would also have had their sins atoned for and they would now be correct in their charge that God was not just. It must be then that the atonement was particular in regard to the Old Testament saints. Is the nature of the atonement different for the New Testament saints? There is one God and one sacrifice for sin and the intent of the atonement is to redeem God's elect chosen "in Christ," from before the foundation of the world, called and set apart by the Holy Spirit, through the Gospel.

* * * * *