

**Grace Reigns  
Part 11  
Romans 5:12-21  
Rick Edwards**

Tonight we'll look at the last ten verses in the second major division of Romans. Paul contrasts and compares the influence of two men on the human race.

**I. HOW WE GOT INTO THIS MESS! - Romans 5:12-14**

- Why is there evil in the world? **V 12 Adams disobedience brought sin into the world**
- Why do people die? V 12 b **Death is a direct result of sin.**

**The Bible speaks of 3 kinds of death  
Physical -Spiritual -Eternal**

**What about people who've never heard of the Bible? V. 12-14**

**II. CONTRASTS AND COMPARISONS BETWEEN ADAM & CHRIST - Rom. 5:15-21**  
*"... Adam was a pattern of the One to come." (vs. 14b)*

VERSE	TWO MEN	ADAM	CHRIST
vs. 15	The event	Sin	Death on the Cross
vs. 16	Result	Judgment and condemnation	Justification
vs. 17	Effect	Death	Eternal Life
vs. 19	Reason	Disobedience	Obedience

TWO COMPARISONS:

**V. 18: Both committed one trespass compared to one act of righteousness**

**V. 19: Both influenced the entire race.**

**One act of sin brought universal condemnation. One act of Jesus brought salvation to all who believe!**

**V20-21 Grace will always reign for God's children**

**Part 11**  
**Romans 5:12-21**  
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Tonight we finish up the last ten verses of Section Two. This is probably the most complex passage in the book of Romans. It's a difficult section but very important to understand. No other passage in the New Testament has been more discussed and debated by Bible scholars than the ten verses we're going to look at. In just a few brief verses, Paul summarizes the philosophy and history of mankind and why we have the problems that we do.

Why is there evil in the world?  
Why do people die?  
What is there sin in the world?  
Why does human nature never change?  
What's going to happen to babies when they die?  
What happens to people who have never heard the gospel?

This section deals with these issues.

*v. 12 "Therefore just as sin entered the world through one man and death through sin in this way death came unto all men because all men sinned -- for before the law was given, sin was taken into the world but it was not taken into account when there was no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to Moses even over those who did not sin by breaking a command as did Adam who was a pattern for the one to come."*

Why is there evil in the world? "*sin entered the world through Adam*" -- one man. Adam was a real person and because of his **disobedience sin entered the world.**

What was his disobedience? He ate the "forbidden fruit." Eve was disillusioned but Adam willfully took it and ate it. God had said, you can eat everything in the garden except one thing and what did they go after? the one thing.

**Isn't this typical. Anytime there is a prohibition we immediately go after it.**

It's against the law, therefore I want to do it! Mom says don't do that so I want to do it. We always push against limits.

Like Pandora's Box, once sin entered the world, paradise was lost. Adam blew it!

He spoiled the world for us. Sin entered the world because of Adam. Paul doesn't discuss the origin of sin, which is Satan, but he just shows how it entered the world -- through one man.

Why do people die? "*death came through sin*" There are two diabolical twins -- sin and death. One goes with the other. When you see one you'll see the other. **Death is a direct result of sin.** The Bible says, "*The wages of sin is death*". What is death? Death means separation -- separation from God, separation from your loved ones. There are actually three different kinds of death as the Bible teaches:

**1) Physical death. This is universal. We all die.** *"It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgement."* It has already been determined. God knows when. But there was no physical death in the world until Adam sinned. God did not make the world to be a part of death. Theoretically Adam would have lived on and on. The Bible says that death came because of sin. When sin started messing things up, God said "I don't want this to go on for ever and ever" so he allowed death to come into the world and be a part of it. Back in Genesis 2 & 3, God had said "Once you eat this tree you will die." But did Adam die immediately? No. He lived on several hundred years. The Bible was talking about the second kind of death.

## **2) Spiritual death.**

This is much more serious than physical death. This is the major consequence of sin in the Bible. When Adam sinned something died inside of him. This tendency was passed on to everybody in the human race. All of us are born dead. Spiritually dead. That's why Jesus said, *"I have come that you might have life."* You don't need life if you've already got it. Ephesians 2:1 Paul is speaking to Christians, *"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sin in which you used to live..."* How can you live and be dead at the same time? He's talking about spiritual death. *"... you were followers of the ways of the world, the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. But because of His great love for us, God who is rich in His mercy made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions. For by grace you have been saved."* Paul is saying that before you become a believer you're spiritually dead. Every person is born spiritually dead.

**3) Eternal death.** When you die physically and you're dead spiritually. This happens when you leave this world -- you go to eternal life or eternal death. Heaven or hell. Physical death and spiritual death equals eternal death.

v. 12 *"Therefore, just as sin entered the world and death through sin and in this way death came to all men..."* Everybody dies. Romans 5:12 states two things: there is universal sin because Adam is the father of all of us, and there is universal death. We will automatically accept the second but a lot of people will argue about the first. A lot of people accept that it's obvious that everybody dies. But why? Because everybody has sinned.

*"... in this way death came to all men because all men sinned..."*

How can you sin if you haven't been born yet? He doesn't say "sins" but "sin".

**He's talking about the sin nature.** If you have an infection -- is it possible for a mother to pass on an infection to the baby she's carrying? Of course. And it's possible for generation after generation to carry down a defect. Sin is an emotional, spiritual defect.

**The Bible says Adam is the father of us all and when Adam sinned he was carrying in him the genes of everybody that was to be born and he passed on the infection called sin.**

**It's a sin nature, a tendency to sin. It's an inevitable tendency that we naturally want to go the wrong way.**

Some people think man is basically good. I don't think anybody that's said that has ever been a parent. If you've raised a child you know!

Do children, when they're born, have an automatic self will? A baby is a very selfish creature! They live for themselves, not for anybody else.

How many of you had to teach your kid to lie? to be disobedient?

It comes naturally. It is a natural tendency to want to do what's wrong. The Bible says it's because we're a part of the human race and when our father Adam sinned he passed on that infection, that sin nature, to be our own boss, to do our own thing. He passed it on down.

**Do you sin because you're a sinner or are you a sinner because you sin?**

When does an apple tree become an apple tree?  
After it bears apples? Or is it already an apple tree?  
It's already an apple tree! It gives apples because it's already an apple tree. A plum tree gives plums because it is a plum tree.  
An elephant has baby elephants because it is an elephant.

The Bible says that we sin, we commit sins, because we have a natural sin nature to go the wrong way, to do the wrong thing.

**We commit sins because we have a sin nature.** When Adam was alive he carried all the genes of the entire human race. **You and I were actually in Adam.** Adam blew it!

**Every chromosome that makes up all of us can be traced back to him.** This is what Paul is stating. He's making a theological argument.

We're getting kind of heavy here but as we come out of the other end of the tunnel you'll see where we're going and see the good news out of all this. What I'm saying right now may sound bad but it is really good news!

*"Just as sin entered in the world through one man and death came through sin and in this way death came to all men because all sinned."*

He's not talking about sins; he's saying we all were back there in Adam. Is it fair of God to condemn the whole world just because of one man who sinned? Is it fair that I suffer for Adam's sin? I wasn't there. I didn't have anything to do with it. Is that fair?

Yes. It's not only fair, but it's wise and gracious of God to condemn everybody in one man. Why?

**1) If God had taken each of us on a case by case basis and evaluated our lives He'd still come to the same conclusion: nobody's perfect.**

Even if He did take us on an individual basis is there anybody who could say "I've never done anything wrong in my life!" No. We've all sinned.

**2) But by condemning the entire world in one man God was able to save the whole world through one man, Jesus Christ.** One man brought total condemnation to the world but one man, Jesus Christ, can bring total salvation to the world.

This is what Paul is teaching in this passage. Adam represents sin for all of us; Jesus Christ represents salvation.

**What about people who have never heard of the Bible? What about people who don't know the Laws? Are they going to heaven? to hell?**

v. 13 *"For before the law [The Ten Commandments, the Old Testament] was given sin was in the world, but sin was not taken into account when there is no law."*

God says that even people who have never heard the Law, the Bible, God's truth, that they still have a sin nature too whether they know the laws or not simply because they're part of the human race. **The fact that they die proves it.**

**If you could ever find some person who never sinned, they'd never die.** But obviously even people who have never heard of the Bible die. But if they didn't have a sin nature they wouldn't die.

Paul goes on, *"But nevertheless even though there were no laws people still died. Death reigned from the time of Adam until the time of Moses even over those who didn't sin by breaking a command as did Adam."*

**Adam broke a command -- God told him not to do it and he broke it. It is your nature that condemns us, not individual sins.** We'll reap the results of individual sins here on earth, but those sins won't send us to hell. We put so much emphasis on what we do. God says it's who we are. We need to realize it's not what we do but who we are.

When you understand that you have a sin nature you're going to understand why you have psychological problems.

**Have you ever found yourself saying this: "The thing I don't want to do, I end up doing. And the things I want to do I end up not doing. Even though I know it's right I don't do it. Even though I know it's wrong I do it anyway."**

Paul talks about this in chapter 7. *"Oh wretched man that I am. I don't understand myself..."* I've had a lot of people come to me in counseling and say, "I don't know why I do this. Why do I continue in habits that are bad for me and I keep on doing them?" All of that makes sense when you realize you have a basic nature problem inside of you. That's the bad news.

**The good news is that Jesus Christ came to change that nature.**

That's what this passage is more and more about.

Paul says even though you don't sins (plural) because you have the nature, it causes you to die. Do babies die? Sure. But they've never had the chance to sin. They are part of the human race.

What happens to babies before they're old enough to accept Christ? The Bible says they are safe. They're not saved but they are safe.

**Psalm 116:6 "The Lord protects the simple- hearted."**

I think that includes people who are mentally retarded and go all the way through life never having enough common knowledge to know what commitment means.

Literally the verse means "preserves" -- He saves them. They are not saved in the sense that we are but they are safe.

What we're talking about here is called the doctrine of original sin. Everybody since Adam has had a problem.

*"Adam was a pattern of the one to come."* The rest of this section deals with the explanation of this verse. Amplified Version: *"Adam was a prefigure in reverse."*

He's talking about Jesus Christ. How is Adam like Jesus Christ? Adam blew it for the human race! Jesus saved the human race! How is Adam like Jesus? How can you compare them?

This passage should be divided into two parts. The comparisons and contrasts between Adam and Jesus.

**The first six verses of this passage (v. 12-17) are contrasts -- contrasts between Adam and Christ.**

**The last four verses (18-21) are comparisons -- between Adam and Christ.**

Words are very important in Scripture. Every word of God is inspired. There is no word by accident in God's word. Grammar is very important. And often when you understand the grammar it unlocks it and it comes alive.

There are two phrases that unlock this passage.

The first is a phrase of contrast. *"is not like"* v. 15. *"The gift is not like the trespass."* v. 16 *"The gift is not like the results."* v. 17

*"For by the trespass of one man death reigned through that of one man how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ."* "how much more" -- that's a phrase of contrast.

The verses afterward we see some comparisons -- the phrase *"so also"*. v. 18 *"consequently just as the result that trespass was condemnation for all men, so also..."* v. 19 *"...so also..."* right in the middle of the verse. v. 21 *"So that just as sin reigned in death, so also..."*

Before we look at these contrasts between Adam and Christ some of you are going to say "Why is this even important? Why did Paul even put this in the Bible? Why is Jesus compared to Adam and what difference does it make?"

What is this section in Romans that we're looking at about? Salvation. Paul, in chapters 4 and 5, is talking about how we're saved. In chapter 5 he goes over and over -- he keeps saying -- salvation is the result of a single act, Jesus dying on the cross. v. 1 "*we were justified through our Lord Jesus Christ*"; v. 6 "*Christ died for the ungodly*"; v. 8 "*justified by His blood, He gave Himself for us*"; v. 9 "*justified in His blood*"; v. 10 "*we're reconciled through His death*"; v. 11 "*we receive reconciliation*".

**Over and over Paul keeps coming back and saying there is one even that makes you a believer -- makes you a Christian -- one single event and that is Jesus Christ's death on the cross.** Paul was a logical teacher. He always anticipated people's questions.

**He's saying "Some of you are thinking how can the actions of one person affect the whole world?"**

How could Jesus Christ who died in Jerusalem affect everybody today?

**Is it possible that one man could affect the entire human race?" Paul says, "Yes, Let me give you an example. His name was Adam."**

That's why he's talking about this. One person can make a difference in the entire human race.

This is the most complicated passage in the entire book of Romans. It's very helpful to know where you're going as you're struggling through Paul. v. 18 "*Consequently, just as the result that one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.*" Just like Adam blew it for everybody, Jesus Christ saves it for everybody! This is why Paul is proving the point that people can be affected by one person.

### **Comparisons:**

v. 15 first the event. "*But the gift is not like the trespass.*" What event?

#### **1. Two events –**

- **Adam's sin is the event under Adam;**
- **Christ's gift under Christ.**

He's comparing two things: Adam's temptation and sin in the Garden of Eden and Jesus Christ's gift on the cross.

#### **2. The result of their action.** v. 16 "*Again the gift of God is not like the result of one man's sin.*"

- The result of Adam's sin was **judgement and condemnation.**

He's contrasting two different results. The result of Adam's sin was judgement and condemnation.

- **The result of Christ's gift was justification.** In verse 16 it says "*many transgressions*". Jesus dealt with them all. He paid for them all. He not only paid for the sins I committed yesterday and today, but also the ones I'm going to commit next week. Jesus not only took care of Adam's big sin that gave us our human nature but He also took care of all the other sins that every human being would commit over the next thousands of years. So we see the contrast in results.

### 3. v. 17 we contrast the effect. T

- **The effect of Adam's sin: death reigned.** "*For if by one trespass of one man death reigned then how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life.*"
- The effect: the difference is death and life. Adam brought death through his sin and we can reign in life because Jesus brought life. Death reigns today. Every funeral process proves that is so.

### 4. v. 19. A contrast in the reason these events happen.

- Adam's event -- sin;
- Christ's event -- His gift. v 19 "*For just as through the disobedience of one man, the many were made sinners, so through the obedience of one man the many will be made righteous.*"

The contrast of Adam's disobedience to Christ's obedience. Phil. 2:8 "*Christ was obedient even unto death.*"

**Those are the contrasts. But there are two comparisons in this passage. Things that are similar.**

**1. The first comparison is in v. 18 -- both committed a single act. Adam committed a single act;** Christ committed a single act. "*Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act.*" Circle "one". The key word in this passage is the word "one".

It's used eleven times. **One trespass compared to one act of righteousness.** Trespass means crossing over the line, go beyond the boundaries. Genesis 2:16-17 we find that Adam made a calculated decision to sin.

God told Adam how far he could go and Adam decided to go beyond that limit. God told Adam, "This is how far you can go and no further. This is the limit." Adam went right to the limit and said, "You want to bet?" Adam trespassed. He broke the law.

Why is it our nature to rebel against those same kinds of boundaries? Like father, like son! We're all human. The first human did it and the tendency is passed on down.

**# 2 v. 19. The other thing we can say is that both influenced the entire race.** "*For just as through the disobedience of one man, the many were made sinners, [because of Adam's sin we all got infected] So also through the obedience of one man, Jesus Christ, the many will be made righteous.*"

**One sin brought universal condemnation. One act of Jesus brought universal salvation.**

It's not automatic. Does this mean that because of Adam we all became sinners and because of Jesus we're automatically saved? Sounds good!

Logically it makes sense. Everybody sinned because of Adam and every saved because of Jesus.

There are some people who actually believe this. It's called universalism. They say, "Our duty is not to go out and save anybody but to tell them they are saved and just don't know it. Then they'll start acting like it." Some liberal church believe that. But it's not that way.

v. 17 in the middle *"How much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace reign in life."* Those who receive -- that's our responsibility. Yes, Jesus has made salvation possible but it's our responsibility to receive it. Receive it -- that's the key.

Paul gives a beautiful conclusion to this real heavy section. V. 20 *"The Law was added so that trespass might increase ] But where sin increased, grace increased all the more."*

**In the Greek it's the word, super, super increased. Every time you see the devil doing more and more bad things in the world, God increases His grace greater.**

I think the Bible teaches clearly that the world will get worse as time goes on. We're not in evolution we're in devolution. It was perfect when we started and it's been going downhill ever since. We're devolving. But the good news is that God says, "Where sin increased I'll just explode grace in greater abundance."

The deadest churches are dead and the most alive churches are alive!

You cannot make a blanket statement and say everything in the world is bad. There are a lot of things that are good in the world. Because while the devil is at work, God is at work.

v. 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."*

Two key phrases: "reign". Five times in this passage he uses the word reign. v. 21 "sin reigned in death but now through grace might reign to bring eternal life". Whenever you see sin and death the twins that fit together, there's another set of twins -- grace and life. Sin always goes with death; grace always goes with life. We don't have kings here so we don't know what it means to be "reigned" over. It means to be controlled. Either sin and death are going to control your life or grace and life are going to control your life. You get to choose.

One other phrase in v. 20 "much more" -- that phrase is used three times. v. 15, 17, 20. Every time it's used it's referring to God's grace. In Jesus Christ we gain much, much more than we ever lost in Adam! Grace is much, much more powerful!

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