

XXXIV. Romans in Biblical Perspective  
*The Gospel of God*  
“The First Adam and the Last Adam – Part 1”  
Romans 5:12-21  
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Romans 5:12-21 says [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— [13] for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the One who was to come.*

*[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. [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. [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.*

*[18] Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. [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. [20] Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, [21] so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The grass withers, the flower fades, the Word of our God abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

We have spent the last three studies in Romans 5:1-11 and I wish I could have spent more time for it was a text that was so foundational for the Reformation. It is so deep, rich and have these glorious, heart exhilarating truths of the Gospel. We are told that the eternal love of God before the foundations of the world was demonstrated at the cross where Christ redeemed His people from their sins and that this was done at the right time. We see that in this text Christ died for His enemies, sinners, the helpless, the weak and the ungodly. Christ died for us out of His grace not out of our merit. It also tells us of the God who never started loving us, has always loved us, will never stop loving us and His love doesn't begin at the cross but it is demonstrated at the cross where He looses us from our sins. In it is the full assurance having now been justified through Christ by His grace and faith in Him.

The most glorious work of the Holy Spirit I believe since Pentecost itself was the Reformation where the corruption of the church, theology, doctrine and the Gospel itself was addressed with clarity in those marvelous five solas – that we're saved by grace alone (*sola gratia*), through faith alone (*sola fide*), in Christ alone (*solus Christus*), for the glory of God alone (*solus deo gloria*) assured by the truth of God's Word which alone is our only rule of faith and practice (*sola Scriptura*). I just love and delight in Romans 5:1-11 which is the soil of the Reformation. It is the magisterial text for the magisterial Reformers for it tells us what He has done for us and gives us the joy of our salvation.

I recently did a funeral service for a dear woman of this congregation and one of the last times she attended our church service was on the Romans 5:1-11 text where we went over the five legacy blessings that are included in that text. One is we have peace with God. Two we rejoice in the glory of God. Three we rejoice in our sufferings. Four we have access to God, and she knowing she was soon to be in the presence of God. Then it declares the glory of God by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us which is the fifth legacy blessing.

As we look at this next section of Romans 5:12-21 I will be dividing it up into three parts because grammatically it covers three themes in this text – two men, two works, and two results. I thought I could cover this in one study but I can't because it's too rich. This is a challenging text for the mind but as we go through this, I think this will be as exhilarating for you as Romans 5:1-11 were because it answers something for us.

When people ask me why I majored in theology and history because I only had to take one science class and one math class. I'm not a science or math guy but there is one exception that got my attention when I was in high school and that geometry. Part of the reason it grabbed my attention was one of my coaches taught it – he was good coach and he was a good teacher. When this church Briarwood paid for me to go back and start a church in my home town of Charlotte, North Carolina I did have some concerns about being up in the pulpit preaching and someone I grew up with recognizing me because before I became a Christian I did not live a very Christian life. I had this fear someone would raise a white handkerchief and say 'hey Ike, remember me?' One Sunday I kind of had that happen for when I was preaching I saw this woman out in the congregation and thought 'I know that lady.'

Sure enough, she came up to me afterward and said 'Ike do you remember me?' And I realized it was a girl that had the same name as one of my sister and was in my geometry class so I said 'Yes, hi Vicki.' She sat behind me in geometry and dated one of my good friends and later married another good friend of mine. I hadn't seen her in a number of years but there she was. She said to me 'I heard you were a Christian and told people I didn't believe it so I had to come see it myself. I already go to another church but I'm so glad I came for you actually are a Christian. I really enjoyed the sermon but I have one problem.' I said 'What's that?' She said 'When you were in my geometry class I don't remember you being that smart. I understand why now you do this and I'll be back to visit.'

Geometry though was a little bit different for me. The reason I found geometry interesting was because of the axioms you had to know in order to do geometry. I remember my coach telling us that we were going to be looking at problems that seem to have no solution or are way too complex to have a solution but if you remember these axioms what is confounding you will become clear. Things that are confusing you will gain clarity and what you think is unsolvable will be solvable and what you think is so complex will soon be simple, but you have to remember the axioms. That's where we are in Romans 5. There are questions that this text will answer but it challenges the mind so stay with me for the next couple of studies as we study this particular text.

These foundational axioms are so important to get into place. Who does Jesus tell us to share the Gospel with? He tells us to share it with everybody and why does He want us to share it with everybody? It is because everybody needs a Savior because everybody is lost and a sinner. How did that happen? Romans 1:18 through Romans 4 said that we **all** have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Why is that no matter who your talk to or where you go that there is the universality of sin, shame, guilt, and death in everyone? Why isn't there some exception out there? Will Jesus lose any of those that the Father has given to Him? None of God's elect

will be lost. Everyone needs to hear the Gospel because everyone is a sinner and bears the guilt of sin, the fear of death with its enslavement and the shame of sin. Why is everyone born sinners headed to eternal condemnation with no exceptions? How is it that none of the elect of God are lost and declare assurance of salvation?

Here is an axiom (certain theological principle) that God built into creation for the purposes of redemption and it is manifested in the fall for when Adam fell everybody fell – all of Adam's race. When Christ saved His people all of them are saved – the redeemed race. Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit having given us the 'what' of the glories of the Gospel now comes to the 'how' and we anticipate it. Two of my favorite songs because of the Gospel is Amazing Grace and Amazing Love. The first verse of Amazing Love says this;

*And can it be that I should gain  
an interest in the Savior's blood  
Died he for me who caused his pain  
For me, who him to death pursued  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me!  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me!*

When this axiom is given in this Romans 5 text we find that we have two unique men. We find out they did two works – one glorious and one condemning. We find out there are two results. In this study we will look at the two men.

Romans 5:12-14 says [12] *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man (first Adam), and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— [13]for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. [14] Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the One who was to come.*

The word therefore connects us to what he has just said in Romans 5:1-11. He told us we were all helpless and hopeless and there was a way made through His Son Jesus. It is the power of God (the Gospel) in the hands of the Spirit that makes helpless sinners come from death unto life by gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. What assures us of that salvation? It is the word federal theology. We live in a county that has borrowed this principle for government and call it a constitutional federal republic that through an election, our vote puts in place a representative and when that representative votes I have just voted. The phrase elections have consequences is because we're a federal republic. When we elect a president and he has presided then we have presided. That is the principle of federalism – representation.

The Almighty in creation placed the principle of federalism – federal theology – the One for the many/the all, but it was not by us voting. It was by Divine appointment. The Almighty appointed the representatives. He appointed two representatives. By the way, there are two Hebrew words for man and one is *Ish* which means man and *Isha* is the reflection of man which we translate woman but the word given to name the man *Adam* means mankind. So Adam not only means man but he is also the representative of mankind, his entire race and Christ, the Second Adam, has now become a man and is the Representative of the new humanity – all of those that the Father has given to Him. That is why He was given another name Yeshua (Jesus, Son of God) has come as a Man, Immanuel, to save from all of humanity His people from their sins.

We see how this principle flows through the text. Sin comes into the world through the first Adam, through one man and his one sin came sin to all men and that's why we can write Romans 3:23 which says *[23] for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God* and that there are none righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10) for all have turned aside, gone their own way (Romans 3:12). It was assured when Adam sinned and when he sinned, we sinned. This is why I fight atheistic darwinianism because in one of its principles it divides humanity into 3, 5 or 7 races and I believe that is theologically wrong for the Bible is clear. God says in Acts 17:26, *[26] And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place.* God made from one man the entire human race. There are multiple ethnicities and cultures because of the judgment of sin at Babel, but there is only one race – the human race. Everyone of us has DNA that comes from Adam.

Going back to Romans 5:12-14 we see that sin brings death which spread to everyone because all sinned. Now we see our actual sin is the result of Adam's original sin. So, we all sin because we are born sinners. We are not born a blank tablet – a noble savage. We are not our own Adam but we are all of the race of Adam. We are born with that sin nature so we sin and Paul emphasizes this in an interesting way. Sin in our catechism is defined by the transgression of God's law and God's law came in the book of Exodus that came through the Holy Spirit inspired authorship of Moses. So, what about from Adam to Moses? Paul is saying the law which defines sin did not originate sin for sin originated in Adam, therefore all born of Adam sinned, even before the law was graciously given to show us our sin. Sin isn't counted where there is no law, but our sins are counted, why? It is because they came in Adam and death reigned from Adam to Moses because sin was here and sin originated in Adam. Then Paul goes to this One who is to come.

Romans 5:15-17 says *[15] But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass (Adam), much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many. [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. [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.*

Adam was the type of Jesus Christ, the One to come. Adam is the first man and the first Adam and Jesus is the second Man and the Second Adam, plus Jesus is the last Man and the Last Adam. Jesus here stands at the point of our federal Head. The judgment followed one trespass but redemption will come by the obedience of the One who will remove all the trespasses of all of His people for all of eternity. Adam didn't become our representative by our election and Jesus didn't become the Representative for the redeemed by our election but by Divine appointment. Adam was the head of the human race and Christ is the Head of the redeemed race – the forgiven race, from the judgment of sin.

Federalism is all over the Bible. We see it in events. When you see someone scoring the winning touchdown, if the person has an integrity they say 'We won, for when I crossed that goal line my whole team crossed that goal line' not 'I won.' Here is an example from the Bible. There was a time when there was no champion to represent Israel and then an unlikely one stepped up to fight the giant, Goliath, who was taunting Israel. His name was David. The Bible says when God enabled David to take Goliath down in I Samuel 17 that all the men of Israel and Judah rejoiced and shouted for they had won. When those warriors went home to tell of the

event, I'm sure they talked about David but they probably also said 'we won! Israel won the victory!' So here is that principle of federalism at work. We see it time and time again.

Another time in the Bible is in the ceremonial law when the high priest goes into the Holy of Holies with the offering, he brings the sins of the people and God built the concepts in the vestments he wore. The breast plate had twelve stones which represented the twelve tribes of Israel. When the priest went before God with the sacrifice all Israel went with him.

Jesus is our Messiah and that means He fulfills three offices – Prophet, Priest and King. The prophets came from any of the twelve tribes. The kings came from the tribe of Judah for it says the scepter shall not leave the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49:10). Jesus could be our Prophet because He was from one of the twelve tribes and He could be our King because He was from the tribe of Judah. Two genealogies point that out – the genealogy of Mary from the book of Luke and from Jesus' stepfather Joseph in the book of Matthew. The high priests came from the tribe of Levi so how can Jesus be a High Priest if He is not a Levite? The way He is our High Priest is because of a certain Messianic Psalm. Let's look at Psalm 110.

Psalm 110 is a Messianic Psalm and we're told what He is going to do. Psalm 110:1-4 says [1] *The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool."* (Jesus is ruling and reigning from the right hand of the Father.)

[2] *The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your enemies!* [3] *Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of your power, in holy garments;* (He will empower them by the Spirit of God and be born again because they will volunteer freely because their wills have been set free through the new birth and will be justified) *from the womb of the morning, the dew of your youth will be yours.* [4] *The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You (the Messiah) are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."*

So, Jesus does away with the Levitical priesthood which is a temporary priesthood because He is the eternal priesthood as revealed in the priest encountered in the book of Genesis and included in the Messianic Psalm, the priesthood of Melchizedek. This comes from Genesis 14 after Abraham had won the war and on his way to back to his home we see this passage from Genesis 14.

Genesis 14:17-20 says [17] *After his (Abraham's) return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).* [18] *And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.)* [19] *And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth; [20] and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!"*

We see in the book of Hebrews that this Melchizedek is an eternal Priest for He has no genealogy or father or mother and this is what is called a Christofany – a pre-Incarnate appearance of Christ. now this King Priest, Royal Priest, Magisterial Priest appears before Abraham. What does Abraham do in the book of Genesis that is affirmed in the book of Hebrews? He does three things – he pays Him a tithe, he worships and he bows (Genesis 14:20-24, Hebrews 7). It is the lesser to the greater. Who is in Abraham's loins – Isaac and in the loins of Isaac is Jacob and in the loins of Jacob is his twelve sons of which one is Levi. So when Abraham bowed Levi bowed and the greater does away with the lesser. The greater priesthood is what Christ is – the eternal priesthood, Melchizedek. This is federalism at work again – headship stands in its place.

Here is the takeaway. Who is your representative before the throne today? You start out by Divine decree in Adam – here is the probation, the sin, guilt, death, shame and condemnation

but here is the Second Adam – Christ. Adam in his disobedience brought sin, death, guilt, shame and condemnation but the Second Adam took away that sin with His obedience. His passive obedience is where He takes our sin on Himself when He went to the cross and pays for it. His active obedience is where He provides for us a perfect righteousness for all eternity. There is the perfection of our Adam, Christ. Are you still in Adam or by God’s grace in faith and repentance as God works on your soul, come to Christ? If you’re in Adam, all die. If you’re in Christ all are made alive.

I want to close by looking at I Corinthians 15. Here they were arguing about the resurrection. I Corinthians 15:20-23 says [20] *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.* [21] *For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead.* [22] ***For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.*** (One might think I believe in universal salvation after reading this text but let’s continue in the text.) [23] *But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.*

Who belongs to Christ? All that the Father gives Him and who are they? They are the elect of God. We have two Adams and two alls – Adam’s all is the human race, Christ the second Adam, His all is those who are His whom the Father has given Him. Again, who will be your representative before the throne today – Adam (sin, death, condemnation) or Christ (obedience, life, salvation)? Come to Him today. Let’s pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together in Your Word. Thank You for the privilege to rejoice in Your goodness, grace and mercy in Jesus Christ. I do pray that all who are reading this would not hear what I say but what You are saying to them right now and if they don’t know You that they would come from the tomb of sin into the presence of Christ by the power of Christ to be in Christ and Christ in them. Help them leave Adam and come to Christ and be counted in Him therefore through Him have everlasting life. None of Adam’s race can exist without sin and its consequences of judgment. None of Christ’s race will be touched by that judgment for Christ has already taken it and all of Christ’s will enjoy the blessings of everlasting life as He loses not one of His own whom You have given Him. Praise His Name forever, Amen!