

Are YOU in Adam or in Christ?

Text: Romans 5:12-21

Introduction:

1. This passage represents a fitting conclusion to the subject of justification by faith that has been the focus of this section of the Book.
2. The central theme of these verses focuses upon the impact of ‘one’ – one man and one act and the subsequent influence upon many. The word ‘one’ is the key word, appearing 12 times in these verses. Paul draws a parallel between Adam and Christ (note the word ‘figure’ (meaning type) in Vs. 14). More importantly, the Apostle presents a clear contrast between Adam and Christ with Christ being presented infinitely greater than Adam. The substance is of necessity, far greater than the shadow.
3. “Paul presents a comparison between the effects of Adam’s sin and the effects of the redemptive work of Christ.” (RWP)
4. 1 Cor. 15:45 *“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”*

We will examine these verses under 3 headings:

I. The Condition of Mankind (Vs. 12-14)

A. Sin’s Entrance (12a)

1. Note: A literal Adam and a literal fall essential to understanding the doctrine of salvation. Paul assumes the Genesis account of beginnings as being authentic.
2. ‘sin’ = spoken of in the singular. Speaks of the sin nature which forms the root and source of all sins. Adam transmitted to his descendants both his physical and spiritual nature.
3. Note: We do not become a sinner by committing sins, rather, we commit sins because we are sinners by nature.
4. Psalm 51:5 *“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”*
5. Psalm 58:3 *“The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.”*

B. Sin’s Effect (12b)

1. Death is a byproduct of sin.
 - a. Spiritual death – Eph. 2:1. True life does not begin until you have been made alive through the new birth.
 - b. Physical death
 - c. Eternal death - Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8.

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2. Corporate responsibility. This passage teaches us the doctrine of imputed sin. That is that when Adam sinned, we sinned also. Adam sinned as our federal head and representative and we all share in the crime in a similar way that God punished Israel as a whole for the sin of one man Achan. “The great truth of Romans 5:12-21 is that a representative acted, involving those connected with him” (Newell)
 3. 1 Cor. 15:22 *“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”*
 4. Illustration: Levi paid tithes in Abraham before his Grandfather Isaac was even born.
 5. Illustration: Believers are said to be in Christ and therefore they were united to Him in His death, burial and resurrection.
- C. **Sin’s Explanation (Vs. 13-14)**
1. “until the law” = the Mosaic Law. There was law before Moses in the consciences of men. The coming of the law increased their responsibility and guilt.
 2. The existence of death between Adam and Moses is evidence that sin reigned.

II. The Comparison of Two Men (Vs. 15-19)

A. Adam – through Adam came the following:

1. Sin & death (Vs. 12, 15)
 - a. “but not as the offence” = has the idea, “in distinction to the offense is the free gift.” (Sorenson)
 - b. ‘offence’ = a falling alongside, a deviation from the right path (Wuest)
2. Judgment & condemnation (Vs. 16, 18)
3. The reign of death (Vs. 17)
 - a. ‘reigned’ = to be king, to exercise kingly power
 - b. Hebrews 2:14-15 *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*
4. Imputed sin (Vs. 19)
 - a. ‘disobedience’ = the nature of Adam’s first act of sin.
 - b. Note: That is why in order to be saved, men must obey the Gospel (Rom. 6:17, 2 Thess. 1:8)

B. Christ – through Christ came the following:

1. The abundant gift of grace (Vs. 15)
 - a. “free gift” = lit. the grace gift, a gift apart from human merit
 - b. Note: Salvation described as a gift 6 times in these verses!

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- c. “much more” = the gift surpasses the sin in its efficacy. The abundance of salvation is a key thread that runs through these verses. This phrase appears 5 times in this chapter (9, 10, 15, 17, 20) “Adam’s sin had a one-dimensional effect – it brought death. But the effects of Christ’s death are multi-faceted.” (JM)
2. The gift of justification (Vs. 16, 18)
3. The gift of righteousness (Vs. 17, 19)

III. The Conclusion of the Matter (Vs. 20-21)

A. The Purpose of the Law (Vs. 20a)

1. ‘entered’ = came in beside
2. “offence might abound” = ‘abound’ means to increase or augment. Sin by the commandment becomes exceeding sinful, it highlights just how sinful sin is! The law paints sin in its true colours.
3. Galatians 3:19 *“Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions...”*
4. Romans 7:13 *“...that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.”*

B. The Abundance of Grace (Vs. 20b)

1. Against the dark backdrop of our sin with its vileness highlighted by the law, grace shines forth its glorious, magnificent rays.
2. “much more abound” = A strong word. The flood of grace surpassed the flood of sin, great as that was (and is); it overwhelmed the overflowing deluge of iniquity.
3. It is grace that is greater than ALL our sin.
4. The hymn writer expressed it perfectly in the words “Grace and love like mighty rivers flowed incessant from above, and Heaven’s peace and perfect justice, kissed a guilty world in love.”
5. Object Lesson: Glass of dirty water

C. The Reign of Grace (Vs. 21)

1. The reign of sin unto death – sin is personified. Sin rules in the unsaved heart like an absolute monarch. The universal reign of sin has been clearly explained in 1:18-20.
2. The reign of grace unto life – a reign unto eternal life as opposed to eternal death. The reign of grace has been explained in 3:21-5:11.
3. Colossians 1:12-13 *“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son”*

Conclusion: There are only two sides you can stand upon with nothing in between. There is no middle ground. You are either going to hell or heaven, you are either saved or lost, you are either in Adam or in Christ. On which side are you?