

Introduction

- 5:13,14 were a parenthesis.¹ Paul never completed the sentence began in 5:12. The parenthesis ended by naming “Adam” as “*a type* [symbol, foreshadowing] of *Him Who was to come*,” that is, Jesus Christ.² Now the apostle returns to contrasting the first Adam and the second Adam (Jesus Christ).
- The word “one” occurs 12 times in 5:12-19. Paul is highlighting the uniqueness of these two men, Adam and Jesus Christ, and their actions on behalf of humanity.
- All humanity is born “in Adam” with his unavoidable inclination to rebel against God and the death penalty for that rebellion. Adam’s actions in Genesis 3 affected all of his children – including us.³
- As we saw last week, all of humanity is dead in its sins by its relationship to Adam, but we can be “born again” into the second Adam, Jesus Christ, in Whom is life: “...*since by a man [Adam] came death, by a man [Jesus Christ]*

¹ It was an important parenthesis! He stopped what he was saying in 5:12 to address the question: “What about those who have never heard?” The answer had already been given in Romans 1 (all humanity knows enough about God from creation to be held guilty) and Romans 2 (God gave humanity a conscience aware of His Law).

² Paul teaches us here that from Adam onward, the narrative of the Bible and the movement of all human history was leaning toward the coming of Christ (consider Luke’s genealogy which goes from Adam to Christ, 3:23-38).

³ “Our first parents...[are] the root, and by God’s appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of the sin was imputed, and corrupted nature conveyed, to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation [that’s **us!**], being now conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, the servants of sin, the subjects of death, and all other miseries, spiritual, temporal, and eternal, unless the Lord Jesus set them free” (1689 Baptist Confession, 6.2,3).

also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive”
(1 Corinthians 15:21,22).

The Giver and the Sinner (5:15,16)

Death and Grace (5:15)

5:15 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.

- Paul introduces the idea of the “free gift” in this section (5:15,16). He’ll use two words translated “gift” here. One word (δωρεά) emphasizes the gift as something given (5:15,17). The other word (χάρισμα) emphasizes the fact that the gift has not been earned or merited – it is given solely from the gracious nature of the Giver (5:15,16).⁴
 - **One of the more noteworthy passages that speaks of this “free gift” will come at the end of the next chapter – a passage that shows our need and how God’s gracious provision meets that need: “...the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (6:23).**
- Adam’s original sin (“the transgression of the one”) is described several different ways in this section:
 - “...through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin” (5:12).
 - “...the offense of Adam” (5:14)
 - “...the one who sinned...one transgression” (5:16).
 - “...the transgression of the one” (5:17).

⁴ You can see the relationship between the word translated “free gift” (χάρισμα) and the word translated “grace” (χάρις).

- “...one transgression” (5:18).
- “...one man’s disobedience” (5:19).
- Using the word “grace,” Paul sets up a parallel that shows us the dual nature of our Savior:
 - “...the grace of **God**...”
 - “...the gift by the grace of the one **Man**, Jesus Christ...”⁵
 - Jesus Christ our Savior is eternally and fully God, and, since His first coming, fully human. Through Him as fully God and man we experience the saving grace of God.⁶

⁵ The divine and human aspects of our salvation are also highlighted by Paul in his first letter to Timothy: “...there is one **God**, and one mediator also between God and men, **the man** Christ Jesus, Who gave Himself as a ransom for all” (1 Timothy 2:5,6a).

⁶ Athanasius (A.D. 296-373) stood for this biblical witness against a massively popular tide of false teaching concerning Christ. The saying “*Athanasius contra mundum*” (“Athanasius against the world”) describes his battle. May we, too, be able to confess and defend the truth of Christ, no matter how that truth is twisted in the world. A confession summarizing his defense was later put together. This translation into English is from Baptist preacher Hercules Collins (1646-1702), who thought it a basic primer with which every Baptist should be familiar: “For the right faith, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man, God of the substance of His Father, [eternally] begotten before the world; perfect God, perfect man, of reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, inferior to the Father as touching His manhood; Who although He be God and man, yet is not two, but one Christ; one, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by taking of the manhood into God; one altogether not by confusion of substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell [the grave, the place of the dead], rose again on the third day from the dead, He

- Let’s look at this phrase again: “...***much more*** did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, ***abound*** to the many.” **God’s grace is all-sufficient to remedy your spiritual sickness, be strength in your weakness, restore your soul, make one the divided and broken (in our hearts and in our relationships), give us all we need to fulfill God’s purpose for His Church, reconcile us to our God forever, and take us home. His grace is the fullness of “much more” and “abound.” Rest in the grace that is yours super-abundantly by faith in Jesus Christ alone.**

Condemnation and Justification (5:16)

^{5:16}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.

- Paul also contrasts Adam’s one sin and our countless transgressions:
 - “one transgression” → “the judgment” → “condemnation”
 - “many transgressions” → “free gift” → “justification”
- Notice that the only thing we bring to our salvation is “many transgressions.” The only way that doesn’t result in “condemnation” is if the “free gift” of God in Christ Jesus is interposed between our “many transgressions” and our judgment before God. The opposite of “the judgment” is the “free gift.”
- While we inherit our sin nature as a result of Adam’s “one transgression,” we all freely choose to follow father

ascended into heaven, sits on the right hand of God the Father almighty, from where He shall come to judge the living and the dead.”

Adam’s way through our “*many transgressions.*” We saw this in 5:12, where the historical fact “*through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin,*” is realized in all our lives through the reality “*death spread to all men, because all sinned.*”

- While the word “*transgression*” in 5:15 (twice), 17, 18 refers to Adam’s original sin and its effects on humanity, the word “*transgressions*” in 5:16 refer to our sin. We first encountered this word in 4:25, when Paul told us that “*Jesus our Lord from the dead...was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification*” (4:24,25).⁷
- “*Condemnation*” is a new idea introduced for the first time in the apostle’s letter to the Roman Church (he’ll mention it again in 5:18). Before God the righteous Judge now and forever, human beings have only two statuses before Him: in Adam we are under “*condemnation,*” but in Christ (the second Adam) we are under “*justification.*” Beloved, hold on tight to the promise Paul makes concerning our original “*condemnation*” and the difference Christ makes: “*...there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus*” (Romans 8:1).⁸

⁷ Some people don’t like talking/preaching or hearing/reading the Bible concerning sin or our “*transgressions.*” However, you miss the Good News and all of its eternal glory and blessing if you skip over passages that speak of our transgression of God’s Law! READ 2 Corinthians 5:19; Ephesians 1:7; 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13.

⁸ Romans 8:1 is, appropriately, the last time the word “*condemnation*” is used in the N.T. For the believer, Christ is the last word on our condemnation.

The Second Adam’s Righteousness and Our Life (5:17,18)

Those Who Receive Will Reign (5:17)

^{5:17}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.

- “*...death reigned...*” From the O.T. Exodus from Egypt to the salvation we have in Jesus Christ, the Bible teaches us that Christ is the One Who rescues us from the realm of sin, slavery, and death.⁹ **Being under the control of sin is being under the reign of death.** We’ll see this theme come up again in Paul’s application of baptism to normal Christian life in Romans 6.
- In 5:17 an amazing promise is made to “*those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness*” by believing in Jesus Christ. We, who were under the reign of death, now ourselves “*will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.*”

⁹ Consider the last verses of Genesis: “*Joseph said to his brothers, ‘I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob.’ Then Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying, ‘God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones up from here.’ So Joseph died at the age of one hundred and ten years; and he was embalmed and placed in a coffin in Egypt*” (Genesis 50:24-26). Egypt is like the grave, and the movement from Egypt to the Promised Land was upward out of the grave. At the other end of the Bible, Jerusalem is called “*Egypt,*” where the “*Lord was crucified*” (Revelation 11:8) because of their enslavement to sin and rejection of Christ (see also Galatians 4:21-31, where “*the present [earthly] Jerusalem...is in slavery with her children,*” and is compared to Hagar, the Egyptian slave woman).

- This promise is a restoring of the original commission of Adam, who was to show the image of God by reigning as His representative: “...*God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule’*” (Genesis 1:26). Instead of representing God’s sovereignty, man fell for the lie of the serpent that he himself could “*be like God*” (Genesis 3:5).¹⁰
- We see now that in the salvation we have in Jesus Christ, our representing the absolute sovereign reign of God is restored. We “*reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ*” (Romans 5:17). I would compare this with the promises of reigning on the earth in Christ (Revelation 5:10; 20:4,6; 22:5). What we lost at the beginning of the Book (Genesis) in our sin is restored to an infinitely greater level in Christ at the end of the Book (Revelation). The end is better than the beginning.¹¹

¹⁰ The taunt against the king of Babylon describes this root sin of the human heart (wanting to be in control instead of God): “...*you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly [הַר-מוֹעֵד], later rendered “Armageddon” in Revelation 16:16] in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High’*” (Isaiah 14:13,14). Satan, having succeeding in using this temptation against the first Adam, tries it on the second Adam (and fails): “...*the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, ‘All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go, Satan! For it is written [in Deuteronomy 6:13], ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only’*” (Matthew 4:8-10).

¹¹ Pastor Richard Barcellos (Grace Reformed Baptist Church of Palmdale, CA) coined this sentence.

A Life Declared Right Before God (5:18)

5:18 *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.*

- “*One act of righteousness*” refers to Jesus’ obedience to the demands of God’s Law in His life.¹²
- “...*all men.*” Paul is not teaching universal salvation here. All born “in Adam” (everyone) have a sin nature and are condemned to death for that sin. All reborn “in Christ” have their sins justified, are given a new nature, and eternal life.

Obedient in Our Place (5:19)

5:19 *For as through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.*

His Obedience and Ours

- “...*through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous,*” or justified. His obedience decisively, once-for-all, is our justification or acquittal before God now and forever.
- Remember, though, that our justification is not the end of our salvation, but the beginning. God has sent forth of His Holy Spirit into believers in Jesus Christ, that we would be “*conformed to the image of His Son*” (Romans 8:29). All those justified before the Father by faith in Jesus Christ are filled with the Spirit, Who works to make us obedient to the Father like Christ. Paul’s letter to the Romans, after all, begins (1:5) and ends (16:26) by mentioning the obedience of those who are saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

¹² The “*one act of righteousness*” (δικαιώματος, from δικαίωμα) is used through the N.T. to refer to obedience to God’s O.T. Law and God’s use of that Law as a standard of judgment (Luke 1:6; Romans 1:32; 2:26; 8:4; Hebrews 9:1,10; Revelation 15:4).