

Adam and Christ

Romans 5:12 - 21

12Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— 13for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. 14Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. 15But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! 16Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. 17For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. 18Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. 19For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. 20The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In today's Bible lesson, Paul argued that two men cast a direct shadow over all of mankind. The men are Adam and Christ. We identify with Adam in his sin and death. In Adam, we discover the doctrine of original sin. We identify with Christ in His life and grace. In Christ we encounter His offer of salvation.

The name Adam comes from a Hebrew word that literally means "man" or "mankind." Adam's story is our story too. Just as Adam fell, so too we have fallen. Paul wrote that Adam was the gateway through which sin and death came into the world (see verse 12). Adam's DNA has infected ours too. Like Adam, we have allowed sin to come into our lives. In 5:12-14, David Jeremiah noted that we discover insight about sin's presence, penalty and power. Like the proverbial Pandora's box, when sin was unleashed, a whole pandemic of bad things were set free to ravage the world and mankind. There were four logical pieces or conclusions to Paul's argument in verses 12-14...

- 1. Sin came to the world through one man...**
- 2. Death entered the world through sin...**
- 3. Death spread to all men because all have sinned...**
- 4. Death continues to reign over all men apart from Christ...**

Paul could have said much more about the legacy of this one man Adam. But in this same section, Paul moved on to contrasting Christ with Adam. As Adam brought a curse, Christ brought a gift (15). Whereas Adam brought trespasses, Christ brought grace (15). Whereas the one man Adam brought corruption and condemnation upon the whole human race, Christ came to set free, to liberate and to redeem all of mankind. Christ rewrote and rectified the legacy that Adam left.

John MacArthur wrote that *“the analogy of Adam and Christ is anti-thetical, an analogy of opposites. Because of Adam’s sin, all men are condemned; because of Christ’s obedience, many are pardoned. Adam is therefore analogous to Christ only in regard to the common principle that what one man did affected countless others.”*

You can see in verses 15-19 that Paul repeatedly used the two word expression “much more.” This literary or grammatical device was designed to deepen the contrast and to call even greater attention to both the actions of Adam and Christ. In verse 20, Paul made the case that no matter how deep or profound the sins of Adam or mankind, the grace of God is always richer, greater and more abundant. The well of grace doesn’t run dry. Some may read this section and wonder about the role of the law. Simply, Paul argued that the purpose of the law was to reveal the extent to which one is already a sinner. The law had no power to forgive or to free. The law was illustrative of where man was.

In verse 19, Paul presented a choice to his readers. They can choose to identify with one of the two men...Adam or Christ. We can remain with Adam and live as he lived. Or we can come to Christ and receive His gifts and blessings. Paul said in I Corinthians 15:54 that the death associated with Adam that comes from sin has been swallowed up in victory through Christ. Christ has forever shattered and broken the reign that sin and death exercised over mankind. A new King has assumed the throne. We are all invited to welcome and crown that new King as the Master of our lives too.

Applications . . .

1. Be clear today about which man you have chosen as a model for your life...Adam or Christ.
2. Go back to Genesis 3 and read again the story of Adam’s fall. Why did Adam make such a choice? Are there any areas in your life where you tend to stumble as Adam did?
3. Memorize verse 20. Also underline or highlight that verse in your Bible.

- 4. Give thanks today for Christ and His coming. Rejoice that Christ came to save and redeem you!**