

Lesson 29 - DEATH IN ADAM; LIFE IN CHRIST (1) *Romans 5:12-16*

(5:12) - *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”* - Paul shows how the whole human race came to be in the state of sin and death described in **5:6** as *“without strength”* and *“ungodly,”* in **5:8** as *“sinners,”* and in **5:10** as *“enemies”* of God (*cf. Rom. 3:9-20*). It was through the *“one man,”* Adam who stood as the representative and federal head of the whole human race. Many reject this federal view, but it is clearly taught in these verses. When Adam sinned, he brought us into a state of sin and death. He did not merely bring us into a state of the potential to sin - *“Death passed upon all men, FOR THAT ALL HAVE SINNED.”* This literally states that *“ALL SINNED”* when Adam sinned. This is part of the Biblical doctrine of sin that reveals how we all sin because we fell in Adam and, as a result, we are born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins (*Eph. 2:1-3*). Spiritual death is the absence of spiritual life. Spiritual death evidences itself in our own natural ignorance, indifference, and even hatred of the things that reveal and glorify God in Christ, so that it can be said that *“ALL HAVE SINNED and come short of the glory of God”* (*Rom. 3:23*). All death is the consequence of sin, and that is why that *“in Adam all die”* (*1 Cor. 15:22*).

There are some who teach that we do not become sinners until we make our first sinful choice or commit our first sin. This is not a biblical view of sin. The Bible says that we are all *“shapen in iniquity”* and conceived in sin (*Psalm 51:5*), that we *“are estranged from the womb,”* and *“go astray as soon as they [we] be born, speaking lies”* (*Psalm 58:3*). This means that we are all naturally born spiritually dead with no capacity to speak the truth of the things that glorify God in Christ. And though there is a distinction between our natural depravity, sins of omission, and willful sin and rebellion, we must understand that we are all sinners, and all sin brings death. We are not born innocent in God’s eyes. Our natural depravity is the reason that *“the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned”* (*1 Cor. 2:14*). This is why we must be *“born again,”* else we cannot see (recognize and understand) the kingdom of God (*John 3:3*). The natural man’s spiritual death and depravity are evidenced by ignorance and unbelief of the Gospel of salvation by God’s grace through Christ (*John 3:19-20; 1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 4:3-4; 2 Thess. 2:10*). Our sin is such that if God does not sovereignly intervene, we will not seek, believe, receive, or worship Him as He reveals Himself in Jesus Christ the Lord (*John 6:44*).

(5:13) - *“(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.”* - Obviously, sin and death in the world did not begin with the giving of the law on Mount Sinai, because *“sin was in the world”* before the law was given by God through Moses. And there was law in the world before God’s law was given in the specific form that He gave it to Israel on Mount Sinai because sin is not charged without the law. God gave the law to Adam in **Genesis 2:16-17**. God gave man a conscience (*Rom. 2:14-15*). There were laws that governed societies before the law on Mount Sinai. Sin has always been transgression of the law of God in whatever form it appeared on earth (*1 John 3:4; 1 Cor. 15:56*). This proves that sin and death fell upon the whole human race by Adam’s transgression.

(5:14) - *“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses,”* - Death is the consequence of sin, and *“death reigned”* over the human race before the law was given to Moses. This applied even to those *“that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression.”* There has been much debate over whom exactly Paul was describing here. Some believe it describes those who had only the law of natural conscience, which is enough to hold them accountable, but who had no direct or specific revelation of the law from God as did Adam in

the Garden of Eden and the Israelites on Mount Sinai. Others believe it is speaking of infants who, though fallen in Adam and born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins, died before they reached an age where they consciously committed a willful act of rebellion against the law. This second view in no way states that infants are innocent until they commit their first sin (see notes on **5:12**). And it in no way implies that those who die in infancy are saved because of their innocence. All saved people are saved the same way that any sinner is saved - by the sovereign grace and mercy of God through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Who is the figure of Him that was to come” - The point here is that Adam, as representative and federal head of the whole human race, was a type of Christ as the Representative and Federal Head of the whole election of grace. Salvation is the result of an everlasting covenant of grace made before the world began between God the Father and God the Son. God the Father chose a people to save and gave them to God the Son, making Him to be the Surety of their salvation. A surety is one who becomes responsible for the debt of those for whom he stands as surety. The people whom God chose to save would fall by Adam into sin and death and be born spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. They are a sinful people who would earn and deserve nothing but condemnation and death. The debt of their sins was imputed to their Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ. And just as they fell into sin and death by the disobedience of Adam, they are justified (forgiven and declared righteous) by the obedience unto death of their Surety, the Lord Jesus Christ (**John 17:24; Eph. 1:3-7; 2 Tim. 1:9-10; Titus 1:2**).

(5:15) - “But not as the offence, so also is the free gift” - The ***“free gift”*** of righteousness and salvation that comes to sinners by God’s grace through the Lord Jesus Christ is far greater than what we lost by our connection with Adam in the fall. ***“For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many”*** - All whom Adam represented surely fell when Adam fell as evidenced in their natural, spiritual death. All whom Jesus Christ represented surely lived, died, and arose again when Christ lived, died, and arose again as evidenced in their spiritual birth and life by faith in Christ. The glory and value of the ***“gift by grace”*** which we gain through Christ far exceed what we lost through Adam in the fall. We lost the blessings of life in our fall by Adam, but we gain much more (eternal blessings and life) through Christ. Even before the fall, Adam had a righteousness, but it was a mere human righteousness. But in salvation, we obtain the very righteousness of God worked out for and given to us by Christ, the Godman. This righteousness cannot be lost or contaminated and insures salvation and glory for us forever and ever. This is ***“the righteousness of God”*** revealed in the Gospel of Christ (**Rom. 1:16-17**).

(5:16) - “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification” - Again, Paul emphasizes that the ***“free gift”*** of salvation by God’s grace in Christ is so much more in its blessings and benefits than ***“the judgment”*** of sin and death that came to us through Adam. Adam’s one sin brought the whole human race into a state of sin and death, worthy of ***“condemnation.”*** But ***“the free gift”*** of Christ, His blood and righteousness, takes away ***“many offences.”*** This refers to all the sins of all of God’s chosen people, including their fall in Adam and their own personal sins - ***“For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified” (Heb. 10:14)***. This gift of God’s grace in Christ brought His people ***“unto justification,”*** which is a state of forgiveness and righteousness that can never change. It is eternal, and therefore all who believe in Christ can never perish (**Rom. 8:33-39**).