



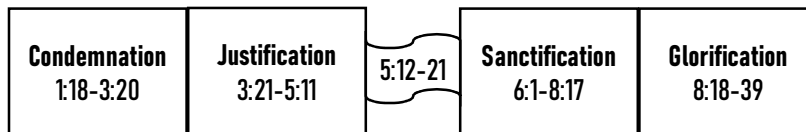
Romans 5:12-21

# THE TRIUMPH OF GRACE

*Adam was a public person. God dealt with Adam and Adam acted as such a one, as a common father and factor, root and representative, of and for all his posterity; so that what he did in that station, as agent for us, we may be said to have done in him and what was done to him may be said to have been done to us in him.*

*Thus, Jesus Christ, the Mediator, acted as a public person, the head of all the elect, dealt with God for them, as their father, factor, root, and representative—died for them, rose for them, entered within the veil for them, did all for them. When Adam failed, we failed with him; when Christ performed, he performed for us.*

—Matthew Henry (1662-1714)



- Why is all of humanity under the condemnation of sin?
- Why is all of humanity under the reign of death?
- How can Jesus' life, death, and resurrection save us?
- How can Jesus' righteousness be imputed to us?
- How can we rejoice in a world of sin, suffering, and death?

Romans 5:12-21 answers these questions by summarizing all of human history in relation to two people—Adam and Jesus.

## 1. ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION IMPACTED US ALL (5:12-14)

When Adam willfully transgressed God's command in the Garden of Eden, it had universal impact on humanity (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-19).

- \_\_\_\_\_ entered the world.
- \_\_\_\_\_ entered the world through sin.
- \_\_\_\_\_ spread to all humanity (1 Cor. 15:22).
- In Adam, we all \_\_\_\_\_ and became sinners.

Adam was both our father and our representative. When he sinned, it meant that spiritual death spread through all of humanity. We inherited both a corrupted nature and an imputed guilt from Adam.

Paul proves this point through a principle: no law=no imputed sin; no imputed sin=no death. But since death reigned before the law was given, it must mean that our problem is rooted beyond our own individual sins. We are spiritually dead and guilty in Adam (Eph. 2:1).

*Romans 5:12-21 is one of the most difficult and controversial passages to interpret in all of Pauline literature.*

—Thomas R. Schreiner

*This passage is the point where all the lines of Paul's thinking converge.*

—Anders Nygren

*The apostle viewed Adam and Christ as federal heads of two groups of people. A federal head is a person who acts as the representative of many others and whose actions result in consequences that the individuals he represents inevitably experience.*

—Thomas Constable

*The Greek verb translated **sinned** is a simple aorist. This tense most commonly refers to a single past action.*

—Millard Erickson

*Paul is not saying that humans all die because we are **like** Adam, but because we were all **in** Adam.*

*...God did not simply choose Adam, He created Adam to be our representative. He was perfectly created and designed to act exactly as you, personally, as an individual, would have acted in the same situation.*

—Timothy Keller

### A FEW IMPLICATIONS FROM ROMANS 5:12-14:

- There is a solidarity to humanity. There are no separate “races.” We are all one race from one blood (Acts 17:26).
- We are linked to one another. One sin affects many (Ex. 34:7). When we condemn another, we condemn ourselves (Rom. 2:1).
- Our two greatest enemies are sin and death. They are invading cancers in God’s creation (cf. 1 Cor. 15:20-26; Rev. 20:11-21:8).

### 2. CHRIST’S FREE GIFT IS DIFFERENT THAN ADAM’S SIN (5:15-17).

- Different in essence. Christ’s free gift (His death on the cross) was an act of self-\_\_\_\_\_ on our behalf. Adam’s sin was an act of self-\_\_\_\_\_ for himself.
- Different in results.



### 3. CHRIST’S FREE GIFT IS “MUCH MORE” GREATER THAN ADAM’S SIN (5:18-21).

- God’s grace in Christ \_\_\_\_\_ all humanity (5:18).
- God’s grace in Christ \_\_\_\_\_ all those who receive it by faith (5:19).
- God’s grace in Christ \_\_\_\_\_ over all sin (5:20).
- God’s grace in Christ \_\_\_\_\_ ! (5:21)

In Christ, we are not only new creations but we are also part of a new humanity. We no longer live under the reign of sin. We reign in grace.

*In the biological and social sciences, the consensus is clear: race is a social construct, not a biological attribute. ...We as a species have been estimated to share 99.9% of our DNA with each other. The few differences that do exist reflect differences in external factors not core biology.*

—Dr. Vivian Chou

*The concept of our having sinned in Adam is certainly foreign to the mindset of western individualism. Africans and Asians, who take for granted the collective solidarity of the extended family, tribe, nation, and race, do not have the difficulty which western people experience.* —John R.W. Stott

**Free Gift.** Greek, *charisma*, a gift of grace, an undeserved benefit.

*The grace of Christ belongs to a greater number than the condemnation contracted by the first man. For if the fall of man had the effect of producing the ruin of many, the grace of God is much more efficacious in benefiting many, since it is granted that Christ is much more powerful to save than Adam was to destroy.* —John Calvin

*We have reason to believe that the lost shall bear to the saved no greater proportion than the inmates of a prison do to the mass of the community.*

—Charles H. Hodge

**Abounded Much More.** Greek, *hyperperisseuo*, super-abound.

*Sin may be a river, but grace is an ocean.* —Charles Spurgeon

*This one word “grace” contains within itself the whole of New Testament theology.* —J.I. Packer