

*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. (Romans 5:14)*

The first two phrases of this passage offer an insight to why our relationship with Adam caused us to need a Savior.

Romans 5:14 also tells that Adam “...*is a type of Him who was to come*”—“*a type*” of Christ. Neither Adam nor Christ has an earthly father. (The impossibility of Jesus being Joseph’s son was addressed earlier.) Just as Adam was created void of a sin nature, Christ was also born void of a sin nature—the heavenly Father being Jesus’ Father. (The sin nature would not have been passed down through Mary to Christ because the sin nature is inherited from the earthly father through Adam.) Adam’s wife was taken from his side (Genesis 2:21-25), while Christ’s wife (the church) was taken from His pierced side (John 19:34). Paul’s point is that Adam “...*is a type of Him who was to come.*”

In Romans 5:15-19, Paul verifies that Christ’s gift through grace supersedes the negativity resulting from Adam’s transgression.

*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. (Romans 5:15)*

Paul communicates that salvation is a “*free gift.*” Due to “*faith*” not being a work (Romans 3:27-28; 4:4-5), salvation is a “*free gift*” (Romans 5:15) granted to those who exercise repentance and faith while depraved. This “*free gift is not like the transgression.*” In fact, the “*free gift*” greatly supersedes the transgression. I once heard the following explanation: “Which would be the greater act, to strike a match and ignite a forest fire, or to extinguish the fire after it was raging out of control?” To extinguish the fire, of course, would be the greater act! Jesus’ sacrifice (and subsequent resurrection) provided ample grace for all mankind to be saved (He died for all), yet only those who repent and believe while depraved are recipients of this grace. Thus, “*the free gift is not like the transgression*” (Romans 5:15).

We must be careful with the word “*many*” in the phrase, “*For if by the transgression of the one the many died*” (Romans 5:15). “*Many*” in this case means “*all.*” This truth was verified in Romans 5:12, for “*all*” died as a result of their genes being in Adam’s gene pool when Adam sinned. We must also properly view the word “*many*” in the phrase, “*much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.*” The “*many*” in this case means “*all*” as well, verified by Titus 2:11:

*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, (Titus 2:11)*

Jesus’ perfect offering brought “*salvation to all men*” (Titus 2:11) in that it provided all that was needed for “*all*” to be saved. Yet, only those who repent and believe while depraved will receive this salvation offered so graciously through the Son. This truth ties in perfectly with Romans 5:16:

*And 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. (Romans 5:16)*

Again we see that Adam's "one transgression" brought "condemnation" upon all men. However, Jesus' "free gift arose from many transgressions resulting in justification" for the depraved who repent and believe—Jesus having died for all mankind. In other words, the result of Adam's "transgression" was "condemnation." "Many transgressions," on the other hand, brought the "free gift" of grace into operation for all mankind—the outcome of which is justification (acquittal) for all who accept Christ as Savior. Those who reject Christ's provision are condemned. Romans 5:17 continues this same theme:

*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. (Romans 5:17)*

Certainly, "death reigned through the one" (Adam), but "those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17). What incredible news! We can actually "reign in life" through yielding to Christ's indwelling presence (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27), which means that we can live above anything that comes our way. Thus, once we exercised personal repentance and faith while depraved, God not only made us new, but introduced us to the most amazing adventure imaginable—an adventure lived by the life of Another, the life of Christ!

In Romans 5:18, Paul again contrasts the results of Adam's disobedience with the fruit of Christ's obedience:

*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. (Romans 5:18—emphasis added)*

Since our genes were in Adam's gene pool when he sinned, we were born in a condition that gave God no alternative but to condemn us. We were born with a dead spirit, a spirit separated from God. Our soul was separated from God as well. This separated spirit and soul (commonly called the Adamic nature, old man, old self, dead spirit, or sin nature—reference Circle Diagrams 3 and 9) made us "children of wrath" before the Father so long as we rejected His provision through Christ (Ephesians 2:3).

The last phrase of Romans 5:18 can be misleading if viewed only at surface level. This passage does not teach that "through one act of righteousness" (referring to the cross of Christ) "all" descendants of Adam are saved (1Corinthians 6:9-10 and 2Thessalonians 1:1-10 refute the error known as "universalism," or universal salvation, for all lost mankind will be condemned). Rather, Paul is communicating that through the

cross “*justification of life*” (salvation) was made available “*to all men*”—to every descendant of Adam. God requires “*repentance*” (2Timothy 2:25; Acts 11:18) and “*faith*” (Acts 16:31; Acts 26:18; Romans 10:9-10) from the depraved prior to His granting new “*life*.” Hence, all are not saved, but “*all*” are offered the opportunity to repent and believe. Thus, only some of the “*all*” who are given opportunity to believe do so. “*All*” must be interpreted in its context or error follows.

The same principle applies in Romans 5:19 with the word “*many*”:

*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.* (Romans 5:19)

“*Many*” means “*all*” in the first phrase of the verse, as verified by Romans 5:12—for all persons “*were made sinners*” through Adam’s misdeed. Yet “*many*” in the last phrase of the verse means “*some*,” not all—for only some of the entirety of mankind are “*made righteous*” by God (the “*some*” being those who exercise repentance and faith while depraved). Thus, Paul applies two different meanings to “*many*”—as he does in other sections of Scripture. For instance, he records in 1Corinthians 12:12:

*For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.* (1Corinthians 12:12)

In this passage, “*many*” in both cases is equivalent to “*all*.” The same principle applies in 1Corinthians 12:14 and 20, where “*many*” also means “*all*”:

*For the body is not one member, but many.* (1Corinthians 12:14)

*But now there are many members, but one body.* (1Corinthians 12:20)

Yet, a few verses earlier, Paul uses “*many*” to mean “*some*.”

*For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.* (1Corinthians 11:30)

Context, at all times, is absolutely essential!

In Romans 5:20, Paul again states the purpose of the Law:

*And the Law came in that the transgression might increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,* (Romans 5:20)

The “*Law*” was given “*that the transgression might increase*.” The Law was given to be broken; its purpose is to actually make man sin to a greater degree. It was given so man could recognize his sinful state, repent, and receive Jesus as Savior. However, when the “*transgression*” increased, God’s “*grace*” increased as well! Consequently, when

man's sin increased, God's grace increased accordingly, giving man ample time to repent and come to Christ should he so desire. As a result, Paul records:

*that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Romans 5:21)*

Yes, "*sin reigned in death,*" but "*grace*" would "*reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord*" (Romans 5:21). "*Eternal life*" (v.21) is God's kind of life, having no beginning or end—"life" that every New Testament believer receives when placed in Christ.