

“all men” in Romans 5:18

Rom 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.

The two “all men”s refer to two different categories of people.

The first one refers to the **entire human race**; the second one refers to **believers**.

With one wrinkle: the second statement includes but the death of Christ (one act of righteousness) and justification. The death of Christ was for the entire human race.

The two different categories are mentioned in the prior verse, verse 17:

Rom 5:17

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one [and verse 12 says that death spread to all men] , much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.

There are several things that support this interpretation.

First, there is the plain teaching of Scripture that every member of the human race was condemned, and only believers have been justified.

Second, Romans 5 is all about providing proof that believers are secure in their salvation.

Rom 5:8-10

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Justification and reconciliation are in the “rear view mirror”.

Everything in chapter 5 takes the viewpoint of the believer who has already been justified by faith.

Third, Romans 5:12-21 contrasts what Adam did for the human race with what Christ has done for believers - those who have been justified.

Each of the verses has the same general pattern: “as this” ..., “so that” ...

Rom 5:17

For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], 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 5:18 shows the same pattern:

Rom 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.

Rom 5:20-21

20 The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21 so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.