

Condemnation by Adam's trespass, justification by Christ's righteous act of death

Our work together in the Scriptures for the last three months has been to discover what the Bible says about what it means to be human.

/What is man?\

We have seen the creation of man in the garden. We have observed the fall of man.

And we have marveled at the unique humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

/The resurrected, ascended, and seated Christ is a completely new kind of Man. \

We have now seen two men who are polar opposites.

/There is fallen man: Adam.

There is glorified Man: Christ.\

The entire story of the human race is wrapped up in the legacies of these two men, Adam and Jesus.

You see, each and every member of the human race, at any point in time, is related to one - but only one – of these two men.

/There are two kinds of humanity , and only two. You are either in the category of humanity associated with Adam, or you are in the category of humanity associated with Christ.\

Which kind you are is determined by which man you are related to.

A governing principle operates here.

/This principle is called Federal headship.\

Here's a good definition of the term "Federal". It appears in William Newell's commentary on Romans 5:12-21, in his book Romans: Verse by Verse -

/The term “Federal” is used to indicate the action of one for all in a representative manner; or for the consequences of such action. \

A passage in Hebrews 7 illustrates the concept.

Heb 7:4-10

4 Now observe how great this man [Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God] was to whom Abraham, the patriarch, gave a tenth of the choicest spoils. 5 And those indeed of the sons of Levi who receive the priest's office have commandment in the Law to collect a tenth from the people, that is, from their brethren, although these are descended from Abraham. 6 But the one whose genealogy is not traced from them collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed the one who had the promises. 7 But without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater. 8 In this case mortal men receive tithes, but in that case one receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives on. 9 And, so to speak, through Abraham even Levi, who received tithes, paid tithes, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him.

Abraham acted. He paid tithes to Melchizedek.

/When Abraham acted, his descendants acted in him.\

Through Abraham, his great-grandson Levi paid tithes, even though during his own life he only received tithes.

Let's turn now to Romans 5:12-21.

Rom 5:12-21

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned — 13 for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. 14 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.

15 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. 16 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. 17 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.

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. 19 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. 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.

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/Verses 12-21 of Romans 5 present the two representative Men, Adam and Christ. The Federal heads of the two human species. In Adam and in Christ. \

The words “I”, “we”, and “you” do are not found in this passage.

It is no longer what we have done, but what our representative has done on our account.

/There was a federal or representative sin – Adam’s sin. And death passed to all men not because they sinned, but because Adam sinned.\

In chapter 5, verses 12 to 21, God traces the history and state of human sin all the way back to Adam, as our representative head, who stood for us, and whose sin became condemnation and death to us.

/And shows us Christ, as the other representative Man (whom Adam prefigured), by His act of death on the cross bringing justification and life to believers .\

The thing to absorb in this section is that in each case,
/It is the act of the representative, and not of the one represented, that brought the result to pass.\

We have

/TWO MEN: Adam and Christ (verse 14)\

/TWO ACTS: Adam's transgression (verses 12, 15, 17, 18, 19) and Christ's one righteous act – His death on the cross (verse 18)\

/TWO RESULTS:

By Adam = condemnation and death (verses 15, 16, 18, 19)

By Christ: justification and life (verses 17, 18, 19)\

/Condemnation by Adam's trespass, justification by Christ's righteous act of death.\

The act of the one representative, and not of the ones represented, brought to result to pass.

We were made guilty by Adam's one act. We did not have to wait to be born, or have a sinful nature, or commit a sin.

In the same way, God grounds our justification wholly in the work of Another than ourselves: Christ, the Last Adam.

Rom 5:19

19 for as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] , the many were constituted sinners: so also through the obedience of the one [Christ] , shall the many be constituted righteous [before God].

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/The key word in this passage is "one". It is found 12 times in Romans 5:12-19. \

/“one man” - verses 12, 15, and 19

“the one” – verses 15, 16, 17 (3 times) , and 19

“one transgression” – 16, 17, 18

“one act of righteousness” – 18\

Rom 5:12-19

12 Therefore, just as through **one man** sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned —

15 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. 16 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. 17 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.

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. 19 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.

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/The great truth of Romans 5:12-21 is that a representative acted, involving all those connected with him.\

/Adam: his single act of sin brought about four major consequences:\

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1. **Sin** entered the world (verse 12a)
2. **Death** passed to all men, for all sinned (when Adam sinned) (verse 12 b, 14,15,17)
3. Through one sin, judgment, resulting in **condemnation** to all men (verses 16, 18).
4. Through one man's disobedience, all men were set down as **sinners** (verse 19).\

/On the other hand, as a result of Christ's one act of obedience :\

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1. The free gift of **justification to life** is extended to all men. (verse 18).
2. The many (who receive the gift through faith) will be **set down as righteous before God** (verse 19)
3. The **grace of God** abounds to the many (verses 15, 17).
4. Those who receive the abundance of God's grace and the gift of righteousness will **reign in life** through Christ (verses 15, 21)

So now we look back to the act that set us down as sinners, instead of our own sins...

...and the act that sets us down as righteous, apart from our own works.

This has tremendous implications for the salvation of the believer. Our sins had nothing to do with our condemnation. Adam's sin did that.

Our deeds have nothing to do with being declared righteous by God. The one act of Christ's death on the cross did that.