

**Standing in the Security of His Grace
Two Men/Two Ages**

Introduction: The text that is the focus of our attention today, rivals 3:21-26 as the text of greatest theological importance.

- In it Paul gives a “bird’s-eye” picture of the history of redemption.
- The canvas upon which he paints his picture is human history and the scope is universal.
- This paragraph is not about Jew and Gentile, it is about humanity and the perspective is corporate, rather than individual.
- ALL people, Paul teaches, stand in relationship to one of two men, whose actions determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them.
- There are then—TWO MEN—TWO AGES

Concept of “Corporate Representation”

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones—“*God has always dealt with mankind through a head and representative.*”

- Levi (himself a priest) paid tithes to Melchizedek through Abraham.

Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, 10 for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Hebrews 7:9-10 NKJV

(Re: Genesis 14)

- Achan brought God’s anger on Israel

- A favorite concept of Paul

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:21-23 NKJV

And so it is written, “The first man Adam became a living being.” The last Adam union is fastm became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 NKJV

— Two men (Adam/Christ) representing two ages

Five statements with this theological backdrop

I. Universal sin is the principle of the first age and the contribution of the first man.

IMPORTANT: Paul is going to make the argument that in order to accomplish His promise of justifying us, a life-giving union between us and Christ that is stronger than the union between us and Adam must exist. THAT union is first described.

A. Sin entered the world through ONE man

1. Clearly Adam (whose name means “man”)
2. Sin has an active role in those chapters (5-8)
 - a. Abounds—5:20
 - b. Has dominion—6:14
 - c. Can be obeyed—6:16, 17
 - d. Takes opportunity—7:8, 11
 - e. Deceives and kills—7:11, 13

NOTE: Sin is personified—a power that holds sway in the world outside of Christ and brings disaster and death.

3. Sin as a principle that is pervasive and dominant—person’s destiny is determined by its power.

B. The sin that entered is more than an individual sin—the bridgehead that paved way for sinning as condition of humanity.

C. This is the principle of original sin.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. Psalms 51:5 NKJV

NOTE: End of v. 12—“because of all have sinned.”

- Through one man sin entered
- All have sinned

1. God thought of us as having sinned when Adam disobeyed
2. Brings sense to Paul’s words earlier

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 NKJV

- a. We weren't born when Christ died
- b. But God judged us as sinners—because He knew, like Adam, we would sin

D. To be judged as sinners because of Adam's sin seems unfair.

1. But we have all sinned voluntarily and our sins will be the basis of our judgment.

Who "will render to each one according to his deeds". Romans 2:6 NKJV

But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. Colossians 3:25 NKJV

(We only have sin nature of Adam but accountable for our own sin).

2. While it may seem unfair—we must also think it is unfair then to be judged righteous because of one man's obedience (Jesus Christ).

II. Death, both physical and spiritual, is the outcome of humanity's connection to the first man.

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus 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 to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. Romans 5:12-14 NKJV

A. The equation is clear in verse 12

1. Sin entered by one man (Adam—original sin)
2. Death (physical and spiritual) was result

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die." Genesis 2:16-17 NKJV

Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread

Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." Genesis 3:17-19 NKJV

For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23 NKJV

3. Death is spread to all men
4. Because all have sinned

B. Short Aside

1. Sin has always existed—even before the Law (Moses)

For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Romans 5:13 NKJV

- a. Before the Law (Torah) may not have transgressed a direct command
- b. Paul addressed it earlier in Romans

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:20 NKJV

- c. Sin was present though an actual transgression of the Law could not be identified
2. Since sin existed, death the penalty for sin, still reigned

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. Romans 5:14 NKJV

- a. Death was both universal and inescapable, because of sin.
- b. Adam to Moses—even though no “transgression” was committed. (That is no breaking of a law per se)

C. Implications

1. Death reigned even to those without Law
2. Will find out later the only escape is faith in Jesus Christ
3. What about those who can never place their faith in Christ?
 - a. Lack of understanding?—Children
 - b. Lack of witness?—Heathen

First the Heathen—Are they culpable?

— God does reveal Himself to them

The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Psalms 19:1-3 NKJV

— Though nature has revealed God, what revelation they have, though not enough for salvation has been rejected.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man — and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. Romans 1:18-25 NKJV

Without excuse—they suppressed the truth they have received

— Why missions is SO important

Children—

— They have not suppressed truth

— They do not know how to understand the revelation of creation

For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. Isaiah 7:16-17 NKJV

And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left — and much livestock?" Jonah 4:11 NKJV

(God for Jonah)

NOTE: Not sin nature that is judged but actual sin, transgressing the Law or moral law

Summarize:

- All have sinned (In Adam)
- Death (physical and spiritual) is the plight of all humanity

NOTE: End of v. 14 "...Adam who is a type of Him who was to come."

New Focus:

III. There are three crucial distinctions between the two men and ages.

But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. 16 And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. 17 For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Romans 5:15-17 NKJV

A. Note the typological connection of end of v. 14

1. This section explains
2. In the case of both men (Adam/Christ) an ACT of EACH has determinative significance to them who belong to each.
3. Three distinctions: One of Degree/One of Consequence/One of Assignment

B. Distinction Degree

But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. Romans 5:15 NKJV

1. The free gift is not like "offense"
 - a. Gift (charisma)—describes an act of grace (easy)
 - b. Offense (paraptoma)—describes Adam's sin
 - c. The act of cross was MORE powerful than the disobedience of Adam
2. Adam's disobedience brought death to man (all who reject Christ.)

3. Many live because of the act of Christ and more powerful because it CANCELED Adam's act.

Having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. Colossians 2:14 NIV

(ILL) O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

*He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.*

C. Distinction of Consequence

And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. Romans 5:16 NKJV

1. One act brought (judgment) condemnation
 - a. Just one act of Adam was deserving of judgment
 - b. Condemnation
2. Justification provided for many offenses

Cranfield— “That one simple misdeed should be answered by judgment, this is perfectly understandable. That the accumulated sin and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift, this is a miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension.

D. Distinction of Assignment

1. Universal guilt from Adam's sin.
2. Reign in life to those who receive free gift!

IV. There are also two great similarities between the two men and ages. (18, 19)

A. Certainty of our position

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. Romans 5:18 NKJV

NOTE: Just as certain as the certainty of judgment and condemnation come to all men because of the offense of Adam—we can stand confident in the grace of Christ that renders us righteous!

B. Results of Disobedience/Obedience

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. Romans 5:19 NKJV

1. Act of disobedience (Adam's) made us sinners

NOTE: We participate in that sin.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. 1 John 1:10 NKJV

2. Act of obedience made us righteous.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:8 NKJV

3. While being made sinners only allows us to be what we are, being made righteous makes us become what we never could be.

But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away. Isaiah 64:6 NKJV

4. We deserve condemnation but He provides righteousness.

V. The Law entered between the two ages for a reason.

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, 21 so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Romans 5:20-21 NKJV

A. Division of humankind into two groups determined by solidarity with two men (Adam or Christ) is simple and straight forward.

1. Choose Christ—life, peace, eternal joy
2. Reject Christ (In Adam) death/condemnation

Can it be that simple? What about the Law?

B. The Law entered so that the offense might abound

1. “Came in beside”

And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), Galatians 2:4 NKJV

(Negative)

2. It was added until the “seed” came

What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Galatians 3:19 NKJV

- a. Came into a situation where sin dominated
- b. No power to fundamentally alter anything

3. Paul said the Law “increased” the offense, not erased it! What does he mean?

- a. Shows sin to be utterly sinful

Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. 13 Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. Romans 7:12-13 NKJV

- b. Reveals the desperation of our condition apart from grace.

4. Did this so that grace could super-increase

Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more. Romans 5:20 NKJV

- 5. At the place it looks most helpless/hopeless—God has a final word—Act of Obedience of Christ that brings grace!

C. So that grace might now reign instead of death.

Conclusion: We are in one age or the other.

- A. No in-between group
- B. Adam or Christ
- C. Both with certain outcomes