

History Lesson

Romans 5:12—21

We are now given a historical viewpoint on why we are in the condition we are in. Past verses indicate that we were lost as sinners, enemies of God, without hope (Romans 5:6, 8, 10). Why are men born into this condition? How can it be that having done nothing good or bad I am already condemned? These verses help explain how this all happened. Stam breaks this passage into three parts: The entrance of sin through Adam (verse 12); the knowledge of sin through Moses and the Law (verse 20); and the forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ (Verse 20, 21)

Verse 12

Here we learn that it was through Adam that we inherited our sin nature. Adam was created with a righteous nature but lost it at the fall when he sinned. Adam's nature would have been the same as our new nature that we received at the point we believe. The only difference would be that Adam was not created with an old nature. We, on the other hand, do not lose the old nature when we are saved but add on the new nature given to us by God. This is why we struggle with sin after our salvation.

Side note: If mankind were a product of evolution it would be impossible to identify the very first male and female human beings. Scripture clearly assumes that the first man was created and from him was formed the woman. Since the first human sinned, all of mankind is born into sin. Many passages of the Bible would need to be edited to account for the process of evolution.

Even though Eve first ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, sin did not enter the world and cause changes in the universe until Adam ate of the fruit. All mankind are considered to come through Adam and not Eve so the stripping away of his righteousness and the corrupting of his nature are passed on to all humans at birth. Sin is universal because we are all in Adam. Men do not become sinners by sinning, they sin because they are born sinners.

Ephesians 4:22 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit,

Many see this imputation of Adam's sin upon each member of the human race as unfair. I believe God set up the tree to allow Adam the opportunity to choose who he wanted to serve. Adam was the perfect test subject, the best, brightest and strongest person that would ever walk on the face of the earth. If Adam failed then anyone following him would fail.

It was through Adam that sin entered the world and into the human race and it was through sin that death was brought in. Man was created to live forever but with sin came death. It's interesting to see the tree of life in the Garden of Eden as the possible means by which man would be able to live forever. After the fall, Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden and an angel guarded the entrance so they would not be able to access the Tree of Life. This same tree is found in the Millennial Kingdom by the throne of Christ (Revelation 22:2). Death can be viewed as a blessing from God. Imagine if we were cursed to live forever in the state we are in now, corrupted by sin. God, in His mercy did not allow for that.

Verses 13—14

Understanding our sin nature and how the sin of Adam affected the human race will aide greatly in understanding these verses. There are two types of sin in view in this passage: inherited and imputed. When Adam sinned there was both a physical (material) change and a spiritual (immaterial) change in mankind. We know there was a physical change by the fact that death came into the world (Romans 5:12). We also know that the universe is groaning under the weight of sin.

Romans 8:19—22 ¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the

creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.²²For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.

Inherited sin nature

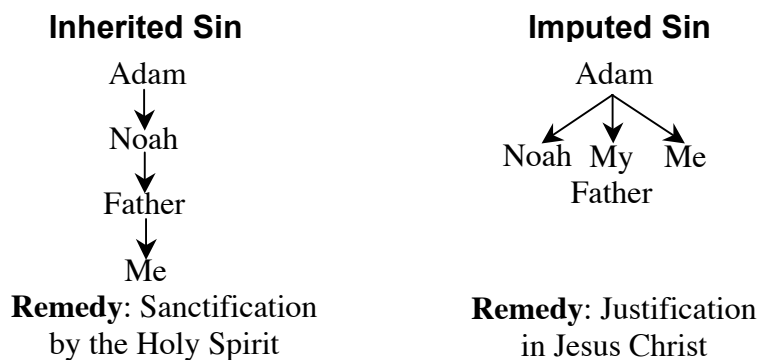
The immaterial part of man was also affected when Adam sinned. Instead of being born righteous, good and sinless we are born unrighteous and there is no good in us at all. Adam's original perfect nature was corrupted when he sinned. His material and immaterial characteristics are passed on to all mankind through the reproductive process. Just as all those who come from Adam have two legs, arms, eyes, ears and one mouth, heart, stomach etc, we all have a corrupt, unrighteous immaterial nature, This is our inherited nature as a result of being born into the human race. We did not receive our corrupt nature by sinning, it came to us because we are in the same family as Adam.

Ephesians 2:3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Imputed sin nature

Imputation is probably best understood as *putting on my account*. If I pick up the tab at a restaurant, I am putting the price of your meal on my account. I didn't order the meal or eat the meal but it is as if I did. Biblically we see how Paul said to put any charges that were caused by Onesimus, a run away slave of Philemon, to Paul's account. When Adam's sin was imputed to me, I was charged with the sin Adam committed. It was as if I had done the sin. God could do this because I, and the whole human race, came from Adam so I became what Adam was. When Adam sinned, it was as if I had sinned. Adam was the perfect test for mankind meaning if Adam failed, we all would fail. Not only is my nature corrupt but now when God opens the accounting ledger He will see that I have at least one sin accredited to my account and that's all I need to stand condemned. This is why Romans 5:12 can say that all men have sinned.

Illustration of Inherited vs. Imputed sin



Individual sins

From the time of Adam (his fall) to Moses (the giving of the Law) Paul says that sin was not put on anyone's account. We know that men were exceedingly wicked during this time, according to the account of Noah, but still their sins were not held against them. This does not mean they were not sinning but their sin was not entered into their personal ledger and counted against them. This is because there was no Law given and where there is no Law, there is no sin. The Greek word for sin has the idea of missing the mark. If there was no mark to hit how could man be held accountable for not hitting it?

However, those living under the Law were fully accountable to obey the Law. Anything less was sin. This is how the Law made sin more sinful

Romans 7:13 Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

Even though men's sins were not held against them, death still reined from Adam to Moses. This was proof that death was not a result of individual sins but of the Adamic sin that spread to all humans.

Verses 15—19

The Two Adams

1 Corinthians 15:45 So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL " The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.

This section compares the two Adams; the first created man with Jesus Christ. Out of the first Adam comes sin and death. Out of the second Adam comes righteousness and life. Christ is called the second Adam because he is the one who will ultimately make the world and us as it should be; as it was originally created. Christ is the second chance for the human race. He was born sinless, like Adam, and was tested, as Adam, but was found to be without sin. From one act of Adam came death but from one righteous act of Christ came life. Those who are found in Adam will die while those found in Christ will live. We find that all are condemned by one sin but Christ takes the many sins and gives justification.

Verse 18 has been used by Universalists to prove their point that all people are saved or will be saved. However, that view goes against many other verses that teach otherwise. This verse merely says that all who believe, those who are found in Christ, will have justification to life.

1 Corinthians 15:21—22 ²¹For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.

²²For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.

We find the following contrasts between Adam and Christ:

Adam	Christ
Transgression	Free gift
Death	Life
Debt	Grace
Sinner	Sin-free
Judgment	Justification
Condemnation	no Condemnation

Verse 20

Even more condemning to mankind was the introduction of the Mosaic Law. Man was now put on notice exactly what God demanded and any breaking of the Law would add more condemnation on an already condemned man. The good news is that there is more than enough of God's grace to make up for the many more sins added to individual accounts. There is no limit to God's grace making it sufficient to take care of anything we could ever do in our sinful state. The Law has done its job in showing us that we are totally helpless in finding righteousness in the works of the Law. Sin was strengthened by the Law and not weakened.

Verse 21

We see a final comparison of the first Adam bringing sin and death and the second Adam bringing righteousness and life. The process could be summarized like this:

The sequential order is as follows: (1) God's grace is manifested in Jesus Christ, (2) He is the embodiment of righteousness, and (3) because we are righteous in Him we have eternal life. Even as sin equals death, likewise righteousness equals life (6:23). *A Commentary of Romans Chapters 1—8* Earnest R. Campbell

Just as we did nothing to receive our sin nature and the "promise" of condemnation, we do nothing (other than to believe) to receive our righteous nature and the promise of eternal life. All of this was made possible by God the Father through Jesus Christ through faith.

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