



Talks given at Reformed Ministers' Conference 2016, Kuala Lumpur, by Pastor Steve Clevenger of Covenant Reformed Baptist Church, Warrenton, Virginia, USA.

6. Title: Two Great Covenant Heads

Text – Romans 5:12-21

Romans 5:12–21 (NKJV)

12 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.

15 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.)

18 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.

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

20 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.

Introduction: Stand in a large cemetery and notice all the headstones and you quickly realize that death reigns. And there is absolutely no escape. You can be a billionaire and have at your disposal all the means

of modern medicine and in the end death will overcome. You can be president or a king with a mighty army and in the end, death will conquer. Even your powerful army will be overtaken by death eventually.

The Bible teaches that death came by the first man Adam, and that new life, resurrection life from the dead, came by Jesus Christ.

These two men found in Scripture serve as two great covenantal heads or two federal representatives that all of humanity stand in solidarity with one or the other. (1) Adam and (2) Jesus Christ. The two men serve as great focal points of Biblical history.

Notice how the Apostle teaches that Adam ***“is a type of Him who was to come.”***

Romans 5:14 (NKJV)

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.***

In Romans chapter 5 the apostle is contrasting these two men and the effects of their actions upon their posterity.

All of Adam’s physical posterity are affected by his *one act of disobedience* in the Fall.

All of Christ’s spiritual posterity are affected by His *one act of obedience* in the work of the cross.

This is the doctrine of **"Imputation"**. **Imputation can be defined as** *“charging or reckoning something to a person’s account.”*¹

The Bible teaches three great acts of imputation. They are **(1)** the imputation of Adam’s sin to his descendants. **(2)** The imputation of the believer’s sin to Christ. **(3)** The imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer.

The Apostle teaches this truth in Romans 5:19.

Romans 5:19 (NKJV)

19 For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,

¹ Youngblood, Ronald F., F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison, Thomas Nelson Publishers, eds. *Nelson’s new illustrated Bible dictionary* 1995 : n. pag. Print.

so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

However, let's begin in verse 12 and observe the devastating effects of Adam's Fall v.12

I. The Effects of Adam's Fall vv.12-14

Romans 5:12–14 (NKJV)

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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.

Adam served as covenantal representative for mankind. But, he disobeyed God in the garden and ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By this act of disobedience Adam brought sin, death, and condemnation upon himself and upon all mankind that he represented. Notice our text in Romans 5.

v.12, and v.17 Adam brought death upon himself and all mankind because of his sin.

Romans 5:12 (NKJV)

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

Romans 5:17 (NKJV)

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.)

v.16 Adam brought condemnation upon himself and all mankind.

Romans 5:16 (NKJV)

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.

v.19 By Adam's disobedience he became a sinner and all of mankind were made sinners.

Romans 5:19 (NKJV)

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

As descendants of Adam, mankind is born in a natural state of sin and rebellion. David declares this truth in the Psalm 58

Psalm 58:3 (NKJV)

3 The wicked are estranged from the womb; ***They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies.***

The Apostle Paul in chapter 3 affirms the universal fallenness of mankind.

Romans 3:9–18 (NKJV)

9 What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips";

14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."

15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways;

17 And the way of peace they have not known."

18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Romans 3:23 (NKJV)

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

II. The Effects of Christ's Obedience vv.15-21 **Romans 5:15–21 (NKJV)**

15 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.

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20 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.

Notice, how the Apostle teaches that just as the sin of Adam brought condemnation to himself and all mankind. Now, because of the obedience of Jesus Christ, He has become the ground of justification and life to all that have faith in Him.

v.18 The One righteous act (Christ's obedience to the law of God, and redemptive work on the cross) results in justification to all men that have faith. These are all men that are united to Him by faith.

Romans 5:18 (NKJV)

18 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.***

v.19 Through the obedience of Jesus Christ all who He represents (believers) will be made righteous.

Romans 5:19 (NKJV)

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

We find this teaching of justification by faith alone in chapter 4.

Romans 4:5–7 (NKJV)

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:

7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered;

By the fall of Adam the entire human race has fallen into sin and death. But God sent His Son, the to redeem us from sin and death by His work on the cross.

I agree with John Calvin who said,

"Christ is much more powerful to save, than Adam was to destroy."²

In the final analysis before God, we are saved by works, but not our works, the works of another, the work of Christ upon the cross.

Adam and Jesus Christ are representatives of the entire human race and we are all connected to them either by nature or by grace. Who are you connected to?

1 Corinthians 15:21–22 (NKJV)

21 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.

² Calvin, John, and John Owen. *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*.