

The Victory of The Last Adam
Romans 5:12-21
Berean Baptist Church
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INTRODUCTION

The first half of Romans chapter five (Vs 1-11) reads like a magnificent hymn of the power of God's redemption. The climax of the passage is Vs 11: "And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement."

"Atonement" means paying a price to set things right. But Romans has shown that the problems between man and God (and also man and man) are as old as the first humans. Our problems are monstrous, so what atonement could be great enough? Even at the moment of Adam's fall into sin and death, God had a solution. But how could God heal a wound as old as history? How could God fix something that has been failing from the beginning?

His solution was the only option, but no one else imagined it could be done. God's answer was simple but audacious; perfectly logical but stunning. God's solution was a fresh start: a new Adam. But the new Adam had to be greater than the old Adam in order to save old Adam and all of us who descend from him.

"For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive... And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit (1 Cor 15:21-22, 45)."

In the first Adam, we are all enslaved by sin and death, but Jesus came as the last Adam to free all who trust in Him.

Acknowledge your defeat by sin, accept Jesus victory over sin, let God's grace reign in your life!

Romans 5:12-14 The First Adam's Failure, Our Failure, and The Dominion of Death

Throughout Romans, Paul assumes a deep familiarity with the Old Testament. And here he is building off the history of the first human Adam and his sin which wrecked the world (Genesis chapter 3).

Vs 12 "World" is all of creation and especially human life. Death is universal to all men. Sin and death dominate humanity like an evil tyrant because of Adam's sin. But "all have sinned" we are enslaved by death and sin, but by our personal acts of sin we give our approval to our masters.

Vs 12 "...by one man..." We must remember that all of death, evil, and sorrow in the world entered because one man sinned against God and failed his family. Adam was not the first one to eat, but sin came into the entire world because God had given Adam headship over the entire world.

Acknowledge the terrible cost of sin, and realize that your sins hurt other people!

Vs 12 "...death by sin..." came into the world through humanity. It was never part of God's plan. We are born into death through Adam, but by our personal sin, we affirm death as our master.

Vs 12 "...so death passed to all men for that all have sinned" Death has now passed to all people, like a disease, for two reasons:

1. the sin of our father Adam has put us under the domain of sin and death,
2. we have all affirmed our submission to sin and death by sinning ourselves.

We inherit a twisted nature and a tendency to death from Adam, but we all affirm our perversion by personal choice.

Vs 13 “until the law sin was in the world” “until” here should be understood as “before” or “up to the point of” as in Acts 21:1. Sin was in the world before the law (the Ten Commandments) and as Paul has already shown all people have a law of one type or another.

Vs 12-14 This passage is critical to evaluating the idea of theistic evolution. Theistic evolution teaches that through the process of evolution by natural selection God created man and the world as we know it today.

But Romans explicitly teaches that death was not part of God's intent for the universe. Death entered into creation through sin. Any interpretation of Genesis that requires generation after generation of death before Adam sinned cannot be reconciled with this passage in Romans.

Death is the engine of evolution. But there could be no death before sin; "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good (Gen 1:31)."

God turns evil into a good end, but know sin and death never had a place in His design for the world! Sin and death are our “contributions” to His creation.

Vs 14 “the figure of him who was to come” Jesus is like Adam and the fulfillment of all that he was meant to be. But there is a critical difference between the first Adam and Jesus (the Last Adam). The work of the First Adam was to lose and destroy, the work of the Last Adam is to redeem and save.

Acknowledge sin's domination of the World from the time of the first Adam so that you can understand the freedom that comes through the last Adam!

Romans 5:15-17 The Last Adam's Victory, Our Justification, and Gift of Life

Vs 15 All of humanity is either in Adam or in Jesus, in death or life, sin or righteousness. We are born into Adam's death without a choice, but by choosing to trust Jesus we enter into Christ's life by His free gift.

“ But not as the offense, so also is the free gift..” this is a critical difference between Adam's work (the offense) and Jesus' work (the free gift): Adam sinned and this forced everyone into death, but Jesus obeyed and gave everyone the choice to have eternal life by trusting Him.

Vs 15 “which is by one man, Jesus Christ” This is key to understanding Jesus: He was perfect, fully, completely human. Jesus was the most human person who has ever lived, and this why He calls himself "the son of man" 79 times in the Gospels.

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works (Matt 16:27).”

Jesus was born a human boy and grew up to be a man (Luke 2). He experienced joy (Luke 10:21), anger (Mark 3:5), love (John 13:23), grief (John 11:35), gratitude (Luke 10:21) and agony (Luke 22:44). He experienced physical discomfort (Luke 22:43) and he died as a man while other men died on his right and left sides (Mark 15:27)

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin (Heb 4:15).”

Take heart remembering that humanity is nothing strange to God; God has personal experience with everything that it means to be human.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phi 2:6-8).”

Grasping Jesus' full humanity is essential to understanding His victory and the freedom He offers.

The World teaches that our sins and faults are what make us who we are. This is the exact opposite of the truth! Our humanity follows from the Image of God that we bare (Gen 1:27). Our sins make us less human by vandalizing the Image of God within us. This is why the most grievous sin is justified by pretending that the victims are not really human; slavery, genocide, and abortion are all justified by claiming that the victims are somehow subhuman.

Know that Jesus fulfills everything that it means to be human so that He can restore our full humanity back to us.

Vs 16 Adam and Jesus were both "new men." They both came into the world by a direct act of God. But their works are almost mirrored opposites:

Adam sinned once and so brought death to all. Jesus perfectly obeyed to cover many sins and so brings life to all.

Vs 17 " by one man's offense death reigned by one" By the First Adam's sin, death dominated us all. We were made to be lords of the earth, but now we live as slaves to sin.

“much more they....shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ” By the second Adam's rich grace, life and leadership are restored to us.

Jesus obeyed where Adam sinned, and Jesus reclaimed what Adam lost. Accept Jesus victory over sin and trust Him!

Romans 5:18-21 The Second Adam's Perfect Work

Vs 18 Adam brought judgment, condemnation, and death unto all, Jesus came to bring grace, justification, and life unto all.

Vs 19 “...by one man...” Adam's sin plunged the entire world under the curse of God, but anyone who trusts in Jesus receives the righteousness of God as though they had never sinned.

Vs 20 Answers a question that would have been very reasonable to Paul's Jewish readers: What about Moses and the Law? Paul points out that the effect of the Law was that people become more sinful, not less! “For there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law;”

But **“sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”** God is not defeated by Sin. The work of grace done by the Last Adam is sufficient to cover the pattern of sin started by the First Adam.

Vs 21 The reign of sin is coming to an end, and all in Christ will rule in life with Him. Grace or sin will reign in every human heart.

Every human has failed to be what we should be. So God became one of us, as human as we are, to save us and restore us by his grace. Let the grace of God reign in your life, and you will reign with Jesus.

CONCLUSION

In the end, grace overcomes sin through the work of the Last Adam. Jesus was truly an "Adam" – a human. Yes, He was also divine and the fullness of God, but He was fully man. And because of His humanity, He is able to save fallen humans.

Acknowledge the systematic and complete failure of our race to be faithful, even extending to our own lives. *Understand that sin and death should have no legitimate place in the world; they are only here by our invitation!*

Don't be deceived, sin and death are NOT the legitimate rulers of this world. God is NOT the author of sin and death. *See sin and death as tyrants who have conquered us for a time but will be overthrown when the King returns to save all who trust in Him!*

Appreciate the victory of the Last Adam as a human being! Don't think of Jesus as some kind of false, superhuman. He was every bit as human as you and me. Let that fact encourage us in our battle with sin.

Let the grace of God reign in your life! This starts by trusting Jesus to save you, placing yourself entirely in His care:

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:11-14)”