

Lesson 6

Chapter Five

Peace With God (5:1-11)

Jesus died for man's sin and was raised up for his justification (4:25). Those who believe in Him who raised Jesus from the dead can, like Abraham, be accounted as righteous having their sins forgiven (4:22-24). Paul has made the case that Abraham and David both attested to a way to be right with God apart from the Law of Moses. Now Paul moves beyond this to expand upon what it really means to be accounted as righteous. He begins, **therefore having been justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ** (5:1). Paul declared in chapter one that God's wrath on account of sin is revealed (1:18). This friction between man and God places one in a state of conflict with Deity. Paul will explain later in this epistle that "the carnal mind is enmity against God"

Only when one is forgiven of sin, being justified by the blood of Jesus Christ, can one have peace with God.

(8:7). In this same chapter he speaks of man, while in sin, as an enemy of God (5:10). Only when one is forgiven of sin, being justified by the blood

of Christ, can one be at peace with God.

Trusting in Jesus as the sacrifice for sin and not ourselves gives one **access by faith into this grace** (5:2a). This leads to a totally new way of viewing life. The one who rejoices

in hope of the glory of God (5:2b) can **glory in tribulations** (5:3a), not because hardship is enjoyed or ignored but because the Christian can recognize that **tribulation produces** (Gr. literally "works") **perseverance** (5:3b). James teaches that "the



The Forum of Nero from Pompeii.
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testing of your faith produces patience" (Jas. 1:3), using the same word translated "perseverance" in our text. It is

only reasonable to recognize that we can never grow stronger in our ability to hold fast in the face of trials without some trials to exercise us.

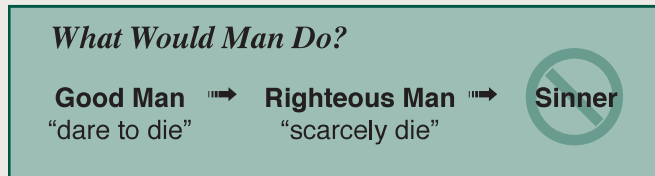
Christians who recognize this fact do not need to be discouraged by trial. Rather, they can see the good that can come out of trials.

When perseverance is gained it can lead to **character** (5:4b). The Greek word for "character" here is *dokimē* which is—"lit. the quality of being approved, hence character" (BAGD). When Christians endure tribulation without abandoning faith, they continue in a condition in which they are approved by God. Being right with God, one can main-

tain the hope of eternal life with God when this life is ended. This **hope does not disappoint** (5:5a). The soul who obediently trusts in Jesus will not find his or her hopes dashed on the Day of Judgment. The assurance of this hope rests in the fact that **the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us** (5:5b). The apostle John addresses some of the same points in his first epistle. When Christians "love one another, God abides in us, and his love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12). Possessing this godly spirit of love allows us to know that "we abide in Him and He in us" (1 John 4:13). When His love is "perfected

among us” it is then that we can have “boldness in the Day of Judgment” (1 John 4:17).

The ultimate demonstration of God’s love was the death of Jesus. No soul who has ever lived was worthy of Jesus’ death on his behalf. Even so, in demonstration of God’s love for man, Jesus died for



unworthy sinners. Paul explores the wonder of this, declaring **when we were still without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly** (5:6). Many have died for others, but not under the terms that Jesus did. He died for those who were “ungodly.” Paul shows the distinction of this, declaring **for scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die** (5:7). To show the wonder of Jesus’ loving act of sacrifice Paul appeals to the common behavior of man. For whom would man be willing to die? It would not be uncommon to lay down one’s life for someone who had done good things that had been of benefit to us. We would “scarcely” die for one who was simply in legal compliance with divine law (i.e., a “righteous man”). The unprecedented thing about Jesus’ death was the fact that He died for those who were sinners! In doing this, Paul says, **God demonstrates His own love toward us** (5:8).

This act of divine love, when accepted, turns away God’s wrath upon us because of sin. Paul declares, **having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him** (5:9).

Jesus’ death allowed us, **when we were enemies to be reconciled to God through the death of His Son** (5:10a). Jesus’ continuing life of intercession on our behalf allows us, after we have **been reconciled to be saved by His life** (5:10b). The Hebrew writer tells us that Jesus “ever lives to make intercession” (Heb. 7:25).

This allows us, now to **rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation** (5:11). The Greek word translated “reconciliation” is *katallagē* meaning, “adjustment of a difference, reconciliation, restoration to favour” (Thayer). One who was separated from Jesus because of sin, can in Christ be “reconciled” to God, having sins forgiven and favor restored with God.

Adam and Christ (5:12-21)

Paul’s teachings in this chapter on the effect of Adam’s sin upon mankind are among some of the most misrepresented doctrines in the religious world. In both Protestant and Catholic circles, it is claimed that Paul is teaching that the guilt of Adam’s sin was passed on and inherited by all mankind. This is a false doctrine that serves as the false premise upon which many other false doctrines are based. In our study we shall first analyze the text and then consider three scriptural doctrines that refute this error.

Paul’s words about Adam are offered to draw a comparison between Jesus and Adam. To explain the results of Jesus’ sacrifice, Paul compares the consequences of Adam’s sin. Paul begins this com-

parison by stating **therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world** (5:12a). It is clear that Adam and his wife’s sin allowed sin to “enter” the world. Until the man and woman violated God’s instructions not to eat of the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” no sin had ever been committed (Gen. 3:6-7). When it did, it also ushered into the world **death through sin** (5:12b). This was true in two senses. In commanding them not to eat of the tree, God had promised the man and woman “the day that you eat of it you shall surely die” (Gen. 2:17). The moment they committed sin, the man and woman became spiritually dead and separated from fellowship with God (cf. Eph. 2:1-3; Isa. 59:1-2). In addition to this, when the man and woman were cast out of the garden, they lost access to the “tree of life” which led (over time) to their physical death (Gen. 3:22-24). This affected all mankind both directly and indirectly. Indirectly, since Adam and Eve had no access to the “tree of life” neither did their posterity. Thus, all of their posterity

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has been subject to physical death. Directly, their sin allowed **death to spread to all men** (5:12c). How did their sin allow the spreading of death? Paul continues **because all sinned** (5:12d). It was not Adam’s sin through inheritance that brought spiritual death to mankind. Rather, it was the example of Adam’s sin, when followed, that brought spiritual death to man-

Unless we are willing to say that *all men* inherit salvation, we cannot say that *all men* inherit sin.

kind. Because all people sin, death spreads to all men.

Paul interrupts his comparison with a parenthetical statement that runs through verse seventeen and addresses the limits of Mosaic law. He writes, **for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law (5:13)**. How could there be sin without law? There couldn't be. Not only was the law limited in its ability to conquer sin, it was not the sole standard that determined sin. Before Moses, there had been sin, so there must have been a type of divine law that held man accountable. This period is sometimes called the Patriarchal Age, in which God dealt directly with the male heads of various families. Paul continues, **nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam (5:14a)**. From Adam until Moses people died spiritually and physically. They did not die because they ate from the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil," as Adam had done, but because they sinned in other ways. God warned Cain that "sin lies at the door" (Gen. 4:7). God declared of Sodom that its "sin is very grave" (Gen. 18:20). Reuben warned his brothers not to "sin against" Joseph (Gen. 42:22). Joseph knew that adultery was a "sin against God" (Gen. 39:9). All of these examples come before the Law of Moses was given.

After this side comment regarding the Law, Paul says of Adam that he was **a type of Him who was**

to come (5:14b). Jesus is the One "who was to come." In what sense is Adam a "type" of Christ? Paul explains this in detail over the next few verses. He writes, **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 (5:15). The comparison of Adam and Christ here tells us a great deal about the results of the actions of both. How did "grace abound to many"? Those who accept the gospel reap the benefits of Christ's work. How is it that "by one man's offense many died"? Those who follow Adam's example of sin die as he died. Unless we are willing to say that *all men* automatically inherit salvation through Christ's sacrifice (apart from individual choice), we cannot claim that *all men* automatically inherit sin through Adam's sin. Paul continues, **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 (5:16)**. The comparison here is that of quantity.

One sin ushered into the world the pattern of rebellion that resulted in condemnation. Yet, Jesus' one act of self-sacrifice came after mankind's many sins.

In this epistle Paul has a great deal to say about sin's power over man. In the next chapter he describes mankind as "slaves of sin" (6:6, 17). This bondage to sin gives death victory over man. Paul continues, **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**

GIFT	NOT LIKE	OFFENSE
By the Grace of the One Man	5:15	Through One Man's Offense
Grace Abounded to Many		Many Died
GIFT	NOT LIKE	OFFENSE
Free Gift	5:16	Judgment
Many Offenses		One Offense
Justification		Condemnation
ONE MAN'S RIGHTEOUS ACT		ONE MAN'S OFFENSE
Righteousness Will Reign	5:17, 18	Death Reigns
Through the One		Through the One
THROUGH ONE MAN'S OBEDIENCE		THROUGH ONE MAN'S DISOBEDIENCE
Many Will Be Made Righteous	5:19	Many Were Made Sinners

(5:17). Death "reigned" through Adam, because he brought sin and the death consequence of sin into the world. This is not because man inherited Adam's sin but "because all sinned" (5:12). We note here that

it is necessary for one to “receive” the abundance of grace, it is not automatic or forced. He continues, **therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in** (lit. “unto”) **condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in** (lit. “unto”) **justification of life** (5:18). Jesus’ death was the sole “righteous act” that can merit forgiveness. This allows those who accept it to be justified and freed from bondage to spiritual death.

There is no question that Adam’s sin affected mankind. The question is how did it do so? Paul says, **as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous.** Jesus’ obedience in going to the cross is paralleled with Adam’s disobedience to the command not to eat of the tree. Jesus’ act allows those who follow Him to “be made righteous” just as Adam’s act allowed those who follow him to “be made sinners.” Jesus’ act did not make those who will not follow him righteous, anymore than Adam’s act made those who do not follow him sinners. The difference in the case of Adam’s example is that all who have reached a morally accountable age have at some point followed his example and sinned.

One final time in this chapter Paul returns to the purpose and value of the Law of Moses. He writes, **moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more** (5:20). The Law of Moses was not the first standard that defined sin, yet it did accentuate and clarify for the children of

Jacob, what sin was in truth. This caused sin to “abound.” Why would God offer something that made sin “abound”? All along God had in mind the system of grace that would come in Christ which would abound “much more.” In this system of grace, **as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord** (5:21).

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The False Doctrine of Original Sin

We have seen from the text itself that Paul is not teaching that mankind has inherited Adam’s sin. Given the prominence of this false doctrine, it is fitting to consider some points from Scripture that expose the error of this teaching.

1. The Soul Who Sins Shall Die.

If Adam’s sin is passed down to his descendants then we have inherited the guilt for sinful actions that we did not personally commit. The Bible makes it clear that sin is personal and individual. In Ezekiel 18, the Israelites in exile bemoaned their punishment claiming that they were bearing their fathers’ sins. Certainly they were feeling the consequences of their fathers’ sins, but the Lord devotes the entire chapter to refuting their misconception. The point is summarized with the declaration, “The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself” (Ezekiel 18:20). If we inherit Adam’s sin this passage is a lie!

2. Jesus Was A Descendant of Adam. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus was sinless. The Hebrew writer declares that Jesus “was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15). Yet, Jesus was also a descendent of Adam. Luke traces Jesus’ genealogy all the way back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38). With respect to Jesus’ humanity, the Hebrew writer tells us, “in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17). If all the descendants of Adam are born guilty of sin, then Jesus was also guilty of sin!

3. Children Are Innocent. When Jesus speaks of children He declares, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 19:14). In the chapter just before this He spoke of His followers becoming like little children if they would enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 18:3). He does not speak of them as bearing sin, but warns whoever “causes” a child to sin (Matt. 18:6). Finally, when the Holy Spirit through Jeremiah speaks of the Israelites sacrificing their children in idolatry it speaks of theirs as the “blood of the innocents” (Jer. 19:4-5). If children inherit Adam’s sin, they are not innocent!

Questions

1. What does “justification by faith” allow a person to have with God (5:1)? _____

2. Why is the Christian able to “glory in tribulations” (5:3-4)? _____

3. Define the Greek word *dokimē*, translated “character” (5:4): _____

4. What is Paul illustrating by addressing that human beings might die for a “good man” but “scarcely” for a righteous man (5:7)? _____

5. Why does man need to be “reconciled” to God (5:10-11)? _____

6. Does Romans 5:12 teach that man inherits Adam’s sin? Why or why not? _____

7. In what two ways has death come into the world through sin (5:12)?
Physical death: _____

Spiritual death: _____

8. What reason does Paul offer for the fact that “death spread to all men” (5:12)? _____

9. Was the Law of Moses the first standard that held man accountable for sin before God (5:13,14)?

10. List four examples of Scripture referring to “sin” before the Law of Moses was given:
_____ (Gen. 4:7); _____ (Gen. 18:20);
_____ (Gen. 42:22); _____ (Gen. 39:9).
11. Fill in the missing words from Ezekiel 18:20 which show that man does not inherit Adam’s sin: “The _____ who _____ shall _____. The son shall not bear the _____ of the _____, nor the _____ bear the guilt of the _____. The _____ of the righteous shall be upon _____, and the wickedness of the _____ shall be upon _____” (NKJV).
12. What fact about Jesus’ ancestry (according to the flesh) shows that man does not inherit Adam’s sin (Luke 3:23-38; cf. Heb. 4:15)? _____
13. How does Jeremiah describe the blood of children, which shows that man does not inherit Adam’s sin (Jer. 19:4, 5)? _____