

ROMANS 5:12-8:39 | GIVING TESTIMONY TO THE VALIDITY OF THE MYSTERY

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ROMANS 5:12-21 | DEFENDING THE MYSTERY (AGAIN) AS IN GOD'S PATTERN

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ROMANS 5:12-14 | BY ONE MAN

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VERSE 12 – BLUE

Paul backs up to speak of the root of the problem that caused the need for an **atonement** (v. 11). Paul gives a short chain of events that took place. First, **by one man**, speaking of Adam (made clear in v. 14), **sin entered into the world**. This summarizes what Genesis 3 teaches, that there was *no sin* prior to Adam's eating of the fruit. Along with the introduction of sin came **death**, just as God had promised in Genesis 3:3. With the introduction of *the curse of death* now **death passed upon all men**.

I prefer the marginal reading of the KJV, *in whom has sinned*. That is, **death passed** upon *each and every one that sinned*. A literal translation of the Greek would be, *upon each and all that sinned*. The pronoun is singular and the adjective "all" is plural. The "promise" of Genesis 3:3 has been passed on to each sinner.

I do not subscribe to the so-called *federal headship of Adam* in which *all sinned because we were all in Adam*. I think that such a theology says *more than this Scripture actually says*, and is therefore a theology built on a dangerous hermeneutical error.

The verse initially and primarily teaches that **death passed upon all men**, whether sinners or not. Then Paul clarifies that *each and every sinner receives this death, there is no escape*.

VERSE 13 – BLUE

Paul begins a parenthetical statement that continues through verse 17. The major point of verse 13 is that *death was not a result of the law because it predated the law*.

And since **sin is not imputed when there is no law** then the *federal headship of Adam* theory collapses. Men and women were dying before the Law, in a time in which there was not imputation of sin. Thus all who died pre-Law did not die *because of their sins*. Rather, they died *because of their location*. They were born into Adam's world, separated from God and sentenced to death by Adam's sin, not their own, for there was no legal basis upon which to impute their own sins to them.

Note, first, that Paul is building a case that *the mystery*, which would certainly include the *non-imputation of sin* (2 Cor. 5:19) is fully within God's pattern. Prior to the law people died when *sin is not imputed*, and they do the same today.

Note secondly that this understanding utterly destroys Calvinism. The entire Calvinistic system is built upon their doctrine of so-called *Total Depravity*, which requires each individual to carry Adam's guilt.

VERSE 14 - BLUE

Even though sin was **not imputed** (v. 13), **nevertheless death reigned**. This, once again, shows that *sin was not the reason those from Adam to Moses died*. Even if they sinned (and we know from the Biblical record that they did, with the possible exception of Enoch), none of them had **sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression**, and it is *that sin* that was the only prohibition God had expressed, at least as far as we know.

Paul then says that Adam is **the figure of him that was to come**. The word **figure** is the Greek τύπος [tupos], or *type*. But a *type* must correspond in every regard, and in his sin, Adam was *opposite* from **him that was to come** (a Hebraism referring to the Messiah). I believe the answer is found in 1 Corinthians 14:45, where Paul similarly teaches of Adam as

a **living soul**, and Christ corresponding as a **quickening spirit**. Thus, the *typology* here is related to Adam as the *giver of life* and not the one who introduced sin. In following verses Paul will make a contrast between Adam and Christ.

ROMANS 5:15-17 | CONTRASTS

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VERSE 15 – BLUE

Having made a *type*, Paul knows that he must now quickly give a *contrast*, lest someone make the wrong conclusions. Adam's *type* was in being a *life-giver*, not in being the one who introduced death. The **offense** and the **free gift** bring the *opposite* result, one bringing death, the other life.

Why does Paul speak of **many** rather than *all*? While Calvinists would use the final words of the verse to support their doctrine of Limited Atonement, they are not consistent in the hermeneutics of this verse, which uses **many** both for those who die from Adam's **offense** and those made alive by **the gift of grace**. But if we put ourselves in Paul's shoes, we understand how he can simply say, "many died, and many will live." This simple approach does not demand a doctrine so objectionable that even many Calvinists bristle at the thought.

VERSE 16 – BLUE

Continuing in showing contrasts between Adam and Christ, Paul says that **the gift** did not come by **one that sinned**. Rather, it was **the judgment...to condemnation** that came **by one**, but **the free gift** is **of many offenses**. That is, *out of one man's sin death was introduced to all men but growing out of many offenses*.

If it was **many offenses** that brought about God's **free gift** of **justification**, then (once again) the doctrine of "federalism" in which all guilt came from Adam is proven false. Rather, because **of many offenses** God provided a **free gift**.

VERSE 17 – BLUE

Paul finishes out his contrasts between the work of Christ and the work of Adam. In Adam there was a *reign of death* and in Christ there is a **reign in life**. Both effects come **by one** but are polar opposites.

ROMANS 5:18-21 | COMPARISONS

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VERSES 18-19 – BLUE

Verse 18 picks up where verse 13 left off, with verses 14-17 as a parenthetical (so printed in the KJV).

Here, rather than a *contrast* (as in vv. 14-17), there is a *comparison*. It was through **one** that **judgment came** and through another **one**, Jesus Christ, that **the free gift came**. Note that this does not say that *all men are saved*, but rather that **the free gift** has been given to all. If it had not been, then we would not proclaim God's work through Christ as a gift for all. Verse 19 simply reiterates the truth of verse 18.

VERSE 20 – BLUE

I do not think that the entrance of the law could make Adam's **offense...abound**. Rather, that **offense** in general might abound. That is, as was noted in verses 13, **sin is not imputed when there is no law**. But when law is given (as in Genesis 3:3), then there is responsibility to obey the law. Therefore, after the giving of the law, **sin abounded**. But Paul rejoices that, in comparison, there was also the abounding of grace, which **did much more abound**.

VERSE 21 – BLUE

And Paul closes with these now familiar words but emphasizing that once **sin reigned** and now **might grace reign**, and the reign of grace might be **unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord**.