

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 5:15-17

A progression of statements: 1. Sin entered the world through one man. 2. Death entered through sin. 3. Death spread to all men. 4. Death reigns over all humans.

- **Two Heads, Two Legacies:**

Adam, “a pattern of the one to come”: A superficial similarity between Adam and Christ on one specific count -- both men have left a legacy that has affected untold numbers of people.

An antithesis of two lives. Anders Nygren: “[They stand there] as the respective heads of the two Aeons. Adam is the head of the old aeon, the age of death; Christ is the head of the new aeon, the age of life.

Three difference: 1). The Nature of the Two Actions -- verse 15, 2). The Immediate Results -- verse 16, and 3). The Ultimate Effects of their actions -- verse 17.

- **The Nature Of Their Actions: v. 15**

Verse 15: “But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!”

Adam's trespass: A deviation from the path which God had for him, versus Christ's gift (charisma), an act of self-sacrifice which bears no resemblance to Adam's act of self-assertion.

Paul uses the Greek word for “offense” or “trespass” -- the word, *paraptma*. It means fall, or a deviation from the path. It is commonly understood as a transgression or trespass, cross over the boundary, to deviate from the path.

The nature of Adam's actions, then, were "paraptma" -- they were a deviation from what God intended. An apt definition of all sin. When we deviate from what God intends, our actions are paraptma. See: 1 John 3:4; Romans 7:7; Matthew 5:19

Christ's Obedience:

Christ's actions are described in terms of a "gift" -- a free gift. The Greek word here for gift is "*charisma*". It is a grace gift -- it is therefore good and righteous and pleasing to God.

Christ did what was expressive of the mind heart, and will of God. Whereas Adam chose to individuate himself from God's person and will, Christ, as the man Jesus, chose to identify himself with God's person and will.

Throughout his earthly life, Jesus honored the authority of His Father through complete obedience: *Hebrews 10:7*-- "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come . . . to do thy will, O God'".

Jesus' Incarnation was an act of obedience to His Father: John 14:31 records, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do".

All that Jesus did and said was exactly what His Father wanted Him to do and say. -- John 12:49: "For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me commandment, what to say, and what to speak".

One of the greatest attestations to Jesus' obedience is how often his actions are attributed to prophetic promises about his life. See: Matthew 21:4 -- "Now this took place that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled". - *Matthew 21:4*

- **The Immediate Results of their Actions -- v. 16**

"Nor can the gift of God be compared with the result of one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification."

Summarization: While Christ God's gift brought justification, Adam's sin brought condemnation. (The contrast is absolute).

Adam's Judgment:

"The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation..." Adam's one, single, solitary, individual sin -- his deviation from God's expressed will - brought condemnation on the entire human race.

All are guilty in Adam because they were all ruined spiritually in Adam and because every human being subsequently born into the world is born outside a relationship to God.

Christ's Obedience:

"The gift followed many trespasses and brought justification."

Adam's one sin brought condemnation to many ... to all. Because of Adam's ONE transgression, God's judgment followed. But, God's gift followed many trespasses.

Charles Cranfield: "That one single misdeed should be answered by judgment, this is perfectly understandable: that the accumulated sins and guilt of all the ages should be answered by God's free gift, this is the miracle of miracles, utterly beyond human comprehension."

- **The Ultimate Effects Of Their Actions:**

Verse 17: "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!"

In that verse, Paul reverses the order of Christ's and Adam's actions from the previous two verses. This time he begins with Adam, rather than Christ.

Adam's Trespass: Death!

When Adam rebelled, he had no idea of the lasting consequences he was producing, did he? We wonder, what did he think he was going to get in

return for his disobedience?

The hard reality: Adam didn't get anything positive from his rebellion. 1. His eyes weren't open to what God could see. 2. He wasn't more like God. 3. He didn't know what God knew.

What did happen was that spiritual death was given a platform from which to operate. Humans were spiritually judged, and placed in the same fallen category as demons. We became the enemies of God. See: Romans 5:10?
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Christ's Consequences: Life!

In reality, Adam's consequences ran from his time to the time of Christ. In one sense, it was temporary -- because Christ came to deliver us from the power of Sin and Death.

Christ has exchanged our death for His life. He has moved us out of death's kingdom into the kingdom of life. What Adam did was ultimately temporary, but what Christ did is permanent.

Another “a fortiori”: “How much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ!”

* Christ so delivers us from the power and rule of death that Paul can say we are now receiving an abundance of Grace. We are receiving the gift of righteousness. We are reigning in LIFE through the one man, Jesus Christ.

We could not have experienced a greater transition and transformation from Adam's helpless state.