

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 5:13-14

- **Recap:**

Paul is explaining the progression of sin in the world. He's not trying to explain the origin of sin. A series of statements as to the original sin of Adam and how it spread throughout humanity and the world.

- **The Sin of Adam:** (see v.12)

Death as a spiritual reality after Adam's willful disobedience: Adam disobeyed the only prohibitive command God had given -- and he certainly died -- even if he had no consciousness of it.

Spiritual death spread to all "Adams": Death (not as an event, but as a power) spread to all men. Death spread to all men because all sinned. As the NIV puts it, "... In this way death came to all men, because all sinned."

Two Views of Universal Sin and Death: 1. All men sinned in the same way as Adam. 2. All men sinned in the person of Adam. Either way, Death spread to all humans.

- **An Apparent Digression:**

Verse 13: "... For before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law."

Some might say, "We are only responsible for our own sinful decisions." Paul says, "No, death reigned from Adam till the time of Moses -- even though the Law had not yet been instituted.

From Adam to the time of Moses, death still reigned in the human race -- even though there wasn't any law yet given regarding many sins.

The importance: There was a period of time when people weren't willfully breaking the commandments of God, but the power of Sin and Death still operated. "Before the law was given, sin was in the world."

Paul's era: Some Jewish theologians insisted that the Law was all that had ever mattered. Paul is showing us that sin and death both reigned in the world -- before Moses brought the Israelites the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law.

For nearly 2600 years (one estimate) between Adam and Moses, all humans lived under the curse of Sin and Death -- no matter what their spiritual orientation.

- **Where There Is No Law:**

v. 14 "But sin is not taken into account when there is no law."

Modern American jurisprudence: A court can't legally charge someone with a crime unless there is a law on the books against it. Once a law goes on the books, you can be prosecuted for that violation.

Paul's analysis: When there was no Mosaic Law, God did not punish people for those sins that had not yet been identified. Once the Mosaic Code was given ... the Israelites were bound to obedience. If they broke a provision of the Torah, they were punished for it.

But before the Law -- while God did not hold humans accountable for the provisions of the Law, they were still dying. Death was still reigning in the world through sin.

Paul is not only explaining the progression of sin and death -- but he's also taking a shot at a common Pharisaical tenet of his day. The Pharisees often insisted that if you didn't overtly, directly, purposefully break a law of God, you hadn't sinned.

Paul says, it doesn't matter: Sin and Death reigned even when there wasn't a Law to define every sin.

Jesus, of course, made it even harder. He made statements like, "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment." -- Matthew 5:21-22

- **Adam As A Type of Christ: v. 14:** "Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, **as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.**"

The Greek word the NIV translates as pattern, is "Tupos". It literally means, a "type". A "type" is predictor or shadow of someone or something that is to come later. An "antitype" is the actual thing or person that has been prefigured.

Adam is the "type" ("tupos") of Christ. Aside from our text, Paul also calls Christ "The Last Adam" (1Corinthians 15:45) and "The Second Man" (1Corinthians 15:47).

Adam is the only Old Testament character to be specifically identified as a "type" of Christ -- even though the typological relationship between Adam and Christ is contrasting, rather than a similarity or likeness.

Old Testament characters used as "types" of Christ: Melchizedek, the High Priest of Salem, Joseph, and Samson.

The typological relationship between Christ and Adam is unique. Christ is Adam's replacement: He is the new representative of a new humanity – one brought to God through His personal sacrifice.

As the hymn writer put it, Christ is the ... "Adam, descended from above, Federal Head of all mankind."

