

Romans: Verse-by-Verse

Romans 5:12-21 (Introduction)

Student Notes

- **The Context Of Romans 5:12-21**

Up to this point, Paul has surveyed both the universal extent of human sin and guilt and God's provision of God's justifying grace through Christ.

1. Both Guilt And Grace Apply Equally To Both Jews And Gentiles.

- Romans 3:9 -- Both Jews and Gentiles alike are under sin.
- Romans 4:16 -- Through faith Abraham is "the father of us all".

Christ becomes the "dividing line" between two halves of humankind: One group is characterized by sin and guilt, the other by grace and faith.

2. Paul's Use Of First Person Plural (We, Us, etc)

- Although being a Jew He is identified with the new believing community (Christians) through his salvation experience.
- Regardless of cultural identification, believers share a number of experiences: justification, reconciliation, and peace with God. They are standing in grace, rejoicing in present sufferings (because of the promises of future glory), and are assured of final salvation through Christ.

- **The Connectivity of 1-11 and 12-21:**

The key ligament: "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin..."

The word, "Therefore" in verse 12 shows what follows in verses 12-21 are not independent; they are not parenthetical, but part of the whole context.

Two Connections Between Romans 5:1-11 And 12-21:

1. Paul has shown that our new relationship to God, manifested in reconciliation and redemption is totally due to the death of God's son. (See: verses 9-10).

2. The first and second half of Romans 5 end with the phrase, "through our Lord Jesus Christ".

- **"Federal" or "Corporate Heads":** Romans 5:12-21

Paul introduces Adam and Christ as the heads of the old and a new relationship to God redemption, and more. Paul's fullest use of the Jewish concept of a "Federal Head" so far in Romans.

The Basic Idea: One man serves as the representative of a group. His actions, whether positive or negative, have sweeping consequences. All who belong to him are said to have experienced the same consequences as their "Federal Head".

F.F. Bruce: "When one man fails in the accomplishment of God's purpose, God raises up another to take his place -Joshua to replace Moses, David to replace Saul, Elisha to replace Elijah."

Paul's use of the Hebrew concept of a "federal head" or "corporate personality" in verses 12-21: "The first man Adam and sinful mankind, versus 'The Second Man' (Christ), and the community of the redeemed.

- Verses 12-14: Paul identifies Adam's responsibility for sin and death, and as "a pattern of the one to come".

- Verses 15-17: Paul contrasts Adam and Christ. Each of these "federal" or "corporate heads" are shown in the light of their actions.

- Verses 18-21; Adam and Christ are compared. Paul uses the phrases, "just as" and "so also" to compare Adam's disobedience or Christ's obedience -- resulting in humanity being either cursed or blessed.