

## EXEGESIS OF ROMANS 5:12-17<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction: Everybody should rejoice that they began in Adam.**

If anybody begins not in Adam, they have no grounds to expect an ending in Christ. Before discussion ensues about Christ and Adam being separate federal heads (vv 5-21), there is a realization that the author and the audience are wicked people and Christ died for them (vv 6-8) followed by joy of being God's friend—saved from His wrath (vv. 9-11).

### **Preceding Context**

Paul introduces this passage by stating the real cause of such a dilemma that would bring about the wrath of God (5:9) and the need for reconciliation (5:11) in the first place. For almost five chapters, Paul had been speaking of the “fruit of sin”, and now he spoke of the “root of sin.”<sup>2</sup> So verse 12 begins with “therefore.” Some say that this ties all the way back to 3:23.<sup>3</sup>

### **Structure of the Text**

In Romans 5:12-17, as found in the KJV and NKJV, there is a parenthesis around verses 13-17 suggesting the translators see this as an extra thought to expound briefly on verse 12. This sentence structure is not conclusive amongst the translations, but Douglas,<sup>4</sup> Walvoord/Zuck,<sup>5</sup> Phillips,<sup>6</sup> and the ESV all see this passage split between vv. 14 and 15.

Nonetheless, Calvin states that verse 12 is “incomplete” because it does not have an “expressed, second clause,”<sup>7</sup> and then later he solves the mystery when he cites verse 18 as a “defective sentence” if it doesn't complete the thought introduced in Verse 12.<sup>8</sup> Calvin says that the “wherefore” of verse 12 “introduces the conclusion which the Apostle draws in the 18<sup>th</sup> verse, but is for a few moments interrupted by the explanatory parenthesis...”<sup>9</sup> Still another says that verse 12 is the “subordinate clause (“just as”) for the main clause (“so also”) of verse 18.<sup>10</sup> The problem is that there is a “so also” (*houtos kai*) in closer proximity—in verse 12.

Rather, the body of proof seems to rest on some of the conjunctions present in the text such as the “because” (*gar*) at the beginning of verse 13 which demonstrates that this verse is an explanation of the preceding verse. The strong adversative “but” (*alla*) of verses 14 & 15 continue the thought of verse 13. Moreover, the connecting “and” (*kai*) of verse 16 and its “because” (*gar*) in verse 17 seem to make this one easy unit through connection with verse 15.

### **Succeeding Context**

Having established that verses 13-17 are parenthetical to verse 12, verse 18 contrasts Christ with the “one man” of verse 12. Furthermore, the first (subordinate) clause of Romans 5:18 is a restatement of 5:12, and the second (main) clause of 5:18 serves as a contrast to 5:12.

From verse 18 onward there is an overwhelming sense that grace is more tenacious than the law and the development of “continuing in sin that grace may abound”—specifically from verses 20 and 6:1. Paul goes

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<sup>2</sup> John Phillips, *The John Phillips Commentary: Exploring Romans* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1969), 94.

<sup>3</sup> C.I. Scofield, *The New Scofield Reference Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 1216.

<sup>4</sup> John F. Walvoord & Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Seminary Faculty; New Testament Edition* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1983), 458.

<sup>5</sup> J.D. Douglas, Ed, *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* (Carol Stream, Ill: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1990), 544.

<sup>6</sup> Phillips, 96.

<sup>7</sup> John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries: Volume XIX (Acts 14-28; Romans 1-16)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 199.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 211.

<sup>9</sup> Robert Haldane, *Geneva Series of Commentaries: Romans* (Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 207.

<sup>10</sup> Max Anders, Ed, *Holman NT Commentary: Romans* (Nashville: Broadman & Homan, 2000), 164.

into a treatise of what it really means when those who profess to be God's people still walk in the flesh (8:1; 8:9).

## Commentary

### 5:12

**Therefore**—literally “through this”: This word gives both a backward look to whatever “this” is and a forward look to the main clause in verse 18 as described previously. “Through the reconciliation of sinners to God” (vv 6-11) there is a result in the main clause of v.18. The main clause of v.18 states that many are made just through One man's righteousness. Whatever that means in this discussion thus far, one can rest assured that the justification of “all men” (v.18) results from the reconciliation discussed previous to the “therefore” of v.12.

**Just as** (*hosper*) introduces the subordinate clause with the preposition *dia*. Paul is therefore making a comparison between a first man “through” (*dia*) whom came “missing the mark” (*hamartia*) into the world (*kosmon*). That is, one man is responsible for bringing a propensity for missing the mark<sup>11</sup> to all mankind.<sup>12</sup>

**Death through sin** gives the reader the third usage of *dia* in this verse. Visualizing this “missing the mark” as the conduit through which death<sup>13</sup> arrives and visualizing the conduit being laid through Adam's “missing of the mark” assists in understanding that “life's extinction”<sup>14</sup> (*thanatos*) came through one man's “missing the mark”—affecting all creation.

**Death passed upon all men** is introduced by the adverb *houtos* which takes Adam's “missing of the mark” and places the consequential creations' death upon mankind—the only creature whose image is the Creator's (James 3:9). *Houtos* is translated “so” in most translations and means “in this way.”<sup>15</sup> “In the way” that Adam was the conduit for “mark missing” to enter the creation of men; and “in the way” that “mark missing” was the conduit for death to enter creation; death passed “to” all men.

Does **For all have sinned** put each member of Adam's race back in the garden? The fact that “passed” (*dielthen*) and “sinned” (*hemarton*) are aorist verbs does not help clear the mystery as to whether this “man sinned in Adam and received death as a race in the garden” or rather that “man sins because of sinfulness passed from Adam and each man's death comes to him as he sins.” The aorist aspect itself does not require a decision as this aspect is simply undefined.<sup>16</sup> Disagreement exists on this point. It is a common saying that “Aorist aspect has a ‘once for all’ idea”<sup>17</sup> which would allow for no debate. However, the debate follows:

1. As Anders points out, if death is passed as individual man sins, then one would need to conclude that the death spoken of in this passage is not speaking of physical death—for infants and mental invalids die and yet they do not knowingly sin. Furthermore, If this passage is speaking only of “spiritual death” as that which Adam experienced in the day in which he sinned (Genesis 2:17), then the question for infants and mental invalids would be: “Are they spiritually dead in their sins since they have not knowingly sinned” (Ephesians 2:1).<sup>18</sup>
2. If this is a too slippery a slope for some, then they would have to conclude that each man effectively sinned when Adam sinned. That is, just as the Levites paid tithes to Melchizedek in the loins of their father Abraham (Hebrews 7:9),<sup>19</sup> so also the race of Adam essentially sinned in their father.

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<sup>11</sup> 56 times the word *hamartia* or its verb form is used in Romans. Seven of these times are in this passage; Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *hamartia* (Strong's 266)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 1 Dec 2010. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong=G266&t=KJV>>.

<sup>12</sup> *Cosmos* is the word used both here and John 3:16.

<sup>13</sup> 22 times in 20 verses, Paul spoke of this “ending of earth life” or “life without God.” Reading this usage four times in Romans 5:12-17 indicates that Paul had this result of “missing the mark” and “falling beside” in mind.

<sup>14</sup> Wesley J. Perschbacher, *The New Analytical Greek Lexicon* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1990), 199.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 300.

<sup>16</sup> William D. Mounce, *Greek for the Rest of Us* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 160.

<sup>17</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur NT Commentary: Romans 1-8* (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 296.

<sup>18</sup> Anders, 168.

<sup>19</sup> John MacArthur, *The MacArthur Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005), 1521.

Certainly a “few righteous” kept a city relatively “safe” in the case of Sodom and a single wicked man brought Israel’s army to its knees at Ai, so it seems understandable that God would hold all the race accountable for Adam’s actions.<sup>20</sup> There is even a more obvious example: The Jews asked for the blood of Christ to be on them and theirs. Indeed, they have been paid as an ethnicity.<sup>21</sup>

Perhaps the most significant piece of information is that of the aorist tense being used. This is that “snapshot” in history. That is to say, if these two verbs were in the “imperfect” tense, one could certainly surmise that men get death as they are born and continually sin. However, the fact that it is written in the past tense at all must leave the reader with the “federal headship view” of mankind sinning in their father Adam, and thus earning his same death (Genesis 2:17; Ephesians 2:1).<sup>22</sup> Does this “view” seem harsh? Perhaps it does, but as “harsh” as it may first appear, this harshness pails in comparison to the grace which becomes evident in the “federal headship” of Christ over those who find life later in the passage.<sup>23</sup>

### 5:13

**For until the law, sin was in the world** begins the parenthetical material which explains verse 12 and really just settles the view of “all men sinning in Adam.” It has already been pointed out that “for” (*gar*) is a conjunction which shows explanation.<sup>24</sup> What makes this “explanatory material” so recognizable as such is the repetition of certain words such as the familiar *hamartia* (“missing the mark”) which is said to have been in the “world.” Now, how long has this “missing the mark” been found in God’s creation? Paul says that “missing the mark” has been found in “creation” even before the law and leading up to (“until”) the law.

*Nomos* (“law”) is mentioned 51 times in Romans and three times in this passage.<sup>25</sup> It’s apparent that “sin,” the “law,” and “death” are closely related. Furthermore, it appears that the law is the “missed mark.” However, this verse is clear that *hamartia* was occurring even before the *nomos* was given to Moses. The implication is that they missed an “unofficial, informal moral code” that held them accountable. This is not a new train of thought for Paul. He spoke of those who were in the same situation even after Moses received the law. He speaks of the “moral code” coming in the form of an inward “knowledge” (1:19) of a Creator (1:20) and a “conscience” that made it clear to them when they were breaking a sort of law (2:14-15).

Furthermore, the idea of there being no “transgression” for those who have no “law” is found in 4:15. However, one should notice right away that Adam existed before the law much like sin was in the world until the law. Both Adam and sin were in the world before the law, and this verse says he (Adam) transgressed. This can only mean, according to both 4:15 and 5:13, that since transgression can only occur where there is a law, that transgressing the law (which is the definition of “sin” according to 1 John 3:4) really did occur before Moses received the law spoken of in this context. Clearly, the law of Moses is in view here as is evident in the very next verse where Moses is mentioned (5:14). Well then, if the law being considered in this context was not broken before it was given by Moses; and if there is no transgression in the absence of the law (4:15); then the question needs to be asked: “Which law did Adam transgress?” Romans 2:14 tells the reader that Adam (and all those before Moses’ law in 5:13) sinned against the law inside him in the form of a conscience.

Therefore, when one reads **sin is not imputed (“counted” in the ESV) when there is no law**, they can rest assured that Adam did not transgress Moses’ law, but he most certainly transgressed the law within (2:14).<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, if Adam transgressed the law within, it is that law which requires a judge to impute it to his account. Impute is the same term (*ellogētai*) that occurs in Philemon 18 and carries the idea of “putting

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<sup>20</sup> MacArthur, *Romans 1-8*, 293-294.

<sup>21</sup> Peter S. Ruckman, *The Book of Romans* (Pensacola: Peter S. Ruckman, 2003), 219.

<sup>22</sup> Walvoord, 458.

<sup>23</sup> Anders, 169.

<sup>24</sup> Mounce, 86.

<sup>25</sup> Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *nomos* (*Strong's 3551*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 4 Dec 2010. <<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3551&t=KJV> >

<sup>26</sup> Wayne Grudem, *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2008), 2166.

something on one's account as they sin."<sup>27</sup> This is how death passed on all men [even before Moses' law] through sin (from verse 12). Their sin is added to their legal account as they commit it. Moses' law under such consideration in this context versus the law of the conscience in 2:14-15 because it is Moses' law with which those in this age have to be concerned (2:12-13).

Phillips sees this "pre-Moses" era as a time when sins were not "formally charged" to men's accounts.<sup>28</sup> The problem with this is that Gentiles are clearly accountable (1:18-2:15) for the sins they committed. How can this be without a formal charge? Moreover, one would ask how sin brought death (verse 12) death reigned from Adam to Moses (verse 14) without imputation. Truly, the point of this passage is merely to state that there was a less-defined standard for these "formal charges." Or, better said: "as sin is not reckoned where there is no law, and as sin was reckoned...before the law of Moses, therefore there was law before the law of Moses."<sup>29</sup> One need only look at the Flood, or the "fate of Sodom", or the "plagues inflicted on Pharaoh and Abimelech" to know that God did impute iniquities before Moses.<sup>30</sup>

## 5:14

**Nevertheless** speaks of contrast with the preceding thought. That is, even though "Moses' law" was not considered in the accounting of those before Moses, the same death that comes through sin (from this law or the law of 2:14-15) "came upon all men" (5:12). All of 5:13 being about **Moses** and those being under his **law** leads into verse 14 and **death reigned from Adam to Moses**. This is to say that despite those before Moses not being under Moses' law, they were still under the death brought by Adam's sin mentioned in verse 12. Again, this is not the main point of the chapter or of the book. This is a peripheral, parenthetical piece of information for those in Paul's audience who were busy thinking about the exceptions. When the Gospel is given to people, and when those who are "convinced of [Moses'] law as transgressors" (James 2:9) are apt to say, "Yes, but what about those who have never read the Bible, or heard the 10 Commandments, or had a clear presentation of the Gospel?" This is a timeless situation. Paul is clearly saying "all men in Adam's race are dead. Yes, even those who did not break the same law that you break."

Now there arises the question of whether this is the "death" that came to Adam the day he sinned (Genesis 2:17) or whether this is the physical "death" appointed to every man (Hebrews 9:27). Considering that Adam lived to be 930 years old (Genesis 5's geneology), it doesn't seem dreadful at all to be a partaker of Adam's "physical death." Rather, it seems more of a reality to feel the urgency of a "death" that comes the day one runs from God (Genesis 2:17). Remember, this is a "death" that all mankind partook of when Adam committed his sin and died. Moreover, Paul speaks of his partaking of this immediate death not only in 5:12, but also in 7:9 where he speaks as one who was walking in the garden in the cool of the day and then dies when "the commandment came." This is that same death (*thanatos*) that is found 20 times in Romans—six of them in this chapter alone.<sup>31</sup>

**Death reigned** (*ebasileusen ho thanatos*) gives the idea that this loss of spiritual life dominated<sup>32</sup> humanity even before the "official law" that Moses brought the self-righteous Jews (2:1; 9:4). This same word for "reign" is found again in verse 17 for the comparison with Christ. **Even over them who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression**. This gets the reader back to the reality that although mankind positionally sinned in Adam their father, none of them have overtly disobeyed God's command in the way Adam did. This is the usually swing between the practical aspects of the individual which can fluctuate from time to time and the positional aspect of a sinner in Adam (5:12) versus a saint in Christ (1:7). "Even" gives the

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<sup>27</sup> Perschbacher, 136.

<sup>28</sup> Phillips, 96.

<sup>29</sup> Haldane, 210.

<sup>30</sup> Calvin, 202.

<sup>31</sup> Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *thanatos* (Strong's 2288)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 7 Dec 2010.

<<http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/Lexicon.cfm?>

Strong's=G2288&t=KJV&cscs=Rom >

<sup>32</sup> Perschbacher, 68.

idea that there were those in the church who might have thought about “exceptions” to those “under death”<sup>33</sup> to include “infants.”<sup>34</sup> Here arises yet another concern: How does the believer today arrive at a consistent view of a “Judge Who does right” (Genesis 18:25) and a seemingly static principle that “all in Adam are dead?” Moreover, all are dead because all have positionally sinned in Adam which earned them his death (5:12) even if they have never practically (as explained in the previous sentences) committed a sin. Such a topic is not within the scope of this paper.

“Sin’s” relative “transgression” (*paraptoma*), which means “to fall beside,” occurs four times in this passage.<sup>35</sup> Do Adam’s *hamartia* of verse 12 and his *paraptoma* of verse 14 differ in their result? “Death” is the result of both as seen in each verse. Whether “falling short” or “falling beside,” both actions bring “death” “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4).

**Who was a figure of Him Who is to come** is a phrase that should alert the reader of a new character approaching the scene who is a reality of the “pattern”.<sup>36</sup> One should begin to see a shift from one federal head to another. Paul begins to unfold what he does elsewhere (1 Corinthians 15): “Two Adams as heads...”<sup>37</sup> Moreover, it is interesting to note that “come” (*mellontos*) is a present tense participle which describes the “One” as He who is coming while “death was dominating.”<sup>38</sup> That is to say, the “One” wasn’t planning His approach as death was dominating. Rather, the “coming” of the “One” was already enacted. Galatians 4:4 gives the sense that The “Coming One” had a particular time in mind for His entrance into the kingdom dominated by death, and the time was approaching until it had reached its “fullness.”

## 5:15

**But the free gift is not like the offense** indicates a strongly opposite idea to a preceding sentence. Which sentence is it? The most natural feel is to see is that this verse is contained in the parentheses because the word behind “offense” here (*paraptoma*) is not used prior to this parentheses in chapter 5. Therefore, it cannot be seen as an opposing principle to 5:12 as is supposed by some.<sup>39</sup> The KJV is by far the most difficult version to read in this verse. The phraseology is telling when attempts are made at forming a block diagram. When the NKJV reading (employed here) is used, the verse becomes clearer.

**For if by the one man's offense many died** proves that this is the conditional, “subjunctive mood”<sup>40</sup>—forming the premise before the logical conclusion to follow. This word “offense”—translated “transgression” in many versions (*paraptoma*)—carries the idea that Adam’s “falling beside” (also seen as “missing the mark”) brought death to everybody.

“Many” is used twice in this verse and should not be understood to mean that Adam’s “offense” did not affect everybody. 5:12 makes clear that everybody was effected. The “many” of Adam was “all” whereas the “many” to whom “grace abounded” later in this verse need not mean “all.” In fact, verse 17 limites the “many” to “those who have received grace.”

**Of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.** This is the logical conclusion to the premise before. That is, “If Adam’s sin brought death to many, then you better believe that God’s grace will bring life to many.” Context should show that “life” is the “gift of grace” since there is a contrast being made here with “Adam’s death” of verses 12-14. The “many” of Christ need not mean “all” as the condition is stipulated in

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<sup>33</sup> Haldane, 210.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 210-211.

<sup>35</sup> Blue Letter Bible. "Dictionary and Word Search for *parabasis* (*Strong's 3847*)". Blue Letter Bible. 1996-2010. 7 Dec 2010. < <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=G3847&t=KJV> >

<sup>36</sup> Perschbacher, 414.

<sup>37</sup> Haldane, 213.

<sup>38</sup> Perschbacher, 268.

<sup>39</sup> J.D. Douglas, Ed, *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament* (Carol Stream, Ill: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1990), 544.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, 186.

verse 17 for who belongs to the “many.” Moreover, this word “abounded” is a remarkable action word which pictures a “bounding” grace that reaches “many” by the “grace” of God and Christ. Moreover, this same “abounding” is performed by “sin” in verse 20, but one should take note of the “much more” which the grace of God brings. There is an idea of both recovery and abundance—rescue and lavishness.<sup>41</sup>

## 5:16

**And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin.** Again, the KJV gives much of the same awkward reading that it did in verse 15. The strong connective *kai* shows the reader that this verse is a part of the thought carried from verse 15. Paul is making the point clear that though there is a good comparison between the affectiveness of both Adam and Jesus with their respective federations, there are also some major contrasts.

**For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation** provides the first part of the first contrast. There is no apparent noun in a word for word idea as the Greek rather speaks of “one” instead of “one offense.” Some versions (KJV, for example) leaves it open for interpretation because it has a static equivalency paradigm. However, the NKJV and the ESV identify this as “one trespass” or “one offense.” Haldane speaks to those who think it should be “one man” referring to Adam when he says that “one offense” better suits the term used in the last statement of this contrast: “many offenses.”<sup>42</sup> Adam’s one “falling beside” resulted in “judgment” (*krima*) delivering “condemnation” (*katakrima*).<sup>43</sup> *Kata* is a preposition that indicates something being brought down upon something else.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, Adam’s one trespass (“offense” in NKJV) resulted in a sentence being handed down to the and his race.<sup>45</sup>

**But the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.** This is part two of the “one the one hand”/“on the other hand” contrast occurring in this passage.<sup>46</sup> Adam’s sin may have brought a “death” sentence (5:12) down to each person, but after that, the “free gift brought justification.” There is an interesting play on words here by the Apostle. The free gift came out (*ek*) of the “falling aside” and went into (*eis*) justification.<sup>47</sup> Or, the “grace” that was a “free gift” (verse 15) was a result of the “falling aside,” and it brought “acquittal.”<sup>48</sup> This appears to be saying that without Adam’s sin, mankind would never know deliverance and the elation of acquittal. Perhaps one can better understand why Paul opens chapter 6 with the answer to those who take this too far saying, “We should sin because grace looks bigger in our forgiveness.”

## 5:17

**For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man (ESV).** The KJV and NKJV differ from this phraseology in that they do not identify the “one” in either case within verse 17. “Man” was added by the ESV for flow of thought as “man” is not in the original.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, the NKJV adds the definite article before the “one man’s trespass” which seems to be supported by the text.<sup>50</sup> The conjunction “for” (*gar*) signals explanation of verse 16. This first phrase is the premise of the explanation for the argument in verse 16. “Since death dominated because of Adam’s ‘falling aside’ God’s law...” is another way to say it.

What needs to be re-emphasized is that men do not die because they “sin” today. Mankind is dominated by death because of Adam’s sin.<sup>51</sup> 5:12-14 makes this clear, but many speak today of “standing in Christ.” The

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<sup>41</sup> Anthony Hoekema, *Saved by Grace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 182.

<sup>42</sup> Haldane, 215.

<sup>43</sup> Douglas, 545.

<sup>44</sup> Perschbacher, 220.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 248.

<sup>46</sup> Douglas, 545.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>48</sup> Perschbacher, 102.

<sup>49</sup> Douglas, 545.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>51</sup> Haldane, 215.

point of this passage is that there is a “standing in Adam” that mankind need not do anything to obtain—through the efforts of Adam.<sup>52</sup>

**Much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.** The word behind “gift” here is *doreas* not *charisma*.<sup>53</sup> The KJV and NKJV translate these words differently throughout the text maintaining the distinction between “gift” and “free gift” while the ESV does not.

Here is the conclusion of the explanation of verse 16’s argument. Since Adam’s efforts wrought sin’s domination to man, one should expect life to superdominate through Christ’s work on the cross. This “superdominance” points to not only the “abundance of grace,” but also to the “gift of righteousness.” It could also be called “superabundance” as it “abounds” over the loss from Adam’s work.<sup>54</sup> That is, Christ not only rebounded from sin’s effect to the saints, but He moreover furnished dominating life—that more abundantly (John 10:10). Over what does this life “dominate?” Saints can expect that when they “receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness,” they will begin to “dominate” (“reign over”) this death that first dominated them. The parallel idea cannot allow a “reigning over sin”<sup>55</sup> as that is not what “reigned” (dominated) over those in Adam in the premise of this verse.

Christ not only recovered what was lost, but gained the more—“much more”—and transfers it to the saint through a “gift of righteousness.”<sup>56</sup> What is this “gift of righteousness?” It is a phraseology that simply means “the gift which is righteousness.”<sup>57</sup>

### **Theological Significance**

Adam is a historical figure which means the Bible is to be taken as an infallibly reliable source for how God’s story began. Furthermore, he is the federal head of all people and his sin was the sin of his race. The death which his sin brought to him was carried to his race. However, his distant grandson—the Last Adam—brought a new race into existence. He became their federal head and His obedience and death to sin (Romans 6:10) became their righteousness.

### **Application For Churches and Individuals**

Churches should be filled with people who expect failure occasionally from a race of sinners. In the best day of a particular son of Adam is still sinful, still under the death sentence of Adam’s race had it not been for God’s abounding grace. This should drive the church of Christ to win each and every son of Adam to a saving knowledge of the Last Adam—Jesus.

Saints should remember that they are the embodiment of their fathers in a world that is full of Garden-of-Eden decisions—always presenting temptations to make gods to suit themselves. They should remember their past for fear of being ungrateful for abounding grace.

### **Conclusion**

Federal headship of two races, spiritual death, and the domination of sin’s death are all seen woven throughout the passage. When one realizes the detriment from which they were rescued, they too can agree that saints (1:7) should rejoice in their Saving God (5:11).

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<sup>52</sup>Then one must ask whether they need to do anything to obtain “the death” that comes with that standing. If not, infants are in a world of hurt.

<sup>53</sup> Douglas, 545.

<sup>54</sup> Haldane, 215.

<sup>55</sup>MacArthur, *Romans 1-8*, 306.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, 214.

<sup>57</sup> Mounce, 233.