

Romans – Justified through faith

Week 10, 11 & 12 – Romans 5 & 6 (God's people united in Christ)

Introduction

The text is divided into three paragraphs in each of which Adam and Christ are related to each other. In the first Adam and Christ are introduced, in the second they are contrasted in the third they are compared.

Week 11: Romans 5:12-21 (The two humanities, in Adam and in Christ)

1. Adam and Christ are introduced (12-14)

Firstly *sin entered the world through one man*, Paul obviously means Adam, through his one act of disobedience. Paul's not concerning himself with the origin of evil in general – just the fact that Adam allowed it to invade the world of human beings. Secondly *death* then enters the world *through sin*, (See Gen 2:17 & 3:19) – just as Adam's disobedience opened the door to sin, so sin opened the door to death.

Thirdly *in this way death came to all men, because all sinned*.

There are two ways of looking at this – the first is that all subsequent men followed Adam's example and sinned themselves (often interpreted this way by those that doubt the concept of 'original sin'). The second way is that Adam's sinful nature was passed on to his descendants and we therefore inherit his nature and the consequences of that nature.

The fact that those who lived before the law was received by Moses all died and that God punished people for their sins on occasion (the Flood, Sodom & Gomorrah, the Tower of Babel etc) would indicate it's not the breaking of specific laws or commands of God but the very nature of man that is the problem. Adam is the source of that nature.

In the last part of verse 14 Paul states that Adam is a *pattem of the one to come*, that is Jesus Christ. Christ will become the source of a whole humanity and undo the damage done by Adam.

2. Adam and Christ are contrasted (v15-17)

Paul seems embarrassed by comparing Adam and Jesus Christ. He immediately starts to stress the difference between them. Paul notes the difference in the nature of their actions, their immediate results and their ultimate effects.

The nature of Adam's act was a fall ('the fall' as we would know it now) a deviation from God's perfect plan, Jesus' act was a gift, an act of self-sacrifice, utterly at odds with Adam's selfish act.

The immediate effects are that Adam's action brought God's judgement brought condemnation (v16). Jesus' action brought justification (v16b)

The ultimate effect of Adam's act was to allow death to reign with us as its subjects, but the superiority of the work of Christ is shown in that death isn't just swapped for life but we *reign in life*, sharing in the Kingship of Christ with death under our feet, and one day to be destroyed.

" 'Twas I that shed
the sacred blood;
I nailed him to the
tree;
I crucified the Christ
of God;
I joined the mockery."

– Horatius Bonar
(19th Century Scottish
Hymn)

