

second blessing is “**access**” (e.g., NIV, ESV, CSB, NET), and the same word is used in Ephesians 3:12 to describe our ability to approach our King. However, here, Paul uses “**grace**” to refer to a characteristic of a new realm into which the justified believer has been given access (cf. 5:21). Some writers identify “**this grace**” with justification itself (e.g., Murray). However, while justification is included in this new realm, it is not the whole. Because of Christ’s work, God can now give us *all things* graciously (cf. 8:32). Notice here in Romans that we receive this “peace” and “access” not on our own merits but “**through our Lord Jesus Christ**” (for the second blessing Paul repeats “**through whom**” referring back to Jesus in v. 1). The third blessing, “**hope of the glory of God,**” refers to the confidence that believers possess that they will one day reflect God’s image, thus fulfilling the original purpose of their creation and reversing the effects of sin (cf. 3:23). Believers can “**boast**” (which could also be translated as “rejoice,” e.g., ESV, NET) in this hope.

- We who have this great “hope” can even “**boast**” or “rejoice” in “**suffering**” (v. 3). The *reason* (“**because**”) we can rejoice is that “**perseverance**” in trials will lead to proven “**character,**” and proven character will lead to an even stronger hope than if we had not gone through the trial (v. 4). “Sufferings, rather than threatening or weakening our hope, as we might expect to be the case, will, instead, increase our certainty in that hope. Hope, like a muscle, will not be strong if it goes unused” (Moo, 331).
- Furthermore, this “hope does not disappoint” (NASB; v. 5) or “**does not put us to shame**” (e.g., NIV, ESV). Paul uses a word often found in the Greek OT for an unfavorable verdict by God (e.g., Ps 25:2–3, 20; 31:1, 17; Isa 54:4).<sup>37</sup> Believers will not experience this unfavorable verdict at the Final Judgment **because** “**God’s love has been poured out**” in their hearts “**through the Holy Spirit who was been given to us.**” What is Paul’s logic here? God loves us. We are made aware of this love by means of the Holy Spirit, who indwells us. And this love of God that we experience through the Spirit gives us reason to have confident hope.
- **Verses 6–8** describe the love of God. It is a love that sent Christ to die for the “**powerless**” and “**ungodly.**” Christ died for us while we were “**still sinners.**” Notice the close connection between God and Christ. Paul sees no contradiction between saying that *Christ’s* death demonstrates *God’s* love.

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<sup>37</sup> Some of the passages specifically connect the lack of shame with trust in God’s promises regarding the Messiah. For example, the Greek version of Isaiah 28:16 can be translated as “Because of this, this is what the Lord says, ‘Behold, I am putting into the foundations of Zion a costly chosen stone, a precious cornerstone into her foundations, and the one who trusts in it [or him] will absolutely not **be put to shame.**’” Paul will quote this verse in Romans 9:33 and 10:11, so we know that it is important to him. Peter quotes it in 1 Pet 2:6. Therefore, there was already an expectation in the OT that the Messiah would be the way for God’s people to escape shame at the Final Judgment.

- **Verses 9–10** contrast the two things that God has already done for believers (justification in v. 9 and reconciliation in v. 10) with the salvation that we will receive at the Final Judgment.<sup>38</sup> If God has already accomplished the more challenging thing (i.e., forgiving his enemies and making them his friends), we can be confident that he will do the easier thing (i.e., saving those forgiven friends from the coming wrath).
  - In addition, not only do we have this future salvation to look forward to (“**Not only is this so,**” v. 11), but we can also presently “**boast in God**” or “rejoice” because of the reconciliation provided “**through our Lord Jesus Christ.**”
2. The Reign of Grace and Life (5:12–21)
- The opening “**therefore**” in **verse 12** (the NET has “so then”; i.e., it could be understood as introducing a purpose) introduces a thought that might be paraphrased as, “**in order to** accomplish this salvation just described in the previous section, there exists a union between believers and Jesus which is like, but greater than, the union they had with Adam” (for a similar paraphrase see Moo, 346).
  - Paul has already described how we receive justification and reconciliation through Jesus and can be confident that it has occurred (5:9–11). A potential obstacle in the way of us receiving our hope of glory might be death, and this next section (5:12–21) describes how God has provided a way to overcome the problem of death.
  - He addresses this potential obstacle by going through a series of contrasts (**vv. 15–17**) and comparisons (**vv. 18–21**) between Adam and Christ, which are depicted on the chart below. The emphasized points come in the second half of the contrasts and comparison (the right column). That is, the emphasis is on Christ’s work. Adam is mentioned to highlight Christ. Through these contrasts and comparisons, Paul describes how we receive justification and reconciliation through Jesus and be sure that it has taken place (5:9–11).

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<sup>38</sup> This is called an argument from the greater to the lesser. The phrase “**much more**” is the clue that this type of argument is being made. Paul will use this type of argument again in vv. 15 and 17.

<b>Adam</b>	<b>Christ</b>
through him, sin entered the world (and through sin, death entered the world), v. 12	
After v. 12, Paul inserts a parenthesis about the Law (vv. 13–14) in his argument before returning to his comparison in v. 18. However, in vv. 15–17, he first <i>contrasts</i> the work of Adam and Christ. <sup>39</sup>	
his transgression brought death to many, v. 15a	he provides a gift of life that overflows to many (i.e., no limit in its offer), v. 15b
his one transgression brought condemnation that will result in judgment, v. 16a	his free gift provides justification after many transgressions, v. 16b
his one transgression began a reign of death over all humans, v. 17a	his free gift of righteousness provides entrance into a reign of life, v. 17b
his one transgression resulted in the condemnation of all men, v. 18a	his one act of righteousness results in justification and life for all men, v. 18b
his disobedience “made” many sinners, v. 19a	his obedience “will make” many righteous, v. 19b
in his realm, “sin reigned in death,” v. 21a	in his realm, “grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life,” v. 21b

- In the beginning of **verse 12**, Paul refers to spiritual “**death**,” which leads to physical death. When Adam ate the forbidden fruit, he immediately died spiritually (God had said, “When you eat from it you will certainly die,” Gen 2:17) and eventually died physically as a consequence.
- The end of **verse 12** (“**all sinned**”) could be saying nothing more than that humans sin because they are dead spiritually from conception. In other words, we are spiritually dead because of Adam’s sin, and thus, all commit individual sins (e.g., Schreiner, 282). However, as the passage later clarifies (esp. vv. 16, 19), Paul is likely talking about the one act of Adam for which all men are accountable and for which all spiritually and physically die.
- In **verses 13–14**, Paul pauses from his central argument to explain how those who lived before the Mosaic Law are included in the “**all sinned**” of verse 12. Paul is not saying that sins committed by people before Moses were not counted against them (Murray and others argued that these individuals were only held accountable for Adam’s sins, not their own). Instead, Paul argues that people still died during this period as sinners despite not having an “invoice” (i.e., a law) that specifically pointed out the nature and consequences of those sins.<sup>40</sup> The fact that they died

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<sup>39</sup> Notice that in vv. 15–17, the *contrast* with Christ is introduced with “**much more**” (vv. 15, 17), but in the next section which *compares* Adam and Christ, the comparison are introduced with “**even so**” (vv. 18, 19, 21).

<sup>40</sup> The verb translated as sometimes translated “imputed” in v. 13 means “to charge with a financial obligation”

proves they were accountable for their sins. Therefore, the people who lived prior to the giving of the Mosaic Law demonstrate that they also were conceived spiritually dead because of Adam's sin.<sup>41</sup> As Thielman puts it, "Paul's primary point... is that in the period when people only had an internal and somewhat vague sense of what God required (2:14–15), and before anyone had been 'entrusted with the oracles of God' (3:2), they still sinned against God and received the penalty of death" (286).

- **Verse 16** is likely the most explicit statement that all men (except for Christ) are held accountable for Adam's sin. Why is this the case?
  - Some argue it is because we follow Adam's example (Pelagius). However, wouldn't Paul then have said we were accountable for *our* sins?
  - Others argue that we have inherited a sinful nature or inclination to sin from Adam and are held accountable for the sins that this nature produces (e.g., Cranfield). But again, Paul's emphasis is on Adam's sin and not ours.
  - Many have argued that we were physically present in Adam (i.e., genetically; cf. Heb 7:9–10) and thus really participated in his sin and are thus rightly condemned for this participation (e.g., Shedd, Millard Erickson, Harrison and Hagner).<sup>42</sup> However, there are no Scripture passages that clearly teach this concept. Instead, this position seems motivated by a desire to give a just reason why subsequent men are held accountable for a sin that they did not commit. However, it does not really solve this apparent dilemma. How can those with no consciousness commit sins? Furthermore, why is Adam's one sin singled out? Why are we not held responsible for all his subsequent sins, at least those committed before he had children?
  - Therefore, the best answer appears to be that Adam was our representative (e.g., Murray, Moo, Schreiner).<sup>43</sup> He was our first mediatorial king and the founder of our race. As our leader, God holds us legally responsible for his actions, and his

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(BDAG), so the NIV translates it as "**charged against anyone's account.**" For example, the word is used by Paul in Philemon 18 when he asks Philemon to charge his account with anything owed by Onesimus. People still sinned before the Mosaic Law, and God will hold them accountable for that sin (cf. Rom 2:12), but there was no written record, or "invoice" so to speak, of their transgressions and the consequences of those transgressions that could be presented. Still, Paul says in v. 14 that death still reigned during this time because people were still sinning even though they were not like Adam breaking a specific commandment given to them by God.

<sup>41</sup> The word translated as "**even**" in verse 14 indicates that Paul is referring to the same group in two ways—(1) they are the ones who lived between Adam and Moses and (2) they are also the ones who did not break commands given to them directly by God.

<sup>42</sup> Augustine famously arrived at this position because he believed that the phrase underlying the English word "**because**" in v. 12 should be translated "in whom." Therefore, he understood the verse to read, "in whom (i.e., the one man, Adam) all sinned." However, the expression is an idiom that means here either "with the result that" (so e.g., Thielman, 282–83) or (as most English translations have it) "because." For a defense of "because" see e.g., Schreiner, 279–80; Moo, 349–50.

<sup>43</sup> Schreiner (282) suggests that "all sinned" in v. 12 refers to our own individual sins, but he still believes that the passage as a whole, and specifically v. 16, refers to the sin of Adam being credited to everyone in the human race.

foundational act brought ruin upon our race. The solution is provided by Jesus the Messiah, a far greater King who creates a new race through his own, better foundational act—his death and resurrection.

- It is essential to note in **verse 18** that the “**all people**” condemned by Adam’s transgressions are not the same “**all people**” who are justified by Christ’s one act of righteousness. The two groups do not match precisely, so this verse does not teach universal salvation. From what Paul has said in this letter, we already know that only those trusting in Christ are justified (e.g., 3:22, 26, 28). Later in this letter, Paul will also make it clear that only those whom God has graciously chosen and called exercise faith in Christ (e.g., 8:30). Therefore, the “**all people**” who are justified refers to the “all those who belong to Christ.” Paul likely uses the “all” language to emphasize that Christ saves all people without distinction, whether Jew or Gentile.<sup>44</sup> “All those who are in Adam die, similarly, all those who are in Christ live. But whereas we are in Adam simply by virtue of being born, we are in Christ only when we receive the gift God offers (v. 17)” (*EBR*, 92).
- It is not immediately clear what Paul means by Christ’s “**one righteousness act**” in **verse 18** or his “**obedience**” in **verse 19**. It could be that Christ’s entire life of obeying his Father is in view, but more likely, Paul is thinking specifically about the culmination of that obedient life, i.e., Christ’s willingness to go to the cross for those he saves (cf. Phil 2:8). All through this chapter, the emphasis is on the benefits believers receive not on their own merits but because they are united with Christ:
  - “we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 1)
  - “we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him” (v. 9)
  - “we shall be saved by His life” (v. 10)
  - “we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 11a)
  - “through whom we have now received the reconciliation” (v. 11b)
  - “the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ” (v. 15)
  - “the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” (v. 17)
  - “through one act of righteousness, there resulted justification of life” (v. 18)
  - “through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous” (v. 19)
  - “eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (v. 21)
- God can consider us justified and reconciled because he views us in union with his perfect Son. The language of “**made sinners**” and “**made righteous**” in **verse 19** is legal or forensic (Murray, 204–5; Schreiner, 293; Thielman, 292; Moo, 371–72). We also sinned on our own and will become righteous as believers, but that is not the focus here.<sup>45</sup> Instead, Paul uses this legal language to describe how Adam’s sin is

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<sup>44</sup> Jesus uses “all men” in a similar fashion in John 12:32 after some Gentiles came to see him (cf. Jn 12:20–21).

<sup>45</sup> In other words, those who are declared sinners by virtue of Adam’s sin really do become sinners personally,

credited to us as if we had done it, and Jesus' righteousness is credited to believers as if they had done it.<sup>46</sup> We may object to being credited with Adam's sin, but we should rejoice that we can also be credited with Christ's righteousness. Christ completely undoes all the damage to our lives brought by Adam's sin. God considers Jesus' death as if it was the believer's death, and he considers Jesus' obedience as if it was the believer's obedience. "As sons and daughters of Adam we enter the world spiritually dead and sinners. But God, in his grace, has reversed the baleful results of Adam's sin by imputing the righteousness of Christ to us. Such an imputation is an act of grace; it is totally undeserved" (Schreiner, 290).

- B. Freedom from Bondage to Sin (6:1–23): Chapter 5 addressed the potential obstacle of death. This chapter addresses the potential obstacle of sin. Will sin keep us from the hope of glory? Specifically, the presence of sin leads to **two potential objections**. Moo summarizes the section: "Are we merely treading water here until we can be delivered from this life and enjoy the blessings of heaven? Do we have to wait for our death or Christ's return to enjoy the benefits of new life in Christ? And if that eternal life has already been given to us in Christ, what about sin? Does it really matter anymore what we do in the is life?" (*EBR*, 94).
1. "Dead to Sin" through Union with Christ (6:1–14)
    - In the first section of this chapter (vv. 1–14), Paul addresses the **first objection brought up because of sin**, "**Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase?**" (v. 1). If we live in the realm of grace, wouldn't our sin make the realm of grace show up even more? Paul's answer is a strong, "**By no means!**" or "Absolutely Not!" (CSB; v. 2a). His thesis in this section is: "**We died to sin.**"
    - In **verses 3–5**, Paul explains what he means by "**died to sin.**" At our conversion, we were united with Christ's death (v. 3), and we also were united with his resurrection (v. 4b). Paul can say that this happened at our "**baptism**" (and he refers to water baptism as the initiation into church membership) because baptism was closely associated with conversion. It is an ordinance that pictures our union with Christ's death, and every believer is expected to obey Christ and be baptized. Since Paul could not imagine a believer who would choose not to be baptized, he uses "baptism" to refer to a person's conversion. Therefore, "we can assume that baptism stands for the whole conversion-initiation experience, presupposing faith and the gift of the Spirit" (Moo, 390; cf. Schreiner, 309). Just as Christ's burial indicated that he

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and those who are declared righteous by virtue of Christ's obedience really do become righteous. However, this benefit of our union of Christ is the focus of chapter six and does not appear to be what Paul is talking about at this point.

<sup>46</sup> The word translated "**made**" can be used to describe the appointment of someone to a position (Lk 12:14; Acts 7:10; Titus 1:5; Heb 5:1; 7:28; 8:3) and is used in James 4:4 to describe someone who is categorized as God's enemy. The use of the future tense "**will be made righteous**" might mean that Paul is referring to our glorification. However, Paul could also be using the future tense to describe the justification of believers who will come to faith in Christ in the future from Paul's perspective (Murray, 205). This option better preserves the parallel with Adam's sin.