

Session 16 Summary and Review

This session of our Back to the Beginning Bible study series focuses on Romans 5 (especially verses 12–21), a pivotal chapter that explains the doctrine of original sin through Adam and the far greater gift of salvation and righteousness through Christ, the second (or last) Adam. We review how sin and death entered the world through one man and how grace abounds even more through Jesus. Use your Bible (especially Romans 5) and the provided notes to follow along and reflect on these foundational truths. This is material every believer should be able to explain to family or friends when the opportunity arises.

Lesson Objectives

- Understand how sin and death entered the world through one man—Adam—and spread to all.
- See Adam as a “type” (pattern or foreshadowing) of Christ, the second Adam.
- Grasp the contrast: Adam’s one act brought condemnation and death; Christ’s one act brought justification and life.
- Recognize that grace superabounds where sin increased (Romans 5:20).
- Reflect on living in the reality of Christ’s finished work rather than striving to earn God’s favor.

Part 1: Sin and Death Entered Through One Man (Romans 5:12–14)

Let’s read Romans 5:12–14: “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.”

Paul makes a clear point: sin and death entered the human race through one man—Adam. His disobedience brought guilt and death to all his descendants. This is not just individual sins; it is original sin—Adam’s sin is imputed to the whole human race because we are all in him by natural descent.

Even before the Law was given (which defined sin more clearly), death still reigned from Adam to Moses. People died even though they did not sin in the exact same way Adam did (breaking a direct command). Death’s reign proves sin’s universal presence and power.

Adam is called a “type” of Christ—the pattern or foreshadowing. Adam’s one act affected everyone under him negatively; Christ’s one act would affect everyone in Him positively.

Reflection Questions

- How does Paul prove that sin was present in the world even before the Law was given?
- Why is Adam called a “type” of Christ? What parallels and contrasts do you see?

Part 2: The Gift of Grace Through the Second Adam (Romans 5:15–19)

Let's read Romans 5:15–19 (key phrases): “But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many... For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.”

Paul repeatedly contrasts Adam and Christ:

- Adam's one sin → condemnation and death for all
- Christ's one act of obedience (His death and resurrection) → justification, righteousness, and life for all who receive it

Adam's trespass brought universal ruin; Christ's gift brings superabounding grace. The result of Adam's disobedience: all are constituted sinners. The result of Christ's obedience: all who are in Him are constituted righteous.

This is not universalism (everyone saved automatically); it is federal headship—Adam represented the human race in sin; Christ represents His people in righteousness. We are “in Adam” by birth; we are “in Christ” by faith.

Reflection Questions

- How is Christ's gift “much more” abundant than Adam's trespass?
- What does it mean to be “in Adam” by birth and “in Christ” by faith?

Part 3: Grace Abounds More Where Sin Increased (Romans 5:20–21)

Romans 5:20–21: “The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The Law was added to highlight sin and show its exceeding sinfulness. Sin increased in visibility and guilt, but grace superabounded—overflowed even more.

Sin reigned through death; grace now reigns through righteousness to eternal life in Christ.

Reflection Questions

- Why did the Law come in “so that the transgression would increase”?
- How does grace “reign” in the believer's life today?

Part 4: Living in the Reality of Christ's Finished Work

This truth is not just theology to memorize—it is life to live. We are no longer under Adam's condemnation; we are under Christ's righteousness. Our sins are forgiven—not because we are good enough, but because Christ was perfect in our place.

We should strive to live pleasing to God, not to earn salvation, but because we are already accepted. When we fail (complain, get angry at a red light, etc.), we confess, receive forgiveness, and keep going—resting in Christ's finished work.

This is not license to sin. It is freedom from the burden of perfectionism. Christ has already met God's standard perfectly. We live from that reality.

Reflection Questions

- Why is it exhausting to try to be perfect in our own strength?
- How does resting in Christ's righteousness change how we handle daily failures?

Study Exercises

- Read Romans 5:12–21 slowly. Underline every mention of “one man/one act” and “many/all.”
- Compare Adam and Christ in a two-column chart: what each did, and the result for others.
- Meditate on Romans 5:20–21—write down ways grace has abounded more than your sin.
- Explain to yourself (or someone else) in simple terms: “Adam's sin brought death to all; Christ's obedience brings life to all who believe.”

Conclusion and Next Steps

Romans 5 shows the devastating effect of Adam's sin and the far greater triumph of Christ's obedience. Where sin and death reigned, grace now reigns through righteousness to eternal life. This is the gospel in miniature—something every believer should be able to explain. For next week, review Romans 5:12–21 and complete the exercises. Come ready to discuss how this truth changes daily living.