

# The Two Adams

“For as in Adam all die,  
even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

I Corinthians 15:22

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,  
so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”

Romans 5:19

You and all men must die because of Adam’s one sin in Eden. God appointed Adam to represent the human race, and his sin and its punishment of a three-fold death are imputed, or charged, to all men, even if they never hear of Adam. In the very same way, God appointed Jesus Christ to be the representative of His elect, and His righteousness and eternal life by it are imputed, or freely given, to all the elect. Your sins are only the evidence of your union with Adam, and your faith and good works are only the evidence of your union with Jesus Christ. The first Adam made you a condemned sinner; the second Adam made you a justified saint, both by imputation. Salvation is of the Lord! And grace is totally free!

# The Two Adams

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

I Corinthians 15:22

## Introduction:

1. Though the doctrine is summarized clearly in I Corinthians 15:22, it is detailed for us in Romans 5:12-21.
2. Here is the doctrine of representation – God has chosen to deal with the human race by two representatives.
3. Here is the explanation of the human condition before God – condemnation and death or justification and life.
4. Where did death originate? You need not wonder. God promised it as punishment for sin in Eden, set up Adam to represent the human race, and Adam chose to rebelliously disobey God to follow his wife instead.
5. Here is one of the simplest and most powerful explanations of salvation in the Word of God, yet few know it.
6. How is a man saved from hell to eternal life? By God’s grace in imputing Christ’s obedience and death to us!
7. These are verses that even simple Christians can understand, but we want to know all the details given here!
8. These verses will humble you and any sincere man into the dust, for God is most sovereign by imputation!

## **5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**

- A. Thus far Paul has established Jews and Gentiles under sin (Romans 1:18-32; 2:11-16; 3:9-19,23).
- B. “Wherefore” refers back to our previous condition and our salvation from it (Romans 5:6-11).
  1. Paul is about to show Christ’s great work in undoing Adam’s sin for our full and free salvation.
  2. Our salvation consists of justification, reconciliation, and atonement by Jesus Christ’s death.
  3. We were without strength, ungodly, sinners, and enemies, when Jesus Christ lovingly saved us.
  4. The imputation of righteousness without works has been mentioned briefly (Romans 4:6-8).
  5. How desperate was our condition and need for the intervention of a substitute acceptable to God?
  6. Any thought the Law of Moses could save a man has been proven utterly fallacious and wrong.
  7. To show the magnitude and origin of the sin problem, Paul takes his readers back to Adam.
  8. Paul used “wherefore” to draw an inference and explanation of imputation from earlier verses.
- C. Sin and death (Gen 2:17) were brought into the human world by Adam’s sin (Romans 5:14; 6:23).
- D. Spiritual death resulted immediately (Gen 2:17; Eph 2:1), physical death resulted 930 years later for Adam (Gen 3:19; 5:5; Heb 9:27), and eternal death awaits final execution (Revelation 20:6,14).
- E. All men are thus considered sinners in this act and must consequently die (Gen 2:17; I Cor 15:22).
- F. The adverb construction of “as ... so” indicates “in this manner” sin and death came upon all men, by the one man Adam and his one sin in Eden. All men have sinned by imputation of Adam’s sin.
  1. “For that all have sinned” is not your sins, but rather the sin of Adam that passed death on you.
  2. How do we know this? By reading past the parentheses, where we can find 5:18-19 drawing this very conclusion from 5:12. It was one man’s disobedience – Adam’s – that made many sinners.
  3. Each member of the human race is legally guilty and punishable for eating the forbidden fruit.
  4. We truly sinned in Adam, so we bear the sentence of that crime (and “so” death passed on us).
  5. The death under consideration, by looking ahead in the passage, is primarily legal condemnation.
- G. We are sinners in Adam both naturally (Genesis 5:3; Eccl 7:29) and legally (Rom 5:18; Heb 7:9-10).
  1. Each member of the human race is legally guilty and punishable for eating the forbidden fruit.
  2. Sinners became such “together” with Adam in his single act of rebellion and sin (Romans 3:13).
  3. Adam originally bore God’s image; we now bear his fallen image (Gen 5:1-3 co I Cor 15:49).
  4. We are conceived and born with a totally corrupt nature (Ps 51:5; 58:3; Rom 3:9-19; Eph 2:1-3).
- H. Grammatically, a reader can proceed directly to 5:18, where Paul takes up after his parenthesis.
  1. By running past the parenthesis, the doctrine of representation by one man is clearly seen.
  2. The conclusion of 5:18, by virtue of “therefore,” proves “for that all have sinned” is Adam’s sin.
  3. But there is value in the parenthetical section, for it contains further proofs and some jewels!

**5:13** *(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*

- A. Paul reduced Jews and Gentiles to one common father and death – Adam, not Abraham, not Moses.
  - 1. If Jews thought for a moment they had eternal life by the law, they were condemned by Adam!
  - 2. It would not matter how well they kept the Law of Moses, for they were condemned by Adam!
  - 3. If Jews thought for a moment they had eternal life by Abram, they were condemned by Adam!
- B. The law under consideration is the Law of Moses, which ignorant Jews thought could justify them.
- C. Paul, taking Jews and Gentiles back to their father Adam, condemned them all before Moses' law.
- D. Jews might object that prior to the law all men could not have been legal sinners (Romans 5:12).
- E. The argument, by “for,” is with maximum force that men are sinners and condemned to die in Adam.
- F. Another law of God was obviously in effect for the 2500 years from creation to the Law of Moses.
  - 1. The existence of a law before Moses is proved by arguing backward from death to sin to law.
  - 2. For until the law sin ... and its effects ... were in the world – men died before the law (5:14).
  - 3. For sin to be imputed against a man, there must be a law broken by that man (Romans 4:15).
  - 4. **Impute.** To bring (a fault or the like) in the reckoning against; to lay to the charge of a person.
  - 5. Sin is the transgression of the law of God, which requires a law for sin to be charged (I John 3:4).
  - 6. Cain sinned (Gen 4:7), Sodom sinned (Gen 18:20), and Joseph's brethren sinned (Gen 42:22).
  - 7. God destroyed the world with a flood due to its wickedness and continual evil (Genesis 6:5).
  - 8. But Paul's argument is not to establish any laws before Moses other than that given to Adam, for he is proving the doctrines of representation and imputation, not the doctrine of a corrupt nature.
  - 9. Men experienced physical death as a result of sin, Adam's sin (Genesis 3:19; 5:3-8; 6:21-22).
  - 10. As the next verse will prove, death proved sin and a law before Moses, the law given to Adam.
  - 11. Paul will specifically raise a class of sinners to prove the point that never had a law from God.
  - 12. The whole passage is proving the doctrine of representation, not man's depravity (5:12-21).

**5:14** *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.*

- A. Paul reduced Jews and Gentiles to one common father and death – Adam, not Abraham, not Moses.
- B. We are not heretical Dispensationalists of the Scofield variety, but we do see three dispensations quite clearly: the patriarchs from Adam to Moses in this verse, Moses to John the Baptist with the nation of Israel, and the gospel kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 16:16; Heb 12:28-29).
- C. Although the Law of Moses was not given for 2500 years, men still suffered the penalty of death.
- D. Men were judged as sinners and condemned to death by Adam's disobedience apart from their own.
- E. “Nevertheless,” or notwithstanding, death reigned even though actual sin was not imputed (5:13).
- F. The force of this argument is in the expression introduced by “even,” indicating an extreme case.
  - 1. **Even.** *Adverb.* Prefixed to a subject, object, or predicate, or to the expression of a qualifying circumstance, to emphasize its identity. Also serving to introduce an epexegetis; = ‘namely’, ‘that is to say’. 9. Intimating that the sentence expresses an extreme case of a more general proposition implied. Prefixed to the particular word, phrase, or clause, on which the extreme character of the statement or supposition depends.
    - 2. Those without a positive commandment and threatened death for punishment fit this description.
    - 3. This is as strong and clear a proof of imputation and representation that can reasonably be made.
    - 4. Infants, idiots, and other helpless ones fit this description (Genesis 7:21-22; Ex 1:22; 12:29-30).
    - 5. Infants are conceived in sin (Psalm 51:5), and they prove their sin nature at birth (Psalm 58:3).
    - 6. Emphasis is beyond those who had laws similar to Adam (Gen 4:3-7; 9:6; 19:7; 20:3-6; 39:9).
- G. Moses' Law simply brought another source of condemnation to those under it (Romans 3:19; 5:20).

- H. All things considered, man had a better chance in Adam than with any law given to any man now.
- I. Since Adam's sin is imputed to men, therefore Adam is the figure of Jesus Christ (Rom 4:6-8; 5:12).
  - 1. Adam is a figure of Jesus Christ according to the testimony of Scripture (I Cor 15:21-22,45-49).
  - 2. Jesus Christ had already come when Paul wrote, so he refers to his prophesied coming as past.
  - 3. Adam is still a figure today: Paul is still using him as a figure, and men are still sinners by him.
  - 4. The analogy between Adam and Christ is the role they fill in representing two groups of men.

**5:15 *But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.***

- A. Similarities have already been established by Adam being presented as a FIGURE of Christ (5:14).
- B. And the strong similarities will be restated most clearly in the conclusion of this section (5:18-19).
- C. Paul declared here a difference between Adam and Christ's representation and the figure, and he did this by interrupting the AS...SO construction with the negative NOT, in the first sentence.
- D. If Adam's offence is legally held against men, "much more" God's grace in Christ will be applied.
  - 1. The issue here is quality. The quality of grace, of a gift, and of Jesus Christ are most superior.
  - 2. If Adam is fit for representing his constituency, how "much more" is Jesus Christ fit for His?
  - 3. Jesus in His state of humility was superior to Adam by any measure in his state of innocence.
  - 4. Adam was weak and most suspect to fall in Eden, but Jesus was strong and could not fall at all!
  - 5. If one man were able to drag his race down, how "much more" the Godman save His race?
  - 6. If God guaranteed the legal sentence of death to many, how "much more" the gift of grace?
  - 7. If God strictly applied one's offence to many, how "much more" will He apply grace to many?
  - 8. If God righteously applied sin to many, how much more shall He apply righteousness to many?
  - 9. The key is in the coming context: where sin abounded, grace did much more abound (Rom 5:20).
  - 10. **Abound.** To be present in overflowing measure; to be plentiful; to prevail widely.
  - 11. Mercy is greater than judgment (James 2:13), and our God is a God of mercy and grace. Glory!
    - a. Paul opens and closes most of his epistles declaring the grace of God (Romans 1:7; 16:24).
    - b. The exceeding riches of grace will be our theme with Christ in heaven (Ephesians 1:6, 2:7).
    - c. The saints should delight in this aspect of our glorious God (Colossians 1:6; Hebrews 13:9).

**5:16 *And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.***

- A. Similarities have already been established by Adam being presented as a FIGURE of Christ (5:14).
- B. And the strong similarities will be restated most clearly in the conclusion of this section (5:18-19).
- C. Paul declared here he is considering a difference between Adam's sin and Christ's salvation from it.
- D. Adam condemned us with one offence against God's law; Jesus Christ saves us from many offences.
  - 1. The issue here is quantity. The quantity of one offence is inferior to Christ paying for many.
  - 2. The judgment was by one OFFENCE to condemnation, which is an ellipsis by the comparison; we have entered upon a different argument from the previous verse where it was one MAN.
  - 3. The one offence that brought judgment to condemnation was Adam eating the forbidden fruit.
  - 4. Jesus Christ's death and resurrection justified us from many offences (Hebrews 1:3; 10:12).
    - a. Jesus Christ had to suffer the wrath of God for Adam's offence AND your offences.
    - b. You would still be condemned if Jesus Christ had only suffered for Adam's offence.

**5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)**

- A. Similarities have already been established by Adam being presented as a FIGURE of Christ (5:14).
- B. And the strong similarities will be restated most clearly in the conclusion of this section (5:18-19).
- C. Paul declared here he is considering a difference between Adam's sin and Christ's salvation from it.
- D. The combination of the two above differences results in complete dominion of grace over sin.
- E. Spiritual, physical, and eternal death reigns over each of us human beings because of Adam's sin.
- F. Spiritual, physical, and eternal life reigns over each of us elect children because of Christ's death.
- G. If the law of sin caused death to reign, how "much more" shall grace in Christ cause life to reign?
- H. If death was powerful to the destruction of the race, how much more the power of life to the elect?
- I. If there is an absolute certainty of death's dominion over all men by Adam's sin, how much more shall God's abundant grace and Christ's righteousness cause life to have dominion over His saints?
- J. Some argue that RECEIVE is our active obedience in appropriating God's offer of righteousness.
  - 1. Such frivolous reasoning misses the whole point of the section – condemnation and salvation by imputation: there is no argument here for accepting, choosing, deciding, or receiving anything.
  - 2. This denies that the grace of God and the gift by grace is FREE, as stated (Romans 5:15-18)
    - a. **Free.** Given out of liberality (not in return or requital for something else).
    - b. Justification is said elsewhere to be FREELY given (Romans 3:24; 8:29-32).
    - c. If a man must exercise his will and obedience for it, then it is not free (Rom 9:16; 11:6).
    - d. It was free from our perspective, but certainly not from God's perspective (I Pet 1:18-19).
  - 3. This denies the repeated emphasis on condemnation and justification coming by only ONE.
  - 4. This denies the grace of God, since grace cannot have any work related to it (Romans 11:6).
  - 5. This denies the work of God, since receiving involves the human will (John 1:13; Rom 9:15-16).
  - 6. This denies man's natural depravity and rebellion against God and righteousness; man would never receive anything so spiritual as eternal life in Christ (John 8:47; Rom 8:7-8; I Cor 2:14).
  - 7. This denies the comparison with Adam, for there is no receiving sin or death in any sense in him.
  - 8. RECEIVE is used passively [to be given] and actively [to accept] in the Bible, but here it is obviously used passively, as it is in most other places (Job 2:10; John 3:27; 20:22; Acts 1:8; 2:38; 3:5; 8:15,19; 9:12; 22:13; Rom 13:2; I Cor 4:7; 14:5; II Cor 5:10; 7:9; Gal 4:5; Col 3:25; Heb 7:5; 9:15; Jas 3:1; 5:7; II Pet 2:13; I John 3:22; II John 1:8; Rev 5:12; 13:16; 17:12; 18:4).
  - 9. The verse actually indicates the gift may only come upon some, by the choice of God (Romans 8:29-30; 9:15-16,22-24; Eph 1:4-12; II Tim 1:9; I Pet 1:2).
  - 10. There is no more activity in receiving Christ's obedience than there is of Adam's disobedience.

**5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.**

- A. The previous five verses (5:13-17) are a parenthesis, and here Paul returned to Adam and sin (5:12).
- B. Note the intermediate conclusion of "wherefore" in 5:12 and the final conclusion of "therefore" here.
- C. The similarities between the representation of Adam and Jesus Christ are taught in Romans 5:18-19.
- D. THEREFORE indicates an inference from what has already been established earlier (Romans 5:12).
- E. The grammar of AS ... EVEN SO expressly states a precise comparison between Adam and Jesus.
  - 1. **As.** With the clauses transposed for emphasis; as...so: a. In what manner...(in that manner).
  - 2. **So.** As...So: Denoting more or less exact correspondence, similarity, or proportion.
  - 3. **Even.** Exactly, precisely, just. A. of manner; often followed by as, thus, so.
  - 4. Observe this emphatic construction in I Corinthians 15:22. (See also John 3:14; 5:21; 10:15).

- F. The doctrine of representation is plainly stated for those able to read with any understanding.
  - 1. The sentence of condemnation came upon all men by the single offence of Adam in Eden.
  - 2. In exactly the same way (by imputation), justification comes upon all men by Jesus Christ.
- G. The use of ALL in this verse is easily explained by Paul's use of the same word in I Cor 15:22.
  - 1. ALL that are in relation to Adam will most certainly die (Romans 5:12).
    - a. Union to Adam is by conception and birth with a human father (I Cor 15:49; John 3:6).
    - b. Jesus Christ had sinless flesh, because He had no human father (Luke 1:35; Exodus 20:5).
    - c. Adam was the representative for the entire human family conceived and birthed from him.
  - 2. ALL that are in relation to Jesus Christ will most certainly live (John 17:2; Rom 8:29-32).
    - a. Men are IN CHRIST by election – chosen in Christ by God (Ephesians 1:4; II Tim 1:9).
    - b. Any other relationship we have with Christ results from this one (Romans 8:29-32).
    - c. Jesus Christ was the representative of the elect only (Matt 1:21; John 7:38-39; 10:15-16; 17:2; Rom 8:29-33; Eph 1:4-12; II Tim 1:9; Heb 2:10-13; I Pet 1:2).
  - 3. If this obvious and scriptural interpretation of “all” is not applied, universal salvation results; for there is no basis for making either Adam or Christ creating a mere potentiality or possibility.
- H. Do you find this unfair of God to charge you with the fact, fault, guilt, and punishment of Adam?
  - 1. The severe concept and application of representation occurs to all under the authority of others, where children suffer for fathers' choices, wives suffer for husbands' choices, citizens suffer for leaders' choices, employees suffer for management choices, soldiers suffer for generals' choices, church members suffer for pastors' choices, and so forth and so on, *ad infinitum*.
  - 2. The Philistines brought forth their champion and agreed to be Israel's servants if he lost in battle, because they believed his superiority over any champion of Israel. They had not met David yet!
  - 3. God gave us a champion in Adam, far superior in ability and opportunity to any man past or present. He was without sin, in a perfect world, with a sinless wife, and only one law to keep, which was very clear and simple. God is more than fair! You had a more than fair chance!
  - 4. Do not resent God for not saving all, for we all deserve hell. Why did He save any? Would you?
  - 5. Rejoice that the blessed God chose to save some for His own glory, and run to Christ for safety!

**5:19 *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.***

- A. The similarities between the representation of Adam and Jesus Christ are taught in Romans 5:18-19.
- B. FOR indicates a consequence and further explanation from what has been concluded and established in the previous verse and its corollary (Rom 5:12,18).
- C. The careful and precise argument by analogy or comparison (AS ...SO) continues here in this verse.
  - 1. The disobedience of one man – Adam – made the many related to him all sinners – all mankind.
  - 2. This is exactly what we learned in the first verses of the section, “for that all have sinned” (5:12).
  - 3. The obedience of one man – Jesus Christ – made the many related to him righteous – the elect.
  - 4. This is the doctrine of imputation – God charging to men either sin or righteousness by another.
- D. This is as strong as any statement in Holy Scripture of salvation by the free grace of God in Christ.
  - 1. You are condemned by Adam's sin whether you know, believe, accept, receive, or obey it.
  - 2. You do not have to accept Adam as your personal sin representative to be judged for his sin.
  - 3. If you never hear about Adam, or deny his existence when you do hear, you will die by his sin.
  - 4. You are justified by Christ's obedience the very same way – by imputation and representation.
  - 5. Faith or obedience on your part is merely evidence that Jesus Christ obeyed for you; it has no more cause-effect for eternal life than do your sins have a cause-effect for death in Adam.
  - 6. This is the only doctrine of salvation that can save infants, idiots, and all others consistently.
  - 7. If you add your obedience in faith or works, you have made salvation by the obedience of TWO!
  - 8. If you add the witnessing of a soul winner, you make salvation by the obedience of THREE!
  - 9. If you add the organist playing the funeral dirge, you make salvation by the obedience of FOUR!

10. If you add a prayer warrior praying for a decision, you make salvation by the obedience of FIVE!
  11. If you add the giver paying the preacher to beg, you make salvation by the obedience of SIX!
  12. If you add a priest sprinkling baby's head, you make salvation by the obedience of SEVEN!
- E. True believer, you are God's elect! And God had chosen you in Jesus Christ before creating Adam!
1. Never forget! Adam's sin did not surprise God! It was part of His drama to magnify Himself!
  2. Do you know this (John 7:38-39; 10:15-16; 17:2; Rom 8:29-39; Eph 1:3-12; II Tim 1:9-10)?

**5:20 *Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:***

- A. God gave a law through Moses to show the utter dominion of sin over men, not to save men it.
1. The offence of Adam, legally condemning all men, also made them sinners by nature, which is clearly manifested by any law given to them, for they will surely break it with lascivious greed.
  2. The law was designed to reveal sin and make it appear exceedingly sinful to us (Rom 7:13-17).
  3. The law was never designed to be the source of justification with God (Galatians 3:21).
  4. The law leaves those under it condemned and guilty without excuse (Romans 3:19-20).
  5. It causes the effect of Adam's OFFENCE to abound by showing all men in Adam to be sinners.
- B. Even though the law showed Adam's ravaging effects on the human race, God's grace is greater!
1. No matter how extensive the effect of Adam and the judgment of the law, God's grace is greater.
  2. The grace of God in Jesus Christ was more than sufficient to cover Adam's sin and your sins!

**5:21 *That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.***

- A. Sin by Adam, by Moses' law, and by the law of nature has total dominion and rule over all men.
1. Death rules all men. It is the king of terrors (Job 18:14). It is appointed for you (Heb 9:27).
  2. There is no discharge in this war, for there is no man alive that can retain the spirit (Eccl 8:8).
  3. Death has total dominion and rule over our race. Every funeral you attend preaches about Adam!
  4. Death results from sin, and sin results from a law, and death entered the human family by Adam.
- B. But the blessed God has purposed that His grace will have equal dominion and rule over His elect!
1. Again we have a comparison made by AS...EVEN SO, which shows the comparative dominion!
  2. As surely as Adam and sins guarantee death, Jesus Christ guarantees eternal life for the elect.
  3. The grace of God in Jesus Christ is totally dominating in bringing many sons to eternal glory!
  4. What can the elect say? O Death! Where is thy sting? O Grave! Where is thy victory!
  5. Jesus Christ our Lord is the second Adam, and He has won a total victory for us over sin, death, hell, the grave, the law, and every other enemy ... applied by imputation by the grace of God!

**Conclusion:**

1. The human condition – every man is dying and will die – is the result of Adam's offence in Eden. Believe it!
2. The great God of heaven gave every man a chance for eternal life with Adam and the tree of life in Eden.
3. God's sovereign rule over men is most evident by His appointment of Adam and Christ to be representatives.
4. In the very same certain way that you become a sinner by Adam, you also become righteous by Jesus Christ.
5. The horrible dominion of sin and death over men is exceeded by the wonderful grace of God over the elect!

**For Further Study:**

1. [Seven Proofs of Unconditional Salvation](#): extensive Bible proof that eternal life is absolutely without human conditions.
2. [Five Phases of Salvation](#): extensive Bible proof and illustrations that men are condemned and saved in five phases.
3. The sermon outline, "[The Book of Life](#)," provides the details of names written down by God for eternal glory.
4. The sermon outline, "[Adoption](#)," which shows Bible proof of God chose and adopted His sons in five glorious phases.
5. The sermon outline, "[Why Preach the Gospel?](#)" which shows the subordinate role the gospel has to eternal life.
6. The sermon outline, "[Why No Invitation?](#)" explains the invention and heresy of the modern invitation to salvation.
7. The sermon outline, "[John 3:16 Revisited](#)," in case you are still confused by the most abused verse in the Bible.
8. The sermon outline, "[Does God Love Everybody?](#)" to clear up any confusion about the relationship of God and sinners.
9. The sermon outline, "[Salvation by Works](#)," condemns the heresy of thinking a decision for Jesus results in eternal life.
10. The sermon outline, "[God's Will or Free Will](#)," puts the Bible perspective on the role of man's will in his salvation.