

The ten verses that we will be looking at today are considered by many to be the most theologically rich in all of Scripture. They certainly sum up Paul's message to this point in his letter to the Romans. They are also considered some of the most difficult verses to translate. Because they lay the foundation for New Testament understanding, they are also some of the most attacked verses of Scripture. Paul began the chapter with the word "therefore" and gave conclusions to the points he had addressed. He begins the second half of the chapter with another "therefore". Because of the Scripture he has cited to this point, he comes to the following conclusions.

***12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned*** - Paul is telling us that we were all in Adam when he sinned (Genesis 3:6). In Hebrew, Adam means mankind. When Adam chose to deliberately disobey God, sin entered the human race. Since we are all descended from Adam, we all inherited that sinful nature. As I've said many times before, the prevalence of sin in mankind is one of the most empirically verifiable facts of sociology, yet it is one of the most vehemently denied by modern culture.

Of course man would argue the very premise that we came from Adam. It is just a story they say. Few will be so bold as to attack Jesus. They say, "It's just the disciples that got it all confused and those silly Christians taking the stories literally." Well, I'm glad to inform you that **Jesus took the story of creation literally**. He told the Pharisees that if they didn't believe Moses they wouldn't believe Him (John 5:44-47). And so it is today. Those who reject Moses reject Jesus' words. Of course they say it was the disciples that got it all wrong. So they are in a roundabout way saying Jesus had no discernment in choosing those who would convey His message. Jesus spoke specifically of Adam and Eve as real people (Mark 10:5-6).

Give science enough time and they sometimes end up with right conclusions. Geneticists now talk about the woman from whom all humans descended, and of course they call her Eve. That is not because they believe the Biblical account, but because our DNA can be traced back to one individual. That, by the way, is evidence that we are deteriorating as a species, not evolving to some higher state. We indeed all descended from Adam, an idea once scoffed at by the scientific elite, but now recognized as a fact. Will the world ever face the overwhelming evidence that all men are sinners? It's in our blood.

The punishment for sin is death (6:23), because sin is rebellion against the goodness of God. It is mutiny against the Giver of every good thing. That death is not only eventually physical, but spiritual as well. We were all born with a dead spirit. Our souls

**Commented [notes1]: Genesis 3:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

**Commented [notes2]: John 5:44-47 (ESV)**

<sup>44</sup> How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?

<sup>45</sup> Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope.

<sup>46</sup> For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me.

<sup>47</sup> But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?"

**Commented [notes3]: Mark 10:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.

<sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.'

**Commented [notes4]: Romans 6:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

were quite functional, but our soul was designed to be under the reign of our spirit. With a dead spirit, the soul is led by the demands and pleasures of the body (1John 2:15-17). It is slavery to the demands of the carnal nature. That nature is the way we were born into this world as a consequence of Adam's sin (1Corinthians 15:22). We all sinned in Adam, and we all choose to sin in our individual life.

*<sup>13</sup> for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.* We must be careful to not interpret this as meaning that from Adam to Moses people will not be held accountable for their sin. That thought is contradicted by Paul in numerous passages (3:10-12; 14:12). He was very familiar with the Torah and aware of the judgments that came upon the people of that era (Genesis 7:21-22). Indeed the verse before and those after say all mankind are in the same state regarding our guilt.

What Paul is saying is that their sinfulness resulting from Adam's sin was evident. It didn't have anything to do with them breaking the laws of Moses. It was in their very nature. The first son of Adam was a murderer (Genesis 4:8). So was the seventh son of Adam, Lamech, as well as being the first bigamist (Genesis 4:23).

The people in that era aren't held accountable to keep laws they were unaware of. The word "counted" is only used in Philemon 18 where Paul said to "charge his account" for anything Onesimus owed. In other words God isn't going to charge them with breaking laws they knew nothing about. They are accountable for not repenting of their sinful natures. Sin was in the world before the law is an understatement. Before the flood, God said the thoughts of man were only evil continually (Genesis 6:5)!

*<sup>14</sup> Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.* I think Paul inserted the fact that their sin had nothing to do with the law because he had previously made the point that the Jews righteousness could not come through the law. The fact that we all die says we have inherited Adam's sin nature. The psalmist said we were born in sin (Psalm 51:5). No one teaches a baby to be selfish and demanding. It is their nature.

Paul does say the sins of those in the era from Adam to Moses were not like the transgression of Adam. Adam had a direct command (Genesis 2:17). He deliberately broke the one command that God gave him. Those in that age of Adam to Moses did not have direct commands, but they did have Adam's nature and a conscience. That is why they died.

**Commented [notes5]: 1 John 2:15-17 (NIV)**

<sup>15</sup> Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.  
<sup>16</sup> For everything in the world--the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does--comes not from the Father but from the world.  
<sup>17</sup> The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

**Commented [notes6]: 1 Corinthians 15:22 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

**Commented [notes7]: Romans 3:10-12 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;  
<sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God.  
<sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."

**Commented [notes8]: Romans 14:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> So then each of us will give an account of himself to God.

**Commented [notes9]: Genesis 7:21-22 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> And all flesh died that moved on the earth, birds, livestock, beasts, all swarming creatures that swarm on the earth, and all mankind.  
<sup>22</sup> Everything on the dry land in whose nostrils was the breath of life died.

**Commented [notes10]: Genesis 4:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> Cain spoke to Abel his brother. And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him.

**Commented [notes11]: Genesis 4:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> Lamech said to his wives: "Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me."

**Commented [notes12]: Philemon 1:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> If he has wronged you at all, or owes you anything, charge that to my account.

**Commented [notes13]: Genesis 6:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

**Commented [notes14]: Psalm 51:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

**Commented [notes15]: Genesis 2:17 (ESV)**

<sup>17</sup> but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Paul ends the verse with an interesting comment. He says that Adam is a type of the One who was to come. The Old Testament is filled with types of the coming Messiah so that the world would recognize and receive Him when the time came. (See my book, Christ Concealed in the Old Testament.) How is Adam a type of Jesus? (Luke 3:38). Jesus is the father of all who are born of the Spirit. He is the first of those of a new nature, the firstborn from among the dead (Colossians 1:18). We receive His nature when we are born-again. He is the Son of God. Similarities can't be taken much further. Mormons do so and err into the false teaching that we will be the gods of our own planets.

**Commented [notes16]: Luke 3:38 (ESV)**

<sup>38</sup> the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

**Commented [notes17]: Colossians 1:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

In many ways, Adam is an anti-type. In Adam all die, but in Christ all have life. His one act brought death to all. Jesus one act brings life to all. He is the example of disobedience and rebellion. Jesus is our ultimate example of obedience and submission to the will of the Father (Hebrews 12:3). As a man representing mankind, Adam lost the title to rule the earth as a prince of God. As a man representing mankind, Jesus took the title back for us regaining the right to rule as a king! We see this anti-typology in the next verse.

**Commented [notes18]: Hebrews 12:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

*<sup>15</sup> But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.* Adam gave us all death through his disobedience. Entropy was set in motion. Decay, toil, sickness, and death entered the world. We could get upset about this except for the fact that if it were us, we'd have done the same thing.

But there is something even more powerful than that disobedience and the resulting curse. It is the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of Jesus, which has abounded to many! Abounded for many can be translated from the Greek in several ways. Some take it as more numerous, but it can also mean more than sufficient for many, or so much better for many.

Jesus not only brings victory over death, He restores what was lost. But there is more. Without giving us the choice would we really have a love relationship? Without seeing the greatness of His grace and the extent of His love, could we ever love Him as deeply as we should? This way of freedom of choice was most costly to Him but most beneficial to us who receive that free gift (5:8).

**Commented [notes19]: Romans 5:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

*<sup>16</sup> And the free gift is not like the result of that one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.* Adam's one rebellious act brought death to us all. Jesus' one act of sacrifice brings justification for all who will receive the free gift of grace. Paul has used the term "free gift" four times and will use it again. A gift, even a

free one, must be accepted to belong to you. You had no choice about your sinful nature, and even if you did you would have eventually made the wrong one. But you do have a choice about the free gift. In Adam we were all condemned. In Christ, we can all be justified. All of us are in the first Adam or the second Adam. We are either in Adam and of the group that refuses the free gift and is under condemnation, or we are in Christ and have been justified (John 3:36). In spite of the many trespasses, in Christ it is just as if we'd never sinned.

*<sup>17</sup> For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.* One sin committed by Adam brought death into the world. You will die because of Adam. Your spirit was born dead because of Adam. But there is a much greater power! **All who receive the abundant grace and free gift of righteousness will reign in life through Jesus!** That means you have the power to break the chains of sin. You can say, "NO!" to your old nature. You can forgive. That is because you have received abundant grace and the very life of Christ in you (Colossians 1:27).

When someone says they can't stop doing this thing or thinking that way or can't forgive, I rebuke that lie and tell them they can do all things through Christ who strengthens them (Philippians 4:13)! If you are in Christ you have an abundance of grace. You have received the free gift of righteousness. That doesn't mean you are perfect now, but it does mean in God's eyes you are (Song of Songs 4:7). That means you can ask your Daddy for anything you need in this life to live in a godly way. Is greed an issue? Take it to your Daddy and ask Him to give you the power to be generous like He is (Matthew 7:7). Is lust a problem? Go to your heavenly Father and ask to be so satisfied with Him that the idolatry of lust has no more hold on you. Then live in freedom by the power of His Spirit alive in your living spirit (Galatians 5:24-25). That is the much more Paul is talking about. You are no longer a slave to the flesh! Your spirit can reign in life! No doubt you will have to persist in the battle, but He will help you overcome (8:37)!

*<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.* Paul is repeating his point to make sure we understand. All died in Adam. All can live in Jesus and be right with God. It doesn't matter how far you have fallen, you can never fall so low that the grace of God cannot reach you. The further some fall the better saints they often make because they are so humbly

**Commented [notes20]: John 3:36 (ESV)**

<sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

**Commented [notes21]: Colossians 1:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**Commented [notes22]: Philippians 4:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

**Commented [notes23]: Song of Songs 4:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you.

**Commented [notes24]: Matthew 7:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.

**Commented [notes25]: Galatians 5:24-25 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

<sup>25</sup> If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

**Commented [notes26]: Romans 8:37 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

dependent on the Lord. Jesus said the one that is forgiven much loves much (Luke 7:47).

Our problem is that we don't realize how much we have been forgiven or we would love Him more. Ask Him to show you how much He has forgiven you of and be prepared for a heartbreaking revelation.

*<sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,* It is because we don't realize the depth of our sinfulness that the law was given. That made things worse for us in that we now know something is wrong but do it anyway. It is good for us in the sense that we realize how desperately we need a Savior. Paul will emphasize this work of the law in chapter seven (7:10-11). Because we have a sinful nature, we just can't see our own condition without the revelation of the Law. The Law drives us to Christ as we recognize our desperate need.

So as we get worse, the grace of God abounds all the more drawing us to seek a Savior. The Greek is even more emphatic. Grace super abounds! As John said in the first chapter of His Gospel, we have grace piled on grace in Jesus. (John 1:16) The revelation of our sin is really the grace of God to bring our hearts to repentance and acceptance of the free gift Paul has been writing about. **The worse people get, the more He pursues them.** There won't be a soul in hell except those who have all their life resisted the super abounding grace of God (Titus 2:11). Yet, so many do, wanting in pride to believe they are some kind of god, denying sin is sin, and reveling in their passions, conveniently overlooking the pain they cause others.

*<sup>21</sup> so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Sin reigns over mankind in the ugliest and most destructive way you can imagine. But the abounding grace of God reigns through righteousness. The Spirit of God in our spirit leads us in the paths of righteousness which is life everlasting (Psalm 23:3). **Life isn't just breathing. Life is knowing God and living in an eternal relationship with Him** (John 17:3). It is all through Jesus, the Messiah, our Lord. When He takes over our life, we experience abundant life. Only when He is Lord of your life will you truly know what it means to be free. Those who reign in life now over their old nature are certain to reign with Him in eternity (Revelation 22:5).

## Questions

- 1 Did Jesus believe in a literal Adam?
- 2 Why are we sinful?
- 3 What is the result of that sin?

### Commented [notes27]: Luke 7:47 (ESV)

<sup>47</sup> Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little."

### Commented [notes28]: Romans 7:10-11 (ESV)

<sup>10</sup> The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me.

<sup>11</sup> For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.

### Commented [notes29]: John 1:16 (ESV)

<sup>16</sup> And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

### Commented [notes30]: Titus 2:11 (ESV)

<sup>11</sup> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,

### Commented [notes31]: Psalm 23:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

### Commented [notes32]: John 17:3 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

### Commented [notes33]: Revelation 22:5 (ESV)

<sup>5</sup> And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

- 4 How is Adam a type of Christ? Anti-type?
- 5 What is the "much more" of grace?
- 6 Why use "free gift" so many times?
- 7 What does "reign in life" mean?
- 8 How much forgiveness have you received?
- 9 How is the law a blessing and a curse?
- 10 How can grace reign in righteousness in your life?