***The Doctrine of Original Sin  
RO55-01***

**© Berean Memorial Church of Irving, Texas, Inc. (1977)**

In Romans 5:12-21, we are in a very, very theological portion of Scripture. This is the portion of the Word of God par excellence, which answers such major questions as sin; the issue of moral guilt; the great problem of physical death; and, the eternal security of the believer in salvation.

**Satan's Deception**

We must again state to you that anybody who does not believe that once you’re saved, you’re permanently saved, has been conned by Satan, and he has taken into his mentality a very serious error. Satan said, "I'd like you just to think about being saved. It's wonderful. It's terrible to go to the lake of fire, but are you sure? Are you sure? And all the dummy Christians stop and say, "Oh, I wonder – am I sure? Maybe I'm not going there." That is Satan's device for keeping you from thinking about your own problems as a believer that need to be straightened out, and from using your spiritual gifts.

So, we have a portion of Scripture here that is very theological and very important because it answers all those major questions. But to do this, we require detailed exposition of what the Greek language says. It is so theological that we have to go slowly, and we have to explain it from the original language. It gives us another example of the necessity for the pastor-teacher analysis, which is why the person that you meet, who says that he's not sure he's going to heaven, says that. It is because he's been denied the analysis of the Word of God. He has not been taught doctrine.

**Fundamentalism**

I received a publication called "The Projector," the June, 1978 issue. It has an interesting article that I wanted briefly to read to you. The title of the article is "How Did We Get in This Mess and What to Do about It?" by Rodney Bell: "Satan has always been most successful when mingling truth with error. We are never to judge what we see by what we see, but judge what we see by what God's Word says about what we see. Naked truth can walk down Main Street and never blush. Fundamentalism is in the middle of a split. The issue is not personalities, but principles. Good men are being deceived by clever devils and seducing spirits. How did we get in this mess?

"We must speak out against this compromise in the tradition of true fundamentalism. God will hold us accountable for refusing to speak out against the subtle attacks upon His truth. We will have to give an answer, not only for what we say, but for what we do not say. I believe this split in fundamentalism has come about over a gradual process of the last several years by five reasons:

**Shallow Preaching**

One is shallow preaching. Thanks to "how-to-do-it" conferences, seminars, and feminars. There has been very little exposition or doctrinal preaching, which leaves a vacuum for heresy, tongues, and ignorance."

I think that is a very good point. I don't know how you feel, but I get pretty sick and tired of constantly receiving these advertisements in the mail, usually by Christian conferences and campgrounds: "Come to this wonderful week that we are having, which will tell you how to raise your children. Come to this wonderful week we are having, for ladies only, and tell you how to control your husband. Come to this wonderful week, for men only, and we will tell you how to get around your wife. And come to this wonderful week, and we will tell you how to get rich; how to do this; and, how to do that." And I don't care what the price. Boy, these places flood out with "How to ..."

However, the problem with these things, if you've attended them, is that it's always some guy who gets up and says, "Now I remember when Jim came to me. Jim was just as broke as he could be. Then he goes on and tells you a story. And when you finish, you say, "Wow, that is really something." And what do you do? You got the signal: "how to" was to go out and do just like Jim did.

I've heard a great industrialist – a Christian man in our country, and I have no doubt that he is a very sincere Christian man. And I heard his testimony one time when he told on how his business was going so bad, and he was just really down. And finally he came to the Lord and said, "God, I'm going to give you 10% of everything You give me from now on." And he said, "And then the Lord started blessing me and prospering me. And I got money here, and I got money there. I got money on top of the table, and under the table, and in the table, and over the table." And all the dummies are sitting there at the Christian businessmen conference saying, "Oh, that's how to do it. Give God 10%. Bribe Him, and then He'll come through for you."

These conferences, you will notice, are not based on doctrine. Now you can have a week of meetings. You can have a summer conference that could be very profitable, providing that the people who run it see to it that the conference is based upon a Bible doctrine study – period. And I don't mean somebody who's getting up, and we're going to deal with this subject, and here we're going to bring a little Scripture proof-verse in. And here, a little Scripture proof-verse in. These Bible doctrine conferences generally do not start with a passage, and then start going through the language verse-by-verse and verse-by-verse. Anytime you hear somebody preaching who does not go first verse-by-verse, explaining word-by-word, you shy off from him. He is a threat to your spiritual well-being.

So, this is a good point – shallow preaching because of all these how to do it conferences that Christians are caught up in. Well, that's exhilarating because people love to hear about experiences, and especially if you've got the kind of a clod who likes to get up and tell about his experiences. He loves these conferences. When they get to the sharing time, he's just itching for a chance to get up there, and to put himself on display.

**Super-Aggressive Evangelism**

He goes on in the article: "The way we got in this mess is one: shallow preaching; and, number two: super-aggressive evangelism. The end justifies the means: sideshows; ringmasters; and, cheap carnival tactics.

**Second-Degree Separation**

"Number three is second degree separation. This is a misnomer, which is a term coined as a smokescreen for those who hide behind those who do not want to practice biblical separation, and who want to practice inclusivism, and use W. A. Criswell, Lockridge, etc., which leads to softness. In ten years, we will have no pure faith. Remember that we are only strong as long as we are separated."

What he is referring to there is that a great famous evangelist comes along. This evangelist has fellowship with the National Council of Churches, which, if anything was ever under the wrath of God, that is. Therefore, his influence says, the National Council of Churches isn't so bad after all. The World Council of Churches isn't so bad after all, even though they are shot-through liberals, and even though they are rank unbelievers. It's not so bad after all." And people are deceived.

Along comes a famous spiritual leader in some area of teaching. He's a great teacher. He's got a following, and he plays footsie with the charismatics. What does he do? He brings the impression that the charismatics are, after all, not really so deceived by Satan. And what they're teaching it's really not so bad, and it's acceptable to have fellowship with them. What he is saying is the person may be a famous leader, but if he refuses to separate himself from that which is error, then we should separate ourselves from him. When he runs a meeting, don't go to it. When he writes a book, don't buy it, until he learns that biblical separation means to cut yourself off from error, and to mark error for what it is, as Jesus Christ did – that which is contrary to God's divine viewpoint.

However, those who want to be accepted, and those who want to play ball, contend that a second degree separation; that is, you're not separating from me because of what I believe, but because I won't refuse to associate with those who have serious errors.

**Success Image Philosophy**

"Number four is success image philosophy. If it's big, it's good. If it's big, it's scriptural: Baptize 200 a year, or you're not scriptural. This has led to overextension and bankruptcy. If you're not winning souls, you're not spiritual. Winning is just the beginning. Obedience is better than sacrifice. If we are obedient, we will win them; baptize them; and, teach them. I feel this has produced an easy believe-ism and many well-meaning brothers have fallen into the trap of being loyal to personalities and programs, instead of being loyal to biblical principles and biblical preaching.

**Scriptural Ignorance**

"And number five is scriptural ignorance concerning biblical separation. As a fundamentalist, we must be historically correct in position as well as doctrine. This has led to a new evangelical mood among fundamentalists. Inclusivism and sacred principles of ecclesiastical separation has been surrendered because we never compromise principles. We always surrender it. We hear from pseudo-fundamentalists pleas for unity and love and coined phrases such as, "We must all hang together, or we're going to hang separately. I, for one, want to know whom I'm going to hang with. I would far rather hang separately than hang together non-scripturally. We should never have unity at the price of truth. I have more respect for Billy Graham than I do a pseudo-fundamentalists. He at least refuses to be called a fundamentalist and be deceptive.

**Speak the Truth**

"So, what must we do about it? One: speak the truth. We need prophets instead of diplomats. Truth is being raped by deception. Good is called evil, and evil, good. Any preacher who will not use his pen and his pulpit to name names and declare the truth is a traitor to his calling. Paul said, "Alexander the coppersmith has done me much harm." He named him. There must have been more Alexanders than one, so he said he's the Alexander who runs the copper shop.

**Expose Them**

"Secondly, we must expose those who fellowship with ecumenical evangelism, new evangelicalism, and the charismatic movement. We must expose those who practice and teach in their schools and pulpits the second degree separation. We must expose and name those who use men who support the apostate programs. We must expose those who use men to support their programs, who walk in new evangelical and charismatic circles. With your influence, in support of affiliations, declare yourself fundamentalists or pseudo-fundamentalists. Do not support their TV ministry. Do not buy a piece of the mountain. Do not attend their rallies. Warn others and stay away.

**Stand against Them**

Third: stand against them. We must take our stand and take our losses. Fundamentalism has never been static. According to Jude, a fundamentalist is not only one who loves the common salvation, but is also one who earnestly contends our battles for the faith once delivered unto the saints. When we quit contending, we are no longer fundamentalists. It is a strange thing that the pseudo leaders will contend with true fundamentalists who speak out against their compromise, but they will not contend with new evangelical or charismatic leaders who pervert the truth.

**Serve Him**

Fourth: serve Him. Fundamentalists are loyal to principles, not personalities. We must be loyal to a person, Christ Jesus, instead of a program of man methodology. We are fundamentalists today because our forefathers paid the price, and withdrew from unbelief and compromise. We owe our allegiance to Jesus Christ and His Word, and nothing else. God help us to love souls, and serve the Savior until He comes out and delivers us from this mess."

I think, in general, that is well put. And I think the heart of it is the fact that there is no longer very much true genuine expository preaching. So, if you find that a section like we are in here in Romans is awfully heavy and awfully theological, it is because you are inviting the same kind of disaster upon yourself that most Christians have. Remember that someday you are going to be rewarded, or you are going to lose. Understanding Romans 5 is the greatest area of enlightenment in the Bible. And Satan manipulates lives. He destroys eternal rewards of believers who either do not know doctrine, or they won't obey it.

**In Christ**

So, now we are going back to Romans 5:12. We are getting this critical verse straight in our mind: "Wherefore as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and, so death passed upon all men, for all sinned." Here's our heritage from Adam. Let's review the basic facts of Romans 5:12. This is perhaps the most critical verse in all the Bible. This opening, "Wherefore" indicates a connection with a previous discussion on justification by faith, which was begun as far back as Romans 3:21. It, of course, has an immediate connection with verse 9-11, which immediately precede it. These verses point out the believer's position before God as being "in Christ." That's the significance of that phrase – "That, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." This is not really "by His life," but "in His life." That is, we shall be preserved now that we're born-again in the living Christ; as we were once saved by the dead Christ on the cross.

Paul has shown that salvation includes the judicial pronouncement of God that a believing sinner is justified. God pronounces that you have absolute righteousness. That has been imputed to you. That has been credited to your account. Paul has already told us that. But now he adds an important factor. And that is that those who are justified, and therefore reconciled to God, are also placed "in Christ" – – that you have a position. He has made it clear that God has made a judicial declaration – the declaration of a judge about you. You are justified. You have absolute righteousness.

Now Paul says, "I want to add a very critical point, and that is that you not only are declared to be something by God, but you are *in* something by God's placement, and that is that you are "in Christ." You have a position. The point is that, as believers were reconciled to God's standard of absolute righteousness by the death of Christ on the cross, so they will be preserved in reconciliation by their position in the living Christ. That is his first point. As you were saved by being justified through the death of Christ, you will now be declared to be preserved through the life of Christ.

**Security in Salvation**

The purpose of Romans 5:9-11 is to show the absolute certainty of retaining one's salvation once you are born spiritually. If that hasn't come through to you, then you better start reading those verses again. We've gone over to detail, but verses 9-11 are making one big point: certainty of salvation – the much more. "Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved (preserved from wrath) through Him. For when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we will be saved by His life." That is the whole point – security in salvation.

**In Adam**

This "wherefore" in verse 12 then connects the immediate context of verses 9-11 with a broader instruction of justification by grace, which has preceded since Romans 3:21. Everybody needs this justification in order to escape the wrath of God. So, "wherefore" hits the immediate verses, but it is also tying in with this whole question of justification. Paul's reference to our eternal security from the wrath of God, because we are in Christ, leads him to bring up our previous position in Adam. That's how Adam comes into the picture, because he's saying. "You are not only justified, but you are also in Christ. And I'm saying this to you in order to establish for you that you can never be lost again. And I'm going to make that clear by comparing you to what you once were in Adam." That's the line of logic.

The apostle Paul wrote a very systematized, logically thought-out letter. He is going to, as I say, beginning in chapter 6, talk about the Christian life – sanctification. But before he leaves it, he said, "I want to clear from your mind once and for all any concern about your being permanently saved. So, since you never have to think about that again, we can get on with the business of going on to Christian maturity.

Paul was very conscious of the principle that we are born with a spiritual deficiency. We are horrible clods by birth spiritually. And the worst thing about it is that it's like the ugliest person in the world looking in the mirror and wondering why he's so beautiful. You don't know what you are. We're horrible clods. Consequently, the Word of God says that we have such a spiritual deficiency, it's hard for us to believe it, and it has to be corrected, corrected, and corrected. And finally, you get far enough down the line where it's corrected, and you look back, and you shake your head and you say, "Boy, what a clod I was. I can't believe what a loathsome mess I was." And you become disgusted with yourself all over again.

Now the apostle Paul says, "I don't want you to be thinking about that issue of salvation. I want you to get on with getting over being a spiritual clod." And that means your mind is free to devote yourself to the subject of sanctification.

So, this "wherefore" comes into the picture based on this fact of our internal security. He has logically said, "You're saved. You're justified. And it was the result of what Christ did for you. And you, by grace, have accepted it. Now he says, "You have not only been justified, but you are in Christ. And to show you what that means to be in Christ, let's go back and take a look at what you were before you were in Christ. You were in Adam, and everybody is either in Adam or in Christ."

It is that line of logic that brings Adam and Christ together, and thus illuminates one of the grandest portions of the Word of God. He plans to show believers that they have the same relationship to Jesus Christ now as they had before their salvation to Adam. He intends to explain what caused that previous position of wrath in Adam, and how it parallels their current position of blessing in Christ.

So, "wherefore" signals Paul's transition to stressing the fact that salvation not only results in forgiveness of sins and imputation of absolute righteousness, but also to being placed in Christ. And to clarify the significance of being in Christ, he contrasts it with our previous position in Adam. The reason he brings up being in Christ is to stress the fact that salvation by grace is in perpetuity. That's why it's secure. It's because it is in Christ. Satan says, "It's temporary," and many church members believe him.

"In Adam," therefore, we have found means eternal death; and, "in Christ" means eternal life. This continues these "much mores" that we have in the previous verses, verses 9-10, where he says, "Much more. Much more." Being in Christ is much more than what we once had when we were in Adam. It's much more than what Adam had before he sinned.

So, the introduction here of the doctrine of the union of the believer with Christ anticipates this section that is coming up on sanctification. You are in Adam (and here's the first comparison.) You are in Adam without any action on your part. What did you do to get in, Adam? Nothing. Your parents produced you. You were born, and when you were born, you were in Adam, and you never started even with fellowship with God. You were out with God to begin with. At least Adam, when God breathed into his soul, and Adam opened his eyes, and self-consciousness came to his mentality, Adam was immediately in fellowship with God. When you come to life, you're out of it to begin with. There is no connection whatsoever.

So, here's a situation that you had no control over. What did you do to get in Adam? Nothing. That is the point. You did nothing to get in Adam.

The parallel to Christ is exactly the same thing. How do you get in Christ? By doing nothing. If you catch that, then you'll see why these people are so pathetic who are so fearful about being lost again. He says, "You are in Christ, and you are in Christ the same way that you were in Adam. How did you get in, Adam? You were just born there. You didn't do anything. How did you get in Christ? You were just born there. You didn't do anything. It's a matter of birth.

So, Paul brings up this comparison (this vital union with Christ) and because it is secured apart from any of your doing, this union can never be broken.

To grasp the doctrine of position in Christ is to flood your soul with joy and peace about eternity. Until you grasp this simple little truth, that you did nothing to place yourself under the wrath of God in Adam, and your relationship to Christ is the same principle, you will always be uneasy about your salvation. When you realize you didn't put yourself in Adam, therefore you did not put yourself in Christ, you'll be at ease that your salvation is secure.

What this first 12 told us was that sin entered the world of mankind through Adam, not Eve. The woman was not responsible for bringing sin into the world. Adam was the one who did that. You and I are guilty for what Adam did, not for what Eve did. We're guilty for what Adam. And Eve is guilty for what Adam did, for Eve was in Adam. All of us were in Adam. Now that is the picture that is presented here.

**The Doctrine of Original Sin**

Now at the moment, all we're telling you is that here is the classic scriptural passage on the doctrine of original sin. You can ask all kinds of questions: "Oh, wait a minute. How come I'm guilty for what Adam did? How can that be put to my account? I don't understand this." But we're not talking about that. All I'm saying – I'm just reading the passage, and I'm just telling you what the apostle Paul is saying here. He's simply making a declaration that you die physically, and you die physically because of this. From Adam come two lines. One line is straight direct to you, and that is physical death. And the Bible says, "You die because you did something in Adam for which God condemned you to death. On the other hand, the line of spiritual death is broken because it is a line that goes from generation to generation. You get spiritual death from Adam, too, but you get spiritual death from your parents. So, Adam, passed it on to his kids; and his kids to his children; and his children to his children; and, so on down. We keep passing this down from father to son, and from father to daughter. Parents to children pass on spiritual death. It's your parents who caused you to die spiritually, *because* it's your parents who gave you an old sin nature. So, bingo, you're dead spiritually.

However But why do you die physically? It's not because of something your parents give you. That's what Paul is saying: "You're dead physically because you did something in Adam that brought upon you the judgment of physical death." Now get that clearly in mind, and you'll understand this passage. Sin entered the world through Adam,

This proves that Genesis 1-3 is actual history. I get so tired of listening to these sophisticated intellectuals who like to talk about whether Genesis chapters 1-3 is an actual historical record, or if it's an epic poem, or if it's something else. That is so absolutely dumb, or else Jesus Christ is the most ignorant person that ever lived, because he obviously treated those chapters as being real history. And Paul is obviously treating this as real history. If there was never an actual person named Adam, and an actual woman named Eve, and an actual place called Eden, and an actual sin that was committed, and an actual tree of the knowledge of good and evil from which they ate, then none of this is meaningful. This is all foolishness and nonsense. It has to have a basis in history, and it does. So, that's one thing that's very clear to us – that Genesis chapters 1-3 that tell us about man's fall, is an actual historical event.

Sin, however, was not part of God's perfect creation. It came into the picture. Death entered human experience as the consequence of sin. Death was not a part of creation. Death is not a natural part of creation. Death is only because of sin. And Adam's sin brought death upon creation, as well as upon his children and his posterity.

So, death entered human experience as the consequence of sin, and death became the universal lot of mankind. Physical death is mainly in view here. As in verse 14, it's quite obvious that verse 14 is speaking about physical death. It's talking about people dying physically in the span of time from Adam to Moses. It is wrong to say that the death of verse 12 here is spiritual death. Spiritual death is involved, but here in is secondary way. It is physical death that is primarily involved here.

"Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world and death by sin, and so, death passed upon all men." Now "and so" is proper translation. That's what the Greek says. Do not try to say "even so," as some people do, so that they can have a conclusion. You have to read this verse 12 as Paul intended – to make a statement with a conclusion. And indeed, when you say "as," that's one side of a comparison, you say, "even so" – you finish it off. But what Paul said was: "Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so, death passed upon all men for all have sinned," and then you're waiting for him to go on: "even so," but the verse stops: period.

I'll read it again that way: "Wherefore, by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned." "Even so" doesn't show up. Paul's logical mind got to that point, and the Spirit of God said, "Paul, Are you sure those people in Rome understand the principle of sin imputed to them because they were in Adam?"

So, he starts at verse 13, which is a set of parentheses, and it goes all the way to 17, explaining. And verses 13-14 explain that last statement: "for all have sinned." You have to get the logical connection. Then he gets to verses 18-19, and he starts all over again. And notice: "As by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men (and the condemnation); even so, by the righteousness of One, the free gift came upon all men." There you have it. He goes back in verse 18, and he does finish the comparison that he started in verse 12. He just got the first part of the comparison, and he said, "Now I better stop and explain what I mean by that."

We're going to go into the analysis of his explanation. But you have to see what is happening here – that there is no conclusion in verse 12. So, the comparison is not completed. It is done later. The simple statement is that death is punishment for sin.

The reason death spread to every human being is because every one sinned. So, we should translate the last part of verse 12: "For all have sinned as all sinned." The reason we say that is to translate it as "for all have sinned" makes people think that this is talking about personal sins. This is not talking about anything you did. Now get that out of your mind. Verse 12 is not talking about any evil that you have ever done. You are not dying because of all of your breaking of the moral commandments, and of all the moral rules of God. You're not dying because of that. That is not involved. That is not the sins that it's speaking of in verse 12.

Therefore we have to say, "for all sinned." Now, how do we know it's sinned? You know enough about the Greek language to know that this aorist tense is a point, and therefore it says that: "Some place in human history, all of us committed an act of sin, or we were involved in somebody committing an act of sin, and we were held responsible for that. We had the guilt imputed to us. We didn't actually sin in Eden. We weren't there. But someone who was there did the sin. And what he did was imputed to us. That's why we translate it "for all sinned." Then it becomes much clearer. It does not mean that everyone has committed personal sins. That is true, but that's not what this is saying. It does not mean that everyone has a corruption nature. That's true, but that's not what this is saying. It does not mean that everyone actually personally send in Adam. They were guilty of what he did, but they weren't there to do it. It simply says that in some way, all sinned. OK, now what does that mean? Let's take a look at that.

All sinned in some way, in Adam, who did the actual sinning. That's the meaning. In some way, when Adam sinned, you and I receive the consequences of the guilt of that sin. If you want me to explain that to you, forget it – nor can anyone else. I'm only stressing to you that I'm telling you what the apostle Paul has written. And the apostle Paul has written that the reason you die physically is because you sinned in Adam – not actually there sitting. He did the sinning, but you received the consequence, which was physical death.

So, we have all sinned in some way, by imputation from Adam. The result is universal sin. The result is universal physical death. Rationalism likes to reject the idea that man is a sinner, and that he is evil. He claims that he's simply evolve into something good. That's the idea behind Marxism. But Paul repeatedly stresses that sin and death entered the human race as a direct result of sin – and that the disobedience of one man. This is not the sin of humanity. It is very clearly the sin of one man. "Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered the world of humanity and physical death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for all sinned in this one man.

The statement clearly refers to a single act by a single person. It doesn't mean a pattern of sinning. It doesn't mean general sinfulness. "All sin."

Remember that the main point of Romans 5:12-21 is this comparison between Adam and the Lord Jesus Christ. Notice at the end of verse 14, we're told that Adam was "a figure of Him that was to come," meaning Jesus Christ, Adam is a picture of Christ. Therefore, what is true about Adam is going to be true about Christ. That's what I told you. He's going to say: "You are secure in your salvation because you are in Christ. You didn't do anything to get in Christ. You simply received that by a judgment of God. And I'm going to illustrate this by showing what you were in Adam. You didn't do anything to get in in Adam. You received this by a judgment from God." So, on the one side, you were totally lost without your doing anything. So, on the other side, you were totally saved without your doing anything.

If you grasp that, then the next time some good, well-meaning soul comes up to you and says, "Ah, if you sin, you'll be lost again," you'll say, "Who told you that?" Are you saved because you quit sinning? You weren't saved because you quit sinning. You weren't saved because of anything you did. You weren't involved in. And Adam illustrates that. Now, what is true of Adam is true of us in Christ. That's our point here. The object is to stress the parallel relationship between these two.

**Death**

Now, death is always the punishment for sin. Death is always the punishment for sin. Death, therefore, when it is present, indicates moral guilt and condemnation. Now death comes upon infants. Does a baby sin? Is a baby capable of willfully exercising a violation of the moral code of God? Obviously not. A baby cannot personally sin. But a baby dies. And we're already told that if it wasn't for sin, you wouldn't die. The fact that a baby dies shows that somehow this baby is guilty of sin. Otherwise the baby would never die. And that's Paul's point. This baby is guilty of sin. He's guilty of a particular sin. And that particular sin is the sin of Adam in Eden.

Paul says that all infants are guilty of the act which brought sin into the human race – the sin of Adam, because God imputes Adam's sin to that baby. They all sin by imputation in the original sin of Adam. In this way, they were all constituted sinners.

This fact is reiterated in this parenthetical clarification, which we will be looking at verses 13-17, and in the summary, in verses 18-19. We each die physically because of our guilt in Adam's sin – not because we have an old sin nature. That gives us spiritual death. Adam's disobedience in sin has placed us all in the position where we are viewed by God as sinners. We are constituted sinners, and the result is death.

So, the parallel fact about Jesus Christ establishes the permanency of our justification. As we were without our effort and Adam, we are without our effort in Christ. Our salvation is based on who and what Jesus Christ is – not on our doing. God views us as absolute righteousness. Why? Because He has imputed the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ to us. We die because God imputed Adam's guilt to us. We live because God imputes Christ's righteousness to us. There's the parallel. His righteousness imputed in exactly the same way as Adam's sin is imputed to us.

Now, it's our union with Adam that accounts for all of our troubles and all of our death. It's our union with Christ that accounts for all of our happiness and all of our eternal life. The reason Satan distorts the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit is because that's what puts us into union with Christ. This is why you know that the claw of Satan is upon the charismatic movement. It is because they have fouled up the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Satan must do that. He is compelled to do that because this is the explanation of how we are saved and permanently saved – the baptism of the Holy Spirit which places us in Christ.

Now, how is everyone guilty of Adam's Sin? The Bible doesn't specifically explain that. It's important to understand that this is the way it is with God. Not comprehending the mechanics of a doctrine does not make it false. We just accept what the Bible teaches. The mechanics are not clear on how the guilt of Adam was applied to us.

There are a lot of theories, but I'm just going to summarize it in two features which I think are involved. All the other features I think are extraneous. But these two, I think, really come in. One we have already looked at in Hebrews 7:9-10. I'm just going to read it just to refresh your mind. There is a principle that those who are progenitors are able to act for us, and we are held accountable for what they do. In Hebrews 7:9-10, you have a reference to the Old Testament passage where Abraham (the progenitor of the Jewish people, and particularly of Levi and the Levitical priesthood under the Mosaic system) paid tithes to Melchizedek and that priesthood. Hebrews 7:9-10: "And as I may so say, Levi also, who received tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him."

**Levi was Seminally in Abraham**

What this passage is basically saying is that Levi was seminally in Abraham. Somehow, the fact that the life function within Abraham that reproduced children was present in him at the time that he made this act of recognition of the Melchizedek priesthood. That conveyed to his descendants. The seminal factor passed on the subordination of the Levitical priesthood the Melchizedek priesthood. And this whole passage is simply saying that Levi was the Father of the Jewish priesthood under the Mosaic system. But Levi, because he was seminally in the body of Abraham when Abraham paid tithes. The Scriptures say, "In the loins of his father, Abraham." The result is that, by divine reckoning, Levi also paid those tithes to Melchizedek. That's what it amounts to.

God says, "Obviously, Levi, your priesthood is subordinate to Melchizedek, because if you paid ties to Melchizedek, you're recognizing he is the superior priesthood." Whoever pays tithes to the other recognizes that one as superior. And because Abraham did this, and you were yet unborn in Abraham's body, in divine reckoning, what Abraham did, you did. There's our first clue as to how what Adam did, we did, because obviously we were all within Adam's body, yet unborn. So, Levi was tithed in Abraham. That is the point. Levi didn't actually personally tithe to Melchizedek, but God reckoned that he had done so. So, all humanity, in the loins of Adam, was reckoned by God to have sinned.

**Federal Headship**

There's a second factor that I think is involved, and that is the federal idea, which we've already mentioned. That is that Adam is viewed by God as our representative. And when he acts, he acts as the federal head – the representative of the human race. God, the Creator, has the right to appoint Adam to anything He wants to appoint him to be. That's divine sovereignty. I have no doubt that this is exactly what God did. I think God must have told Adam: "Adam, I don't want you to eat of that tree. I'm going to tell you that if you obey Me, in time, you're going to have children, and those children are going to be blessed and prospered because you obeyed Me. And I'm going to tell you that if you don't obey Me, your progeny will come under divine wrath, and they will suffer the consequences of what you do. I think God spelled it out to him just like that.

I'm confident that is true because of other Scriptures. We won't look these up, but you have several passages in the Old Testament that tell fathers that what they do will be visited upon their children down to the third and fourth generation (Exodus 20:5, Exodus 34:7, Numbers 14:18, Deuteronomy 5:9). There is that federal representative principle here in the Old Testament. God says, "I look at a father, and what he does, I transmit in blessing or cursing on his children."

So, you have two factors in Scripture, both of which I think obviously apply to this situation here. So, I think what we have in explanation of how it is that, in Adam, you and I have imputed to us a sin which he did, and which we suffer the consequences of. It is because of this seminal federal relationship that we had to Adam.

So, Paul is therefore saying that we are all guilty before God, and we're doomed to hell because Adam's guilt is imputed to us. Why is that guilt imputed to us? Because, seminally and federally, we are related to Adam.

So, at that point in Eden: "All sinned." That explains: "All sinned." There we have it in a point of time. So, in like manner, I'm happy to remind you, that at the point of faith in Christ as Savior, and the automatic baptism of the Holy Spirit, which places the believer into Christ, we all reckon to have died for our sins. And thus, we have paid the penalty of death. And thus we have imputed righteousness. That's what Paul is saying, God, through this system, has caused us all to sin, and to be under His wrath. And this because we are in Adam, so by the same system, God has put you in Christ, and the result is you died with Him. You're buried with Him. You rose again with Him. You paid for sins. Were you actually there doing it? No. But God imputes what Christ did to your benefit.

Adam altered the relationship of all of humanity to God. He brought us all under wrath and physical death. Jesus Christ altered all of our relationship where he brought us under eternal life. In time, that will come true in our experience. Right now, we still are under the consequences of physical death. And, in time, you will have life forever. In time, you will come to what God would have done for Adam. Had Adam passed the test, he would never have been able to sin again. He would have had children, and they never would have been able to sin. It would have been a perfect creation finding its perfect expression.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

[**Back to the Romans index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/romans.htm)

[**Back to the Bible Questions index**](http://www.christiandataresources.com/allarticles.htm)