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Romans 5: The Security of Salvation

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Chapter 5 The Security of Salvation

If salvation cannot be earned by being good enough or by accumulating enough good works to merit salvation, how does a person know for certain that when he dies, he will go to heaven? The primary reason that God has revealed to us, and had written down through inspiration, the revelation of His will was so that man could “know that you **have** eternal life” (1 Jn 5:12). This assurance of salvation is sometimes referred to as a “**helmet**” (Eph 6:17; 1 Thess 5:8) to protect the believer from the blows of doubt and uncertainty in his mind concerning his relationship with God.

In Chapter 4 Paul established the method of how He is willing to justify sinful mankind, and an OT illustration of this method to show that this is not something new, but the only way sinners from the beginning of the people of God could ever be acceptable to Him. Not only are there immediate blessings to this gracious salvation, but blessings that accompany the believer throughout his life.

I. Justification is provided to be enjoyed (5:1-11)

Paul will define six reasons why our salvation is so great and why we should rejoice in it always (see Phil 3:1; 4:4)

First: Believer’s peace with God.

^{NET} **Rom 5:1** Therefore, **since** we have been **declared** righteous by faith, we have peace **with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ,

5:1 “**Therefore**” (*oun*, conjunction, “something follows from another necessarily, drawing a conclusion,” THAYER) ties chapter 4 and 5 into a continuous thought introducing the implications of the salvation of full justification (chapters 3-4). The premise or basis of the blessings to follow is the fact that “**we have been declared righteous** by faith” (*dikaioo*, emphatic position, aorist passive participle: “At one time in the past someone did something to us” - “to declare and treat as righteous; acquitted of a charge or reproach; to declare guiltless one accused,” THAYER). As a consequence we “**have peace with God**”¹ (*pros*, “to show motion towards a person, or position and state looking toward a thing,” THAYER). This is not a feeling, but a state of peace between the repugnant sinner and a holy God. Instead of a state of enmity, rejection, hostility and antagonism there is a declared “**peace**” because all conflicts have been resolved on the cross of Christ. Most people are unaware of this conflict because they think they are pretty good and have done little or no wrong (a typical concept of the unsaved in 1 Jn 1:8, 10). Two things are necessary for a peace treaty: a successful mediator and an acceptable satisfaction of all conflicts. How do these verses show God’s wisdom in creating a peaceful resolution to the conflict between sinfulness and holiness?

1 Tim 2:5-6

Eph 2:13-18

Col 1:19-22

- This peace is God’s doing, something we can count on or depend upon. We can rest in the fact that Christ’s work was to secure our peace with a Holy God, thus this peace cannot be lost, nor ever changed. It is all His doing. We can only enjoy it. The fear of

¹ This is not the “peace of God” (Phil 4:7; Col 3:16), which is a corporate bonding peace shared together in the church.

rejection by God is forever gone. Hallelujah! How does Romans 8:38-39 help explain the “peace of God?”

Second: Believer’s standing in grace

^{5:2} through whom we have also **obtained access** by faith into this grace in which we **stand**, and we **rejoice** in the hope of God's glory.

5:2. Let’s look at the unbeliever’s standing before God. What is the description of the unbeliever before God in Isaiah 59:2?

- God is totally inaccessible to the unbeliever, except to hear his repentant cry. Otherwise he is ignored and only finds a deaf ear. What a difference for the believer! The promise of an “**access**” (*prosagoge*, “the act of bringing to, approach;” “whereby we are acceptable to him and have assurance that he is favorably disposed toward him,” STRONG) is provided to us because Jesus has justified us, providing an open access to God’s grace for all those He has declared as, and will forever treat as, righteous. What are the means and the importance of this access in Ephesians 2:18 and 3:12?
- On the basis of his faith, the believer can “**stand**” (*histemi*, perfect tense: completed action with permanent continuous effect –“standing firm, fixed and immovable”) accepted in the presence of God. We are not saved by grace and then made secure by human effort. His grace is not fickle or conditional. It would make no sense for God to begin by grace then be unwilling or unable to preserve or secure us by grace. How do these verses reaffirm the permanence of being able to stand by His grace?
Phil 1:6
Jude 24
Gal 3:3
2 Tim 1:12
- The purpose and benefit of a secure salvation is to free men from sin, not to free them to do sin: “Having been freed from sin, you became enslaved to righteousness” (Rom 6:18). Any “professing” Christian who continues unchanged by continually practicing his old sin life, evidently made an insincere profession. Even true believers are not perfect, but their new nature hates sin and loves God, resulting in new desires to please God through obedience to His Word. The next several chapters deal with this change. How did John describe those who were not changed by God’s grace?
1 John 2:19
1 John 3:9-10
- When salvation is understood from the biblical revelation, the believer can’t help but “**rejoice**” with all his soul (*kauchaomai*, present tense: “continuously” – “attitude of confidence, a boasting in or about, expressing a high degree of confidence”). The “hope of God’s glory” refers to the promise that believers will share in Christ’s future glory and manifestation. Notice in these verses how the believer anticipates the future coming of Christ:
Col 3:4
Heb 2:10
Phil 3:20-21

Third: Rejoicing in a shared hope in glory

^{5:3} Not only this, but we also **rejoice in sufferings**, knowing that suffering produces **endurance**,
^{5:4} and endurance, **character**, and character, **hope**.

5:3 Ironically, the believer can especially “rejoice” (same word as above in present tense: “continuously...”) in “**suffering**” (*thlipsis*, “pressing together, pressure,” as squeezing olives in a press to extract the oil; metaphor: “affliction, tribulation, distress, straits”), because there is a direct relation between the present suffering for Christ and the future glory. This is not a reference to the human suffering common to all men due to sickness, sins or mistakes, but the consequences of choosing to so identify with Christ and His purpose that persecution is inevitable. See 2 Tim 3:12. What was the Apostle’s attitude toward suffering for Christ in these verses?

2 Cor 4:17

Rom 8:18

1 Pet 4:19

- We can rejoice in suffering not only because of the future, but also because of what it “**produces**” (*katergazomai*, present tense: “continuously...”-“accomplish, achieve, brings about results”) in the present, namely, “**endurance**” or “**patience**” (*hupomone*, “remain under, continue under difficult circumstances,” LOUW-NIDA). This is a high value in God’s providential dealings with believers. Why did James declare that learning “endurance” was so important in James 1:3-4?
- What is the source of this endurance in Romans 15:4?
- Suffering for Christ is a necessary schoolmaster also to teach “**character**” (*dokime*, “approved character, experience of a testing ordeal, and proof of genuineness”). It is used of testing silver and gold to demonstrate their purity. How was Paul approved or accepted as a “minister” or “servant” of God in 2 Cor 6:4?
- The proven character produces “**hope**” (*elpis*, “expectation of good”). How does suffering generate hope in 2 Cor 1:7?

^{5:5a} And hope does **not disappoint**,

5:5a The first phrase of 5:5 completes the thought of 5:4, namely, passing through suffering for Christ will never lose its recompense nor ever be forgotten by our Lord, even if He is the only one who saw it. “**Disappoint**” (*kataischunein*, “dishonor, humiliate”) has the idea of never being forgotten. How did Jesus express this confidence in Luke 6:22-23?

Fourth: Sharing in the divine love of God for others through the Spirit

^{5:5b} because the love of God **has been poured out** in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who **was given to us**.

5:5 Paul began speaking of *faith*, then spoke of *hope* and now explains *love*, the trilogy of Christian character (1 Thes 1:3; 5:8). This is not the love of God for us, but the character of God’s love being implanted in us by the Spirit. The first aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is “love” (Gal 5:22). In the Bible “love” is technically not an emotion, rather an unselfish attitude toward others. The Spirit generates in us a concern for others that results in sacrificial actions for their benefit, just as it did in Jesus. In Greek the feeling or romantic love is *eros*, which does not appear in the NT. This “love” is *agape* (“good will,

benevolence”), also called the “self-sacrificing love” from Eph 5:25. When we begin to care about sharing the gospel story with those who have never heard, family and strangers, neighbors and unreached people groups around the globe, we are sensing the direction that the love of God is flowing and how it wants to take us with Him (John 3:16). It is an attitude and commitment to benefit others without selfish interest. This selfless love is the key to every healthy relationship, which the Spirit greatly facilitates. How does the comparison of our “walk in love” with Christ’s love in Eph 5:2 work out in practical actions?

- Since the Holy Spirit “**was given**” (*didomi*, aorist passive: a one-time past action done to us, “give over, deliver, to put into the heart”) at the moment Christ was received into the believer’s life. In order to grasp the power of this indwelling Spirit in every believer, Paul wrote in Col 2:9-10^{NAS}, “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete...” The giving of the Spirit in every believer without exception at the moment of his salvation gives the power of all that there is of God, the entire godhead, to transform the new believer to be like Christ. Do you see any relationship between the powerful presence of God in our lives and the call to love people in these verses?

2 Tim 1:7-8

1 Peter 1:22

1 John 3:16

Explanation of Christ’s Love as our model

^{5:6} For while we were still **helpless**, at the right time Christ died for the **ungodly**.

^{5:7} (For rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person perhaps someone might possibly dare to die.)

^{5:8} But God **demonstrates** his own love for us, in that while we **were still sinners**, Christ died for us.

5:6 The love that has been fused into our being by the Spirit is the same love that motivated Jesus to give His life for others, the greatest demonstration of love in human history. The target of His love was the “**helpless**” (*asthenes*, “weak, feeble”). These are the ones who are incapable of being acceptable to God, in fact, this is the group called the “**ungodly**” (*asebes*, “destitute of reverential awe towards God, impious”). MacArthur writes, “When we were powerless to escape from our sin, powerless to escape death, powerless to resist Satan, and powerless to please Him in any way, God amazingly sent His Son to die on our behalf.” How are we expected to manifest this kind of love?

5:7 The natural love is different from this God-like love. Natural love is attracted to its object and generally expecting to be loved in return. We make a mistake to think that God’s love is similar to human love, that is, that it depends on how good we are or how much we love Him. Even deceiving tax collectors can love humanly (Matt 5:46). How does Christ expect us to be different from the “unsaved”?

5:8 Christ’s love is so unmerited and giving to the totally undeserving, that is, for “**sinners**” (*hamartolos*, “devoted to sin, pre-eminently sinful, wicked”). He “**demonstrates**” His love (*sunistao*, present tense: “continuously or habitually...” – “to bring or band together, to teach by combining and comparing, to exhibit”). God despises every sinful thought or deed, but loves the sinner, even in the midst of his sins. His sin against Christ does not change His commitment to continue to demonstrate His love towards all sinners. Only at death does a sinner cease to be loved by God. At that moment, the sinner is beyond the reach of God’s

love. If man chooses to live without God in life, God will grant him that wish for eternity. This is why the time for us to demonstrate the love of God in us is now. How will you do it?

Fifth: The certainty of being delivered from God's judgment.

⁹ Much more then, because we have **now been declared righteous** by his blood, we will be **saved through him** from God's **wrath**.

¹⁰ For if while we were **enemies** we were **reconciled** to God through the death of his Son, how much more, since we have been reconciled, **will we be saved** by his life?

5:9 The verse opens with an exaggerated conclusion, “much more then” (*mallon*, comparative adverb, “to an even greater degree”) the following argument is conclusive that the believer is eternally bonded to Christ in an unbreakable union. The emphasis on “**now**” (*nun*, “at the present time,” not *now* meaning during the present age, which is another word) as a consequence of a past action: “**have been declared righteous** by his blood” (*dikaioo*, aorist passive past tense, i.e., someone else completes the action to the recipient, “to render righteous, to declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous”). This is the immediate response of God to the repentant sinner. This complete transaction of our sins exchanged for Christ's righteousness results in an assurance that all believers will be “saved from the wrath of God.” The assurance is based on understanding the promises of God and putting one's complete trust in them. What are the unbelieving people considered in these verses?

Eph 2:3

John 3:18

1 Thess 5:9

5:10 The transition from “children of wrath” “already condemned” to having been “**reconciled**” (*katallasso*, aorist passive tense: past tense instantaneous action, “to change, exchange, as coins for others of equal value, thus to equalize others at variance, to return into favor with,” THAYER). If the death of the Savior has secured our rescue or salvation, then “much more” (see 5:9) “we [for certain] shall be saved by his life.” If His death in the past resulted in full “reconciliation” or acceptance before God, then His living will keep us reconciled forever. It is not just His past action that saved us, but His present actions eliminate all uncertainty and doubt about His being able to fulfill His promise of salvation. If His grace covers the sins of even His enemies, who could doubt that His grace will cover the sins of His children? Who are the kind of people reconciled by God in Col 1:21?

Sixth, The bond of rejoicing for this gracious redemption

^{5:11} Not only this, but we also **rejoice** in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received this **reconciliation**.

5:11 The final reason that bonds the believer to Christ is the “**rejoicing**” in God (*kauchaomai*, present tense: “continuously...” – “to speak loud, boast of a thing, take pride in”). This is not a pride in one's self, but the overwhelming privilege of being the object of a Sovereign God's perfect plan to make perfectly acceptable for all eternity all sinners who hear and believe the offer of “the **reconciliation**” (*katallage*, “restore to favor, reestablishing of personal relations, change from enmity to friendship,” FRIBERG). The confidence in the guaranteed promises are great cause for pride, not in ourselves, but in our God, whose wisdom and sacrificing love gives great cause for eternal rejoicing. What is it we “glory in” or “rejoice in” and what do we not glory in?

Eph 2:9

Gal 6:14

II. The Righteousness of God contrasted (5:12-21)

In these early chapters of Romans Paul has been explaining the implications of two major doctrines of universal sin and depravity resulting in the condemnation of mankind (1:18—3:20), followed by the revelation of how Christ's vicarious death on the cross provided a just salvation for all who hear and come to God through faith in Christ's sacrifice (3:21-5:11). The objective is to show how one person's actions affect many others. This becomes a reasonable argument for faith in the wisdom of God's provision for the sinfulness of man.

Paul he will clarify our understanding by making contrasts between (1) Adam's reign of death and Christ's reign of life (vs. 12-14); between condemnation and justification (vs. 16); between disobedience and obedience (vs. 19); between law and grace (vs. 20); between sin and righteousness (vs. 21); and between death and life (vs. 21). Three important doctrinal truths are elaborated in this passage: (1) by one disobedience by one man all the world has been made guilty of sin; (2) the consequence of Adam's original sin is imputed to every human being; and (3) Adam in essence was our official representative when he decided to disobey God.

¹² So then, just as sin **entered** the world through **one man** and death through sin, and so death **spread to all** people because all sinned—

5:12 The connective “so then” ties this passage with the preceding argument, that is, that the believer has been reconciled to God by the sacrifice of Christ (vv. 8-11). Paul begins with an comparative analogy, “just as,” between Christ and Adam who each had vast effect on mankind. However, he will not return to this comparison until 5:15. Now three arguments are presented in this verse.

1. “**Sin entered the world through one man:**” Adam did not originate sin; rather he was the means that sin came into the human realm. Sin originated with Satan who “has sinned from the beginning” (1 Jn 3:8) of creation, which was before Adam was created. The verb “**entered**” (*eiserchomai*, aorist: at one time in the past, “entered into, began to be in”) means after his creation, Adam was given one simple prohibition by God, yet the consequence of disobedience was severe: death in every sense (spiritual and physical) to Adam and all his descendents. Adam was held responsible, not Eve, because he was created first and he was given the direct command. He was given headship over Eve and could insist on their mutual obedience to God rather than let her lead him into disobedience. Furthermore, when Adam sinned the first time, his status as innocent changed to guilty and his nature changed forever to a sinful lust for the prohibited, which nature was passed on to his descendents. As a consequence when the first man sinned, in essence all his descendents sinned as they were polluted with his new depraved nature. If Adam and Eve were not actual historical people would this view effect the doctrine of sin?

How did Adam affect all mankind in 1 Cor 15:22?

2. “**And death [entered world] through sin:**” God had warned that “in the day that you eat from it you shall surely die” (Gen 2:17). The implication of this means that Adam was not created as a mortal being (subject to death), but became such by violating God's command. The fear of God means that we would be wise to recognize that God will do exactly what He says. Satan tempted Eve by getting her to believe that God would not do what He said He would. Adam and Eve did not die physically “in the day” that they disobeyed, but they died spiritually and remained dead spiritually until

they came to trust in God's mercy. If in death the soul is **separated** from the body and thus the body dies, how does Isa 59:2 describe the spiritual death of a person?

Thus every human is now subject to death, because he is by nature a sinner. How do these verses describe the sinful nature of man and its consequences?

Matt 15:19

Eph 2:1-2

Eph 4:18

Rev 21:8

3. **“Death spread to all people because all have sinned:”** The key part of Paul's argument is the proof that all mankind, Adam's descendents, were infected without choice by the infection of sin through an inherited sinful nature. Death **“spread”** (*dierchomai*, aorist: at one time in the past, “pass throughout”) as a disease, which no one either has a choice to avoid. The obvious proof of this consequence is the undeniable fact that all men born have died or will die. The verb **“sinned”** (*hamartano*, aorist tense: “at one time in the past” – “to miss the mark, wander from God's law”) indicates that at one point all men sinned. Everything points to the single sin of Adam (all verbs are aorist: a onetime past act) because all mankind came out of his descendents. No one is taught to sin or act selfishly; they are born with this tendency.²
 - Some might argue that is not fair that everyone is made a sinner without their choice, but neither is it “fair” that the Son of God would suffer the full penalty of sin in the place of everyone throughout the history of the world. It would have been fair to have eliminated Adam and Eve immediately and not let them procreate all humanity. However, the facts are that God created man with a free will to freely choose a relationship with Him by faith over the passing pleasure of disobedience. How is trust and obedience related with Adam and Eve, as well as in our choices?

5:13-15 Explains the principle of universal sin.

¹³ for **before** the law was given, sin was in the world, but **there is no accounting for sin** when there is no law.

5:13 Paul continues this explanation: **“For”** (*gar*, “a conjunction to express cause, inference or continuation of an explanation”) introduces this additional evidence. Because the sin nature was inherited seminally from Adam, its manifestation by mankind's sinful actions only became worse with passing generations (see Gen 6:5-7, 11-13). The relationship between sin and death made the presence of sin as self-evident even without the law since everyone died. However, it was not a direct “transgression” since there was no revealed command or law from God to disobey. It was not the **“accounting”** (*ellogeo*, present tense: “continuously...”- “impute, charged, or to keep a record of something”) of any specific disobedient sin, but rather it was the natural tendency of man to ignore God, violate their conscience, and live selfishly (Rom 1:19-32) that condemned mankind. Not only did death make sin to be evident, eventually God would reveal the law (BC 1400) to make sin an undeniable reality. What would eventually become the purpose of the law in Rom 5:20?

² Theologians present two views of this universal participation: (1) Adam is seen as a Federal Headship over the human race or the representative of the human race where God considered Adam's sin to be the act of all mankind and his penalty of death was judicially passed on to every human. (2) The Natural Headship view sees all mankind being seminally and physically in Adam, thus all people participated in Adam's sin and were condemned together. This latter view is seen in Heb 7:9-10 where it is said that Levi paid a tithe to Melchizedek when he met Abraham. Levi was not born for 600 years, yet he was “in the body of his ancestor.”

^{5:14} Yet **death reigned** from Adam until Moses even over those who **did not sin in the same way** that Adam (who is a **type** of the coming one) transgressed.

5:14 The self-evident proof of sin's existence is the universal death of all people throughout history. The phrase "in the same way that Adam" refers to a specific command from God that was disobeyed. Adam and Eve were evicted from the garden so they had no more access to the forbidden fruit, nor did any of their descendants. Thus no one could sin as did Adam, but regardless all men died because of their sin nature. The reason for the giving of the law was to make undeniable that all men are sinners needing a Savior. How is this purpose evident in these verses?

Gal 3:24

Gal 3:10

- Adam is seen as a "**type**" or the "coming one" or Christ. Paul will begin a series of comparisons between Adam and Christ as the heads of human beings; however, the comparison is more a contrast than a comparison.

(BKC [NT] p. 461)

Contrasts between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:15-21	
One Man (Adam)	One Man (Christ)
v. 15 <i>One man's trespass</i> → <i>many died</i>	<i>One man's grace</i> → <i>gift of grace (righteousness) to many</i>
v. 16 <i>One (Adam)</i> → judgement and condemnation	<i>Many trespasses</i> → gift → justification
v. 17 Through <i>one man's trespass</i> → death reigned	Through <i>one Man Jesus Christ</i> → believers reign in life
v. 18 <i>One trespass</i> → condemnation for <i>all men</i>	<i>One act of righteousness</i> → justification offered to <i>all men</i>
v. 19 Disobedience of <i>one</i> → <i>many</i> constituted sinners	Obedience of <i>One</i> → <i>many</i> constituted righteousness
v. 21 Sin reigned in death	Grace reigns to bring eternal life
→ = led to or results in	

The comparison of the contrast between Adam and Christ has only one similitude: they each were one person and each committed one act that affected the whole race. By Adam's one act of disobedience he brought sin to all men, so by Christ's one act of self-sacrifice he made salvation freely available to all mankind.

First: Contrast in ultimate consequence

^{5:15} But the **gracious gift** is **not like** the transgression. For if the **many** died through the transgression of the one man, how much more did the **grace of God and the gift** by the grace of the one man Jesus Christ **multiply to the many!**

5:15 Contrasts the "**free gift**" (*charisma*, "a gift freely and graciously given, grace gift") of Christ and the "**transgression**" (*paraptoma*, "false step, trespass, deviation") of Adam. The former implies a gift that is given without any human merit or worthiness, whereas the latter, the transgression, implies specific negative merit or action.

- This is not a comparison of equal affects but rather “**how much more**” implies great disproportion. Christ’s act of redemption had immeasurably greater effect on men than Adam’s act of condemnation. It was not just the restoration of sinful man back to the **original innocence** of Adam through forgiveness and cleansing, but also in addition the incredible provision to share in the **perfect righteousness** and glory of God. The grace of God is much greater than the one original sin of Adam, because it is greater than all the total **sins that men have ever or will ever commit**.
- “**Many**” (*pollous*, a positive degree of comparison, “many, numerous, great”) has two apparent meanings in the passage: in the first it is universal throughout humanity (“many” as a lot of people) ; in the second, it is “**to**” (*eis*, “to”; denotes purpose and sometimes results; “extension toward a special goal,” LOUW-NIDA) “the *many*.” Though the two words are the same, the second is universally possible as “a special goal” or provision, but contingent upon the individual believer’s response in faith. Paul is not talking about a limited or restricted number in either case. They both mean “a lot of people.” The word “**multiply**” (*perisseuo*, “be more than enough, be extremely rich or overflowing; be over and above a certain measure”) suggests that this grace is ample for every human being. The first group is entered by the physical birth and the second group is universally offered and entered by personal faith. How universal are the following descriptions of Christ’s gracious offer?
2 Cor 5:19
2 Cor 5:21
Heb 2:9

Second: Contrast in Extent

^{5:16} And the gift is **not like** the one who sinned. For **judgment**, resulting from the one transgression, led to **condemnation**, but the gracious gift from the **many failures** led to **justification**.

5:16 This second comparison it is not the sin of Adam, but the “one who sinned,” putting the emphasis on the sinner. It was one man, at one time, by one sin, who brought “**condemnation**” (*katakrima*, “a legal technical term for the result of judging, including both the sentence and its execution, sentence of doom”) of death to all. This is a clear statement of **how much God hates sin**, even one sin. It is not that this is the worst sin ever committed, because any sin would have had the same result. It was the only command that Adam and Eve had to demonstrate their love for and trust in their Creator God, but they chose to distrust and disobey. This was just the only sin they could commit, since they only had one command.

- However, the gift refers to one man, at one time satisfying the justice against “**many failures**” (*paraptoma*, “deviation from living according to what has been revealed as the right way to live, false step”). The gift of God’s grace is not like the judgment from one sin rather is the only solution to the many transgressions resulting in “**justification**” (*dikioma*, “that which has been deemed right so as to have the force of law; a favorable judgment by which [God] acquits men and declares them acceptable to Him”).
- As in 5:15 the “**many**” is not used to imply a limited number, but rather a huge number of failures for which the grace of God is more than sufficient.
- Just as it was God’s decision to condemn all sinners, exactly as He had warned He would, so now it is His decision to grant His perfect righteousness to all believers. As sure as the first decision was totally fulfilled, exactly as He said: all men have died, so His second decision to justify the sinner freely can be as counted on to be true.

MacArthur writes, “Despite the fact that God hates sin so much that any one sin could damn the human race, His loving grace toward man is so great that He provides not only for the redemption of one man from sin but for the redemption of all men from all sins.” How does 2 Cor 5:19 reconfirm this truth?

Third: Contrast in results from one man

^{5:17} For if, by the **transgression** of the one man, **death reigned through the one**, how much more will those who **receive** the **abundance of grace** and of the **gift of righteousness** reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ!

5:17 Paul begins with the already established truth: from one sin from one man, Adam, brought death to all men (vs. 12—14). “If” (*ei*, a conditional particle, “if, since” – when used with the indicative tense it expresses “a condition of fact regarded as true or settled,” FRIBERG) should be translated, “since” Adam’s sin brought death to all men. Adam and Eve distrusted God’s character and His word to them, believed the lies of Satan that they would become like God, only to discover that their sin made them more like Satan and condemned by God, who still loved them, but now could not accept them in their sin. The only hope for man was that the Creator God could maintain His character of justice by justly punishing Someone else for man’s sins, then offer His single act of justice-done to all men who could never deserve it.

- The transmission of this result is not by heredity, birth (as the sin nature is transmitted) or merit (since they are all guilty this is impossible), but they must “**receive**” His gift (*lambano*, present tense, “to take, lay hold of, take to one’s self”). This incredible offer of Christ’s amazing grace is not automatic but must be personally understood, trusted in, and received individually. If the blessing of God can only be **received**, then what do these verses teach that must be received by faith?

Gal 3:14; 4:5

Heb 9:15

Acts 10:43

Acts 26:18

John 1:12

- The offer of God to sinful man is to be transferred from the reign of death to the reign of life by the receipt of two offers: (1) abundance of grace and (2) the gift of righteousness. The fact that these must be “received” by consciously trusting in His offer means that they cannot be merited. Since all men are sinful they only merit condemnation (it only took one sin of Adam to be guilty of sin). Man’s only hope is that God would have an “abundance of **grace**” (“undeserved favor of acceptance despite unworthiness”) and the “gift of **righteousness**.” Since we cannot be righteous in our own effort, acceptable righteousness must be received as a “**gift**” (*dorea*, “free gift, benefit; in the NT used only of spiritual and supernatural gifts that are freely given by God to believers, including eternal life (Jn 4:10), the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38), righteousness, i.e. state of being put right with God (Rom 5:17) and enabling grace for appointed ministry (Eph 3:7),” FRIBERG). What is the nature of this “righteousness” in 2 Cor 5:21?
- Once the sinner receives these gifts he will “**reign** in life” (*basileuo*, present tense: “continuously, perpetually...” exercise kingly power”) as surely as before man reigned in death. Now the believer is a “new creature” (2 Cor 5:17) indwelt with the power over sin and the new nature of perfect righteousness. Compare these passages and describe the practical application of this truth:
Rom 6:17-18

Eph 4:22
Phil 1:6

Fourth: Contrast in one single action

¹⁸ Consequently, **just as** condemnation for all people came **through one transgression**, so too through the one **righteous act** came righteousness **leading to life** for all people.

¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man many were **made sinners**, so also through the obedience of one man **many will be made righteous**.

5:18 The one act of Adam's disobedience is contrasted with the one global act of Christ's obedience as to their impact on mankind. When Adam chose to disobey, one "**transgression**" (*paraptoma*, "to fall beside or deviation from truth and uprightness") resulted in the universal "**condemnation**" (*katakrima*, "sentence of damnation"). It did not take a multitude of sins to condemn a sinner: just one is sufficient to be separated from God forever; likewise, it was one righteous act of Christ (not a perpetual sacrifice as the Roman Catholics teach) on the cross, the Just or Perfect One, accepting the wrath of God against all the sins of the world as just payment for sins of the world. Christ's single act made available "righteousness" to "all people." Since the effect of Christ's single act of self-sacrifice must be personally received as a gift, this righteousness is dependent upon an act of faith on the part of any sinner to trust exclusively in His righteousness for acceptance before God.

- In vs. 18 "all" people refers to the universal impact on all men, which is parallel to the "many" in v. 19. In each verse the second group is universally offered, but must be individually "received" (5:17). The phrase "**leading to life**" (*eis*, "denotes a specific goal, the direction of an action to an intended end," FRIBERG). This is not a universalism whereby all men are automatically saved, but a universal offering that must be personally "received" or trusted to be granted. How is this individual acceptance clear in these passages?

Rom 1:16-17

Rom 3:22, 28

Rom 4:5, 13

5:19 A reiteration of the effect of a single act with an addition of a verb, "many were made sinners" (*kathistemi*, aorist tense: "one time in the past..." – "constitute, declare, render, cause to be"). Adam's disobedience caused him and his descendents to be rendered or made sinners permanently. In the same way, but in the opposite transformation, Christ's obedience caused those who believe to be "made" righteous permanently in their nature and inner being. How do these verses imply or state the act of obedience of Christ?

John 4:34

John 6:38

Matt 26:39, 42

- Anyone who follows Adam's act will become like Adam. Anyone who follows Christ's act of obedience will become like Christ. Not only is the believer declared to be righteous (justification), but he is "**made** righteous" ("caused to be"), that is, he has an inward righteousness and an affinity to be righteous. The seed of the Spirit is planted within him and will bring forth fruit, even in a sinful flesh. How would you explain the concept of the "fruit of the Spirit?" (Gal 5:22-23).

Fifth: Contrast in the increase of sin and grace

²⁰ Now the law came in **so that** the transgression **may increase**, but where sin increased, **grace multiplied all the more**,

²¹ so that just as sin reigned in death, so also **grace will reign** through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

5:20 How far does the comparison of these two acts extend? Adam's sin created a sin nature that progressively "increased" in sinfulness, but men became so accustomed to sin that it did not seem so bad to them. God would eventually reveal the "Law" (especially the Pentateuch – first five books—and specifically the Ten Commandments) for the purpose of making sin to be increasingly evident. As the conscience becomes seared and hardened it loses its sensitivity to sin. The measure of our loss of sensitivity to sin can be sensed by how humans (were they God) would have responded to Adam's single disobedience. This seems like a minor infraction to humans, but to God, it was catastrophic, demanding an eternal separation from Him joining Satan and his fallen angels in a place he prepared for them called hell. The true perspective of the holiness of God is practically beyond our comprehension. He is so holy that the only way God could ever accept a sinner would be if He Himself made Himself guilty of all repugnant sins, then accepted the just wrath of a holy God against all the sins of mankind, concluding with the Father's acceptance of His sacrifice. This, too, is far beyond any human comprehension. We know the facts, but the feelings endured by Christ, actual extent of the wrath and suffering of the Father and Son, and full motivations can only be imagined. What love is this? When the term "law" is used, it might be helpful to think of the Ten Commandments although "law" has a much broader meaning. What is the purpose of the Law in Gal 3:24? What does the Law teach us?

- It must be clarified that the Law was never a means of attaining or meriting salvation. Since no one, except Jesus, has ever been able to fully obey the Law, it would be impossible to ever be worthy of salvation by attempting to obey them. The "law **came**" (*pareiserchomai*, "aorist tense: "at one time in the past..." – "came in secretly or by stealth, creep in") "so that the transgression may increase." God is not trying to make men righteous by striving to be obedient to the law, but rather to reveal to their conscious and mind that they are condemned by their own sins (whatever their level of sin might be). How much disobedience of the law is necessary to be condemned according to James 2:10? What is the similarity with Adam's sin?
- Six hundred years before the giving of the Law God had set the precedence of His acceptance of a sinner when he trusted in Him without attempting to be good enough. Abraham believed God and was declared just by God, and years later was circumcised centuries before the giving of the Law (Rom 4:1-13). Centuries later disobedience to the law of Moses never damned a soul to hell, and obedience to the law never brought salvation to a sinner. The law was given to make sin self-evident. Men are so wicked, whenever they hear that anything is prohibited, they are highly motivated to experience it. How ironic, God gives the Law to man so he will recognize how guilty he is, only to find himself motivated to sin all the more, or to think in his pride that he is obeying "good enough" (that is, his "good" is more than his "bad"). His depraved nature rebels against all authority and generates a resentment against any restriction or imposition.

- However much man has sinned or will sin, the grace of God and the efficacy of the sacrifice on the cross “**multiplied**” much more (*hyperperisseuo*, aorist tense: “at one time in the past” – “abound beyond measure, overflow;” the *hyper-* prefix gives the extreme capability). God’s grace and sin-payment is more than sufficient for both Adam’s original sin, as well as all the sins of mankind, past, present and future.

5:21 The final verse is introduced with “so that” (*hina*, a conjunction introducing purpose, aim or goal, “in order that...”). This verse makes reference to the double contrast between sin and righteousness and death and life. As soon as sin entered the universe it has reigned bringing both physical and spiritual death, but sin has been dethroned through the sacrifice of Christ who now rules in its place. Death reigns in everyone born from Adam, but now when Christ comes into a life “grace will reign” instead. Notice the reign of grace is “through righteousness to eternal life.” The access to this new reign is through righteousness, not ours because we are all guilty of sin, but the righteousness of Christ, which is freely given to us who believe and receive (5:17). This is not a universalism because the access to His grace is through receiving His righteousness by faith. What is the means whereby we have access to this grace (and thus His righteousness) in Eph. 2:8-9?

It is a worthwhile question to say, “Why did God allow sin to enter into the world?” Perhaps the following questions will help you see some answers?

- Would God have received more glory had man not been allowed to sin?
- Would man have come to understand his own nature and the nature of God had Adam not sinned?
- Would man have received the great blessings from God had Adam never sinned?
- Are we better off with our life in Christ or would it have been the same if Adam had never sinned? What are the things that Adam could never have become, but we have?