

Dr. Robert Peterson, Humanity and Sin, Session 15, Original Sin, Romans 5:12-19, Continued

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This is Dr. Robert A. Peterson in his teaching on the doctrines of humanity and sin. This is session 15, Original Sin, Romans 5:12-19, Continued.

Welcome back to our study of the doctrine of sin.

We are working with the larger context in Romans of the Textus Classicus, Romans 5:19, 12 to 19. And let's seek the Lord before we do. Father, thank you for your word, for your spirit, for Christian fellowship.

Bless us, encourage us, teach us, and we pray through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

We have said that Romans 1:16 and 17, therein Paul announces the theme of the book of Romans, which is the gospel, the revelation of the saving righteousness of God.

However, immediately, he launches into a discussion of the revelation of the wrath of God from 1:18 to 3:20. In 3:21, Paul returns to his announced theme in that purpose statement, the revelation of the saving righteousness of God. Paul says, now the righteousness of God has been manifested, apart from the law.

This saving righteousness is totally apart from human merit, is what that means. Yet, it is in fulfillment of the promises of the Old Testament. Apart from law, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it, Paul catches himself lest he be misunderstood for speaking against the Bible.

The first use of law speaks of human merit, but now the righteousness of God, the saving righteousness of God, has been manifest, apart from the law and any meritorious notion, although the law and the prophets bear witness to it. This righteousness is appropriated by all who put their faith in Christ. The righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

It is important to emphasize the place of faith. Already in the purpose statement, I'm not ashamed of the gospel, and it's the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, Jew, Gentile. For in it, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith.

As it is written, the righteous shall live by faith. So at least three times, it's debated what the language from faith to faith means, perhaps from faith by faith, from first to last, something like that. But no sooner does he get back to that theme in 3:21, then he says, this righteousness, this saving righteousness, that's apart from law-keeping, but witnessed to in the Old Testament, is through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe.

And Romans 4 is the great faith chapter in Romans. So, in no way is Paul minimizing the need for faith. For there's no distinction.

Salvation is through faith in Christ for all who believe, for there's no distinction. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Perhaps the distinction in the tenses here speaks of Adam's sin and then the actual sin of human beings. For all have sinned, past tense, and fall short, it could be a progressive, it's a present, could be a progressive idea of the glory of God. And are justified by his grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

There's no difference between human beings in this regard. All sinned and continually fall short of earning the praise that comes from God. Doug Moo, in his Romans commentary, agrees with that exegesis of those two tenses.

Verse 24 picks up the thought of verse 22. All who believe and are justified freely by his grace. Paul then presents the basis or grounds of justification in Romans 3, 24 to 26.

It is the atonement of Christ. Paul presents Jesus' atoning death as a redemption in verse 24 but chiefly as a propitiation in verses 25 and 26. He simply mentions redemption, but he explicates propitiation.

God demonstrates his justice in the death of his beloved son. Those who believe are justified by God's grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

There's divine forbearance. He had passed over former sins. It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The basis of justification is the work of Christ conceived as a redemption, verse 24, but chiefly here as a propitiation. We'll see in the actual original sin passage that it is Christ's saving work portrayed as righteousness, procuring righteousness, especially in his sacrifice. God demonstrated his justice in the death of his beloved son.

In Old Testament times, God forgave believers in the prospect of Christ's atonement. It says in Romans 3:25 that in God's divine forbearance, he had passed over former sins. In Old Testament times, God forgave believers in the prospect of Christ's atonement.

The animal sacrifices were a picture of the gospel, but in themselves, they did not put away sin. They did put away sin because, as Hebrews teach us, in Hebrews 9 and 15, Christ's sacrifice was availed for sins under the old covenant. It's astonishing.

God forgave sinners and believers in the prospect of Christ's atonement. He had not yet put away sin by the sacrifice of Christ. Now, in the fullness of time, God set forth Christ as a propitiation in his sacrificial death, his blood.

God poured out his wrath on his son, who took the condemnation that sinners deserved. For a more detailed presentation of propitiation in the New Testament, see Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*. Also, D. A. Carson has a chapter on a festschrift, a celebratory volume for a theologian at Gordon Conwell all those years.

Roger Nicole, for Roger Nicole, the glory of the atonement, the glory of the cross, something like that. Carsten has an exegesis of Romans 3:24, 26. It's beautiful.

In this way, God maintained his own moral integrity so as to be just and yet was able to justify sinners. Here is the miracle of the gospel. The problem is not what unsaved people imagine.

How could a loving God punish anybody? That's an easy one to answer biblically. The third chapter of the Bible and the first three chapters of Romans show us God could easily condemn the world. The biblical problem is how God can maintain his holy character and still save anyone.

That's the problem. How can God judge sinners? No problem. They deserve it, and he's holy and just.

The problem is how can he be holy and just and save anybody. The answer to the problem is provided by God himself, of course. It is because of Christ's atoning death. Jesus died as a propitiation to satisfy the righteous demands of God's nature.

So as to be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus, we do not minimize faith in this presentation. We establish faith.

Faith is only as good as its object. The proper object is the death of Christ, which was conceived as a propitiation. Romans 3:25, 26 as saving righteousness.

Romans 5:18 and 19. The rest of chapter 3 excludes boasting about human achievement with regard to salvation. People are justified by faith and not by human effort.

Verses 27 and 28. Paul then uses an argument based on God's unity to show that Jews and Gentiles are saved the same way. Or is God the God of the Jews only? Verse 29 of chapter 3. Is he not the God of the Gentiles, too? Yes, of Gentiles, too.

God is one who will justify the circumcised by faith and will justify the uncircumcised through faith. Do we then overthrow the law by faith? By no means. On the contrary, we uphold the law.

In verse 31, the apostle guards against a possible misunderstanding when he claims to uphold rather than nullify the law. Chapter 4 carefully sets forth the means of justification. Faith in Christ alone.

Romans 5:1, chapter 5 presents the benefits of this free justification. Objective peace with God. Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 1. There's an inclusion here in verse 11. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation, which means peacemaking. The blessings of justification are peace with God.

Verses 1 and 11. The hope of future glory. Verses 2 through 5. Through Christ, we've now obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

Not only that, but we rejoice in our knowing that suffering produces endurance. Endurance produces character, and character produces hope. We have to read between the lines to understand Paul's thought.

As Christians hang in there and suffer, trusting the Lord, he builds, and he makes them into steady people. And as they see God at work in their lives now and what they can see, it increases hope for his future promise of glory in what they can not see now. And furthermore, verse 5 of chapter 5 of Romans.

This hope does not disappoint us because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. The benefits of justification and peace with God. Romans 5:1 and 11.

The hope of future glory. 2 through 5. And eternal security. Verses 6 through 10.

While we were still weak at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person, one would dare even to die. It is not totally unheard of among humankind for somebody to die for his friends, but it is totally unheard of for somebody to die for his enemies.

But God demonstrates his love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Then, he uses a Jewish argument twice.

If God did the harder thing, he'll do the easier thing. He does it in terms of justification with some abbreviations. He does it in terms of reconciliation, laying it out completely.

Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, God declared sinners righteous. Much more, that is the key of this Jewish argument from the harder to the easier, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. Good grief! When we were condemned, God justified us.

Now that we're justified, we're going to be saved. The exact same argument using the picture of salvation is called reconciliation. For if while we were enemies, the harder thing is we were reconciled to God by the death of his son.

Wow! God made enemies his friends through Christ's atonement. Much more, now that we're reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. If God made peace between himself and his enemies and between them and him, now that we're no longer his enemies, he will keep us saved.

More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we have now received reconciliation as we previously explained. How, then, we finally come to our passage: how does Romans 5:12 to 21, the great original sin text, fit into this pattern? I propose that Paul here, at the end of his discussion of justification, presents Christ's saving work as he did at the beginning of his presentation of the basis of justification. In 3, 24, 25, Paul explained that Jesus died as a propitiation.

Here, he died to secure righteousness for believers. One act of righteousness, verse 18 of chapter 5 mentions. In 3:24, 26, Paul gave the negative side of the atonement, the turning away of wrath, negative subtraction, taking away.

Then, in 5:12 to 21, he gives the positive side, Christ's procurement of righteousness, turning away, averting of wrath, granting of righteousness. If this analysis is correct in context, Romans 5:12 to 21 is not about original sin. It is about the saving righteousness of Christ as the basis of justification.

And yet, these verses do teach that Adam's sin had a great effect on the human race. And it is, therefore, under the topic of justification, a remarkable exposition of original sin. With this summary of the argument of Romans 1:19 to 5:21 in mind, we are now ready to proceed to an exegesis of Romans 5, 12 through 19.

This is the passage in the Bible on the topic of original sin. The event was recorded in Genesis 3. The results are throughout the Old Testament and the New, but here is the Bible's only explicit treatment of the theology of original sin. The results are implied in Ephesians 2:1 to 4, and so forth, in other places.

Ephesians 5:12. Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, plainly Adam, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned, the voice is up because Paul begins a contrast and doesn't complete it. He doesn't complete it until 5, 18 and 19.

As sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned, I'll complete it for him. So also, righteousness and life have been manifested through one man, Jesus Christ. He doesn't say it now, but something like that is where he meant to go.

His thought broke off. Every commentator says it correctly. This verse seems to break into two parts, following a chiastic structure.

One, the presence of sin, A, and B, death in the human race, and two, the universality of death, B prime, and sin, A prime, among humankind. Just as sin, A, came into the world through one man, and death, B, through sin, and so death, B prime, spread to all men because all sinned, A prime. The verse contains the if-clause, protasis, of a comparative clause without a then-clause.

If-clause, protasis, then-clause, apodosis. It has a protasis without an apodosis, as can easily be seen by comparing it to verses 15, 18, 19, and 21, which we will do in plenty of detail. Those passages use *hos* or *hoser* in the process and *huts kai*; they use *as* or *just as* in the if-clause, and so *then* or *so* therefore in the then-clause.

The phrase, therefore, is nothing similar; nothing is like giving out wrong Greek information. Not a good idea. Be careful.

Yes, it begins with *dia tuta*, therefore, the phrase *dia tuta* is either causal, laying a foundation for the corresponding, for the next words, by referring back to the preceding, or illative, introducing an inference from the preceding. I'm really relying on a tremendous essay, S. Lewis Johnson, Romans 5:12, An Exercise in Exegesis and Theology, in a book called *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, edited by Richard Longenecker and Merrill Tenney. It is difficult to know whether this phrase, therefore, refers back to the whole argument beginning in 1:18, or merely to 5:1-11.

I'll say to 5:1-11, which in turn refers back. The comparative clause begins just as sin entered the world through one man; the reference is to Adam and the primal sin. I agree with the dictionary, 446, Johnson, 302, and Cranfield, International Critical Commentary, that the world here signifies the world as humankind.

Similar uses of the world are found in Romans 3:6, and 19, and in 5:13. Through the sin of Adam, sin, personified as an intruder, gained entrance into the world of human beings. The next clause is elliptical, and death entered the world, implied through sin.

Adam was responsible for sins entering the world. Death gained entrance as a second intruder through Adam's sin. Anders Nygren writes, quote, sin and death are in the world as tyrants, a powerful way to say it, who do not ask a man whether he will serve them, but rule automatically.

And so, death came to all men. And so, not to be confused with, down below a few times, it shows either consequence or manner as a result of the two intruders gaining entrance into humankind through the sin of the first man. Death came as an unfriendly visitor to all men.

All human beings died due to the effects of Adam's sin. Verse 12 concludes because all sinned. Cranfield and Johnson, that's the article I referred to, S. Lewis Johnson, 303 and 305, argue convincingly that the preposition should be translated because.

The meaning of the verse could be summarized thus. By the way, there's a huge divide between the Eastern and Western churches over the meaning of that clause. In summary, as a result of Adam's sin, death came to all humans.

This was because all sinned when or after Adam sinned. The exegetical and theological issue is thus. How do we account for the one man sinning and all men sinning? Verse 12 does not answer the question.

The answer lies in an exegesis of the verses which follow. The last clause, because all sinned, is difficult because, one, the context seems to demand a corporate understanding of all sinned. Otherwise, the and so all sinned doesn't make sense.

The intruders sinned in death, entered the world through Adam's sin, and so, as a consequence, all men died. Because all sinned individually? Rather, all died because they all sinned in Adam. On the other hand, some claim that the meaning everywhere else in Paul is that all men sin personally.

Cranfield and Hendrickson say that's the case. Is this the one exception? 5:13 and 14 are very difficult, and I have put many students to sleep while working through the

options. But if I'm committed to exegetical theology, I'll work through the options we must.

Here, 4, gar, introduces an explanatory clause. Somehow, Wells said, verses 13 and 14 explain verse 12. I should read the law because if all sins are sinned, then the clause is omitted.

That's why the translations put a big dash there. For sin, indeed, was in the world before the law was given. But sin is not counted where there is no law.

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. Whew. The law here plainly refers to the law of Moses.

That is correct. Sin, indeed, was in the world before the law was given. At the end of the story, he talks about Adam to Moses, which is a good one.

In comparison with verse 14, which speaks of death reigning from Adam to Moses, from the time of Adam until the giving of the Mosaic law from Adam to Moses, sin was in the world. The intruder, in fact, both of them, sin and death, verse 14, had not left. Human beings sinned and died from Adam until Moses.

The next clause adds that sin is not charged to someone's account when or if there is no law. Here's a statement of the regular state of affairs, a nomic present. Sin is not charged.

That's the way it is. That's a regular statement of fact where there is no law.

Compare Romans 4:15. Where there's no law, there's no transgression. Romans 5:13b, what I just read. Sin is not counted where there is no law, which is very problematic.

There are at least five views as to its meaning. Yikes. The social diatribe view.

The absolute sense view. There was a law then view. The relative or comparative sense view.

Distinguished between sin and transgression view. Social diatribe view. Matthew Black, New Century Bible, thinks that Paul is, quote, arguing with himself or with an imaginary opponent in the style of the social diatribe.

Death came to all men, wherefore all sin. Yet I tell you, until the giving of the law of Moses, there was sin in the world. However, you might argue that where there was no law, there could not have been any sin.

But sin cannot be imputed and therefore punished. You go on to object where there is no law. Be that as it may, death did hold sway from Adam to Moses, as it did from Moses onward, even over those whose sin was not exactly like the transgression of Adam.

B, absolute sense view. Herman Ridderbos writes, quote, from the argumentation of verses 13 and 14, Paul appeals here to the period before the giving of the law, because the death of men then living cannot be explained from their own personal sin, but must have had its cause in the sin of Adam. There was sin then too, for until the law came, there was no sin in the world.

The sanction of the law, death, did not as yet apply, however. For where there's no law, there is also no transgression, compare 4:15. And sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless, at that time also, death reigned over those who did not transgress in the same manner as Adam, that is, who were not confronted in the same manner as Adam with the divine command and the sanction on it.

It is thus apparent that it was not their personal sin, but Adam's sin and their share in it, that was the cause of their death. There was a law then view. John Murray writes, I mean, these are good people.

Quote, it is not consonant with Paul's teaching, nor with the scripture in general, to suppose that what Paul means here is that although there may be sin, it was not imputed as sin, where there is not a law. This would contradict 4:15. There's no law, there's no transgression. Apart from the provisions of justifying grace, which are not in view in this verse, when sin is not imputed is because sin does not exist.

This implies there must also have been law. The thought is that even though the law had not been promulgated as it was by Moses at Sinai, there was law. This is shown by the fact that there was sin.

If there had been no law, there would have been no sin. In terms of 4:15, sin exists only as a transgression of the law. And where sin exists, it must be imputed for what it is.

William Henderson agrees, "sin was indeed in the world even before Sinai's law was given, as is shown by the fact that death, sin's punishment, ruled supreme during the period from Adam to Moses." So, it's clear that even during the period from Adam to Moses, sin was indeed taken into account. Though Sinai's law with its expressed commands did not as yet exist, there was law.

Here, the apostle was undoubtedly thinking about what he had written about earlier in his epistle, the law of God on the heart. He just gives the verses 2:14 and 15, and

this law with death as punishment for wanton transgressors was indeed applied. See Romans 1:18 to 32.

That there was a law follows from the fact that there was sin. If there had been no law, there would have been no sin—relative or comparative sense view.

Calvin holds that we cannot take verse 13b absolutely since God did impute sin to sinners between Adam and Moses. The punishment of Cain, the deluge which destroyed the known world, the downfall of Sodom, and finally, the plagues brought upon the Egyptians testify that God has laid men's iniquities to their charge. This is all a quote of Calvin.

For the most part, however, they connived at their own evil deeds so as to impute no sin to themselves unless forced to do so. When, therefore, Paul asserts that sin is not imputed without the law, he's speaking comparatively because when men are not goaded to action by law, they sink into indolence. Close quote.

Later, Calvin speaks of the quote, the proceeding words in which it was stated that those who had no law did not impute sin to one another. Close quote. Cranfield writes that by not imputed, Paul does not mean it is not reckoned in the sense of being charged to men's account.

Reckoned against them, imputed. For the fact that men died during that period of the law's absence, verse 14 shows clearly enough that, in this sense, their sin was indeed registered. Not imputed, not reckoned, must be understood in a relative sense, only in comparison with what takes place when the law is present.

Can it be said that in the law's absence, sin is not reckoned or imputed? He keeps using Greek. Those who lived without the law were certainly not innocent sinners, as somebody has called them. They were to blame for what they were and what they did.

But in comparison with the state of affairs that has been obtained since the advent of the law, sin may be said to have been in the law's absence and not registered since it was not the fully apparent, sharply defined thing that it became in its presence. It is only in the presence of the law, only in Israel and in the church, that the full seriousness of sin is visible and the responsibility of the sinner stripped of every extenuating circumstance.

View five. Distinguish between sin and transgression view. C.H. Dodd and Moffat distinguish between sin and transgression in this passage.

Quote, he here draws a careful distinction between sin in its broad sense and trespass or transgression, which is a voluntary, responsible, guilty infraction of a

known command. Sin, indeed, is never counted in the absence of law, that is, does not carry guilt, where there's no intention to act contrary to that which is known to be right. In the generations that followed, men sinned but in many cases, did not transgress as Adam did.

But though their sin was never counted in the absence of law, the baleful effects of sin in the objective order of things fell upon them. This is a sticky wicket indeed, as cricket players would say. I'm going to go on to the next verse and try to pull things together and give my own opinion.

We can say we can know for sure how the disputed words function, even if it's hard to say dogmatically what they mean. But death reigned from Adam until Moses, verse 14. Here, we learn that the effects of sin were felt before the law was given.

People died. As a matter of fact, the intruder death ruled as king during the time between Adam and Moses. Death reigned, quote, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression, close quote.

The dictionary explains the lexicon, BAGD 2, page 561, explains the clause to mean, quote, in the likeness of Adam's transgression means just as Adam did, who transgressed one of God's express commands. That's what Adam did in the garden, you see, and that's what is possible to be done after the giving of the Mosaic law. The prohibition not to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil was only given to Adam and Eve, and the law was not given until Moses' time.

Still, death reigned over the people who lived between Adam and Moses, who had these express prohibitions. Adam had an express prohibition. You can eat of every tree in the garden but not of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Surely, that thou shalt not, and that thou shalt are express commands and prohibitions. In between time, Adam and Moses, Adam and the giving of the commandments, the sinning is different. We don't know of express prohibitions.

Nevertheless, people died. We're getting at the sense, which is not easy. Still, death reigned over the people who lived between Adam and Moses.

One's understanding of this verse depends greatly upon his understanding of the difficult 13b with the five senses. Romans 5:14b, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, has been variously interpreted. Calvin wrote, quote, this passage is generally understood of little children, who without being guilty of any actual transgression, die through original sin.

I prefer, however, he wrote, to interpret it generally as referring to all those who sinned without the law, close quote. John Murray agrees, but it is not so certain,

however, that only infants are in view. Those who are outside the pale of special revelation could be regarded as belonging to this category.

They did not transgress and expressly revealed commandment as Adam did. Although adults in this category sinned against the law of nature, compared to 14:15 law of God on the heart, the apostle could adduce the reign of death over all such as pointing to the sin of Adam and as requiring the premise on which his interest is now focused, namely, the sin of all in the sin of Adam. In other words, still quoting, when all the facts of the pre-mosaic period are taken into account, the only explanation of the universal reign is solidarity in the sin of Adam.

I agree. I agree. One could account for the death of Adam and Moses.

People sinned, and they died. The wages of sin is death, Romans tell us, right? 6:23. But what Paul is implying is that although you could account for death, you couldn't account for the reign of death.

The reign of death is explained by Adam's apparent sin in the garden. S. Lewis Johnson writes that realism is the view that we are actually in the loins of Adam; we are really actually physically there in his body. He's not just our representative, but he's our natural head.

Now, I'm working with stuff that we're going to induce later. He is our natural head, there's no question. We come from Adam and Eve.

But is his natural headship the way original sin works? Realism says yes, a realistic imputation. It says yes. S. Lewis Johnson, who disagrees and rather holds to the representative Calvinist view, not the realistic headship view, says, S. Lewis Johnson says, realism cannot handle Romans 14 and its last clause.

The and with which it begins indicates the second clause refers to a special class, even over those who did not sin. Distinguished from the general class referred to in the first clause. The second clause is composed of infants or, pardon my language, idiots; it seems close counters.

If infants are in mind, why does the apostle select this period? First, respect infants; the same holds true in every period, and no one period is a better example than another. That's right. That's good.

The last clause of verse 14 reads that Adam is the type of one who is to come. I'm getting ahead of myself. And I need to explain my understanding of those difficult verses.

As a matter of fact, I will do that and hasten on to further matters in this difficult situation when we take up our next session.

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