

## Romans 5:12-21 – “In Adam or In Christ?”

(Pew Bible Page: 942)

**Intro:** Perhaps the most misunderstood verse in all of Scripture is **Genesis 1:1 - 1** *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.* Perhaps you are wondering why I say that this is the most misunderstood verse in all of Scripture? I believe that it is largely misunderstood by many Bible believing Christians who fail to understand that what we are being introduced to is a GOD story, rather than a MAN story. Many of us read our Bibles from the opposite perspective God intends. We are always finding our own story in its pages rather than God’s story, and because of this all kinds of mischief ensues. Tonight, we’re going to investigate one of those areas of misunderstanding – the matter of Assurance of Salvation. As we’ll learn together, a lack of assurance often comes from a failure to understand how we became Christians to begin with. Our big idea tonight is...

**Proposition:** All who are in Christ are secure; Rejoice that God Himself has placed you in Christ.

Billboard:       (vv.12-14) All in Adam are Subject to Death  
                      (vv.15-17) The Free Gift and the Trespass are Miles Apart  
                      (vv.18-21) All in Christ are Recipients of Eternal Life

(vv.12-14) All in Adam are Subject to Death – Adam and Christ are Representative Men. **Romans 5:12–14 - 12** *Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—* **13** *for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law.* **14** *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.* The issue being dealt with here is that both Adam and Christ are Representative Men – they each act in common for all who are “in” them. In the same way that all citizens of a country act in common with their king or president; all family members act in common with the head of the family; anyone who grants power of attorney acts in common with his representative, so all who are in Adam are chargeable with Adam’s sin. This is proven by the fact that all men suffered death from Adam to Moses, even though only one man, Adam, sinned against the Law of God (“Don’t eat from the tree of good and evil”). There are two Representative Men: Adam and Christ. Adam was a type of Christ in being a Representative Man and all men who are “in Adam” are charged with his sin, and therefore subject to death.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] All men in Adam are subject to death because all sinned in Adam.

(vv.15-17) The Free Gift and the Trespass are Miles Apart – The second point of the passage deals with the results coming from these two Representative Men: as all men in Adam have inherited death because of The Trespass from Adam, so all men in Christ have inherited life because of The Free Gift from Christ. The point here is that there is a vast difference between The Trespass and The Gift. **Romans 5:15–16 - 15** *But the Free Gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.* **16** *And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification.* **17** *For if, because of one man’s trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more*

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*will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.* The point is that these two Representative Men pass on to all who are “in” them two distinct results that are miles apart from each other.

- (v.15) Adam’s Trespass transmits the *weakness* of Spiritual Death to all in Adam; God’s Free Gift transmits the *spiritual power* of Abounding Grace to all in Christ.
- (v.16) Judgment and Condemnation come to all in Adam because of Adam’s ONE Trespass; The Free Gift brings Justification following MANY Trespasses for all in Christ.
- (v.17) One man’s Trespass caused *death* to reign; One man’s Free Gift causes *life* to reign for all who receive the Gift.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] The Trespass and the Free Gift are miles apart in their consequences.

(vv.18-21) All in Christ are Recipients of Eternal Life – Here is the best new ever! One act of righteousness (obedience to God) by Christ, leads to all who are in Christ being put right with God forever (Justification). **Romans 5:18–21 - 18** *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. 19* *For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous. 20* *Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, 21* *so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* It is important to understand what is meant by “all men” in these verses. Does “all men” mean, “everyone without exception”? It cannot possibly mean that because otherwise the salvation Christ won on Calvary would result in universalism – everyone from all ages being saved in the end. Reading these verses in the full context of Scripture makes it clear that this is not what’s being spoken of. “All men” then means, “all men in Adam,” and “all men in Christ.” The result then, is that “all men in Adam” were made sinners, but “all men in Christ” have been declared righteous apart from any work on their part. What about keeping the Law? The Law was given to show that sin was abounding, but also now to prove that righteousness through Christ is abounding much more, leading to Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[DOCTRINAL POINT] All who are in Christ are recipients of eternal life.

So, the whole matter of salvation is removed from the question of our performance and comes down to one issue: “Are you in Adam or are you in Christ”? Since all men begin “in Adam,” our concern becomes:

(1 Cor. 1:26-30) How do we leave Adam and enter Christ? – Let’s look at 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 to find that the entire matter of leaving Adam and entering Christ is God’s doing. **1 Corinthians 1:26–31 - 26** *For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27* *But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28* *God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29* *so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30* *And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us*

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*wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

- (v.26) Were we wise enough? No. Were we powerful enough? No. Were we noble enough? No. These are the ways that men imagine that they can leave Adam and enter Christ. But we are completely unable to go from Adam to Christ under our own resources. The case, humanly speaking, is hopeless.
- (vv.27-29) “*God chose...*” Notice the phrase three times in these verses. God chose the foolish to shame the wise. God chose the weak to shame the strong. God chose the lowly to shame the proud things of this world. Our salvation is entirely a matter of God’s choosing us for His purposes: to shame human wisdom; to shame human strength; to shame human pride. How, then, do we go from Adam to Christ?
- (vv.30-31) “*Because of him you are in Christ Jesus.*” God did it all through His wisdom; His strength; His majesty. He put us “in Christ” (i.e., in union with Christ) so that Christ is now our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. God by doing it all has removed any possibility of human pride and boasting.

(Romans 5:9-10) Assurance – Now go back to Romans 5:9-10 - **Romans 5:9–10 - 9** *Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. 10 For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.* Having taken the initiative to do all of this, could it possibly be that God will now fail to follow through and bring us into His glory in the end? Unthinkable! How would God be glorified by such a failure of His power? How would God’s purpose be fulfilled if He now changed His mind? Wouldn’t the world, the flesh and the devil have every right to say, “God, your wisdom failed; your power wasn’t enough; your majesty is very little. What you set out to do was a failure.” Can we really believe that God would allow such a thing to happen? If God chose to save us BECAUSE we are foolish, weak, and despised, could it possibly be that He would now reject us for those very same reasons? Never! Therefore...

[DOCTRINAL POINT] Our assurance rests in what God did for us in Christ, not what we do for Him in Christ.

[ILLUSTRATION] When we sit down to read a piece of literature, perhaps a novel, or a book of poetry, or even something as pedantic as a driver’s manual, in order to get from the book the instruction intended it is essential for us to read the book from the author’s point of view. If we fail to do this, we are looking through someone’s eyes other than the author, and we’ll always get the book’s message wrong. We do this with our Bibles. Because we’re always trying to find our story in its pages, we largely miss its actual message. It’s a story first about what God has done. We are bit players in the drama, not the main character. That’s the mistake we make in the matter of Assurance. We think it’s about what WE do to get saved and stay saved, while all the time it’s a story about what GOD has done to save us and keep us.

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[APPLICATION] Our assurance rests in what God did for us in Christ, not what we do for Him in Christ. As we gradually become aware of this, our hearts begin to experience peace. So, the first pathway to assurance is through our understanding. But is that our only comfort we are given? Not at all. We also have the witness of experience, and we'll begin to look into that matter when we get to chapter six next week.

**Conclusion:** In the meantime, let the fact of God's priority in your salvation cover you like a warm blanket on a cold night. You are saved and kept because of what God has done. Rejoice!