



Paul's Letter to The Romans

Lost Through One; Saved Through One...¹ Romans 5:12-21

^{ESV} **Romans 5:12**...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. 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 will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. 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.

All people stand in relationship to one of two men and the actions of those two men determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them.² In other words, "Every person on earth is either in Adam or in Christ."

There is no third place.

Now because that is the central point of our passage today and because it is important to Paul's overall argument in his Epistle to the Romans, let me repeat what I just said again.

All people stand in relationship to one of two men and the actions of those two men determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them.

All people on our planet, living or dead, poor or wealthy, young or old, educated or ignorant, religious or not stand either in corporate union with Adam or with Christ.³ That is, every single person on earth is either in Adam or in Christ. I particularly like this quote found in F.F. Bruce's little commentary on Romans. He attributes it to the Puritan Thomas Goodwin.

In God's sight, there are two men—Adam and Jesus Christ—and these two men have all other men hanging at their girdle strings.⁴

Now, only a Puritan would put it quite that way. But it is a wonderful image, I think. It is the image of a hunter. It is the image of a man who has sought after and taken game and has that game hanging from his thick leather belt. Goodwin's point is that all men, and by that he means all men and women, boys and girls, hang either on Adam's belt or on Christ's belt. I love the visual impact of that kind of image and the truth of the matter is...that image is exactly right. You see, all of us are in that sense, either trophies of sin or trophies of grace. I think that may be the reason I like the way John Stott toys here with Churchill's famous quote in his commentary changing it to suit this sentiment of "**union**" in Romans 5:12.

It is not that so many owe so much to so few; it is rather that so many owe so much to only one person. How can that be? Paul's answer is contained in his analogy between Adam and Christ, *which* demonstrate the principle that many can be affected, for good or ill, by one person's action.⁵

Stott's point, in fact Paul's point, is just that simple. All people on earth are either in union with Adam or Christ. Their eternal well-being is intimately tied to one of these two great archetypes, to one of these two great fountains.

In other words, **"All people stand in relationship to one of two men and the actions of those two men determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them."**

Now, that's a simple enough proposition don't you think? What I want you to do today is keep that simple little phrase in mind as we proceed through our lesson together. I want you to keep it in mind when and if we get bogged down or when and if, and its more likely to be when than if, I make something vague or unclear. Now I put it just that way because it is likely that I will get bogged down or be unclear and the reason for that is because Romans 5:12-21 is very difficult.⁶ I do not think it can lay claim to being the most difficult passage in the New Testament but it is certainly in the top five most difficult passages and probably in the top three.

Now what I want to do this morning is start off by explaining what it is about the passage that makes it so difficult. Then I want to discuss what it was that Paul hoped to accomplish by putting the passage where he did and then finally I want to go through the passage itself and try to tie some of its complex ideas together.

Do you get the plan? I want to talk about why it's hard, why it's there and finally how the parts link together to make a whole.

First, then let me explain why the passage is hard.

The overall passage is hard because Paul breaks off right in the middle of a comparison and talks about two other issues, both of which are extraordinarily difficult in their own right. Now before I show you that in the text let me explain what I mean when I say Paul was **"making a comparison."**

In Greek, there is a very simple way to compare two things even if the two things do not readily lend themselves to comparison. All that is required is two simple Greek words. Those two words are ὡςπερ and οὕτως. In English, the two words are a conjunction and an adverb. Usually they are translated like this: As such and such a thing is...so is this other thing. Of course, it can be made even simpler. It can simply be **"as this is...so is that."**

Now this particular construction is fairly common in the New Testament. Let me just show you a few places where it is used.

^{ESV} **Matthew 12:40**...For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

^{ESV} **Matthew 24:27**...as the lightning comes from the east and shines as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.

^{ESV} **John 5:21**...For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will.

^{ESV} **1 Corinthians 15:22**...For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Now, it is clear I think what is intended in each of these comparisons. Remember, they follow the pattern, **“As this is...so is that.”** The first use, Matthew 12:40 seems to be making that point that just as Jonah was hidden away in a sure and certain place of death but came out after three days...so also will Jesus come forth from the grave. As Jonah was hidden and came out, so will Jesus. As Jonah...so Jesus.

The second use, Matthew 24:27, is even simpler. It seems to be making the point that in the same way you can see lightening storms way off in the distance before they arrive...so will the coming of the Lord Jesus be...clear, dramatic and obvious. As lightning is visible...so will the coming of Jesus be. As lightning...so Jesus.

The third use, John 5:21 is simpler still. It says that just as the Father gives life to whomever He chooses so does Jesus. As the Father gives life, so does the Son. As the Father...so Jesus.

Now when we get to this fourth example in 1 Corinthians 15:22, the comparison is structured a bit differently than the previous three. It is different because the comparison between Adam and Jesus is really a contrast. You see if it were a strict comparison, it would have to say something like, **“As all in Adam die...so all in Jesus die.”** But you can see that what it actually says just the opposite of that. The two Greek words that are used to set up the comparison are the same as with the others but the nature of the comparison shows that the two things are

intrinsically different in and of themselves. Because that is so, we understand the contrast to say something like this, **“As in Adam all die...no so in Jesus where all are made alive.”** Now in the text there is no word for **“no”** but the contrast makes it clear that the end result on the comparison is to show just how different the two things are. Are you following me? The idea then is, as Adam...not so Jesus, in fact, just the opposite Jesus. Now, I think this particular passage, 1 Corinthians 15:22, is the one that is most helpful in understanding what is going on in Romans 5. First because he implies a contrast just like the uses in Romans 5 do and secondly because it is talking about the exact same issue that Paul is raising in Romans 5.

Now I have spent an inordinate amount of time discussing this because unless you see the point I am making about these comparisons and contrasts, you won't understand the underlying structure of Romans 5:12-21. Now I say that because this particular structural marker **“as this...so this”** occurs three times in Romans 5:12-21. It occurs in verses 12, 19 and 21. Now, that I have explained how this contrast works, I think you will be able to see it except in verse 12. The reason that you won't see it in verse twelve is because Paul stops his thought in mid-stream and doesn't pick it up again until verse 18. Grammatically, what Paul does is break off his thought to better explain the first half of his contrast. This kind of break is usually called a digression or a parenthesis. It is almost like he is watching his audience, sees a look of befuddlement, and stops to clear that up before he goes on. Now having said that let me show you the three times he uses this **“as this...so this”** structure and what the contrasts are Paul wants to point out.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:12**...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--

Now the first thing I think you might notice is that there is no readily apparent phrase representing the “**so is**” clause that we would expect. I’ve already made this point twice but here you can see it for yourself. And that is exactly why the passage is so hard. Paul sets up a contrast and then doesn’t give the contrast, at least not right away and by the time he does get around to giving it most of us will have lost track of what the “**as this**” was in the first place.

Now I don’t usually ask an audience what Paul should’ve written because I take it for granted and expect my audience to take it for granted that what was written was what should have been written. But since we are all friends here and since you have already forgiven my eccentricities and foibles on so many other numerous occasions, let me ask you, “**If Paul had not gotten tied up explaining himself and had finished his thought, what would he have said?**” Now remember it is a contrast and not a comparison.

I think he would have said, “**So justification or righteousness entered the world through the one man, Jesus Christ.**” And you know what? That is exactly what he does say all the way down in verse 18.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:18**...Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.

You see Paul never loses his place at all. He knows right where he is at and when he clears up the problems associated with the issues he raised in verse 12, he

restates his initial premise and then finishes off the thought he started way back up in verse 12.

Now the other two verses in this section that use this “**just as...so is**” structure are verses 19 and 21. You can see them here but they don’t really present the same kind of problems that we had in verse 12 because there are no intervening sentences or phrases between the start and the finish of the two verses. In fact, the problems they present are theological rather than structural

^{ESV} **Romans 5:19**...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.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:21**...so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now having said that, let me take a minute and explain why the I think Paul put these ten verses, verse 12-21, here in Romans 5 in the first place and then we’ll turn back to verse 12 and put in there.

Now, as to why Paul included this section in the first place. Now you will remember in the last section that Paul posed the idea that men and women and boys and girls who are justified before God on the basis of Christ’s redeeming work are at peace with God. Now this section is an answer to the question, “**How can we be sure that that is so?**” Paul’s answer is that we can be sure that it is so because we are united to Christ. In fact, he is going to suggest that Christ’s great redeeming work is able and has in fact overturned all that Adam lost and all that we lost because of our connection to Adam.

Now this notion of **“spiritual union”** with Christ is a doctrine that today is almost completely ignored and that is true in spite of the fact that even the Lord Jesus Himself dedicated a significant amount of time to it. It is an essential **“idea”** if a person hopes to understand any of what it is that Paul writes about in Romans 6-8. And here is the idea in a nutshell. We are blessed by God; we are justified before God; we are at peace with God; we enjoy the blessings of election and the promise of ultimate glorification because...we are in spiritual union with Christ. All that we possess, we possess in Christ. Now if you keep that simple point in mind, you will grasp the significance of what Paul is saying here. He is saying, **“We used to be in Adam and suffered immeasurably because of that connection. But now we are in Christ. All that Adam lost, Christ has regained and restored and gone beyond.”** I could not help as I pondered these things to be reminded of the way Dr. McGee used to put it, **“Man, the blessing of God is in Christ. Sell all you have. Lay aside all you possess but get into Christ!”**

Now the first time I heard that I took at a sort of slang expression meaning to get interested in Christ. You know what I mean like when a person says, **“I am into stained glass”** or **“I am into the Beatles.”** But that is not, of course, what Dr. McGee or for that matter, the Apostle Paul, meant at all. No, what they mean is lay hold of Christ by faith. Attach yourself to Him by believing on Him by resting in what He has done by being in Him. The way John Knox put was like this, **“He’s the place where I cast my anchor.”**

Now having discussed what the problems of the passage are and why the passage is where it is, let’s take the remaining time and go through the verses themselves.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:12**...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--

The first thing I think you ought to notice is that Paul's premise is very simple.

One man sinned...

Death came as the result of sin⁷

Death has come to all men

All men have sinned.

Now the verse is simple. The past tense of the verb in the phrase "**all sinned**" has to be translated in a way that demonstrates it is a completed act in the past and yet you can see the problem that that poses. How can it be that we sinned when Adam sinned? We weren't alive when Adam sinned, were we? And if we were not alive, how on earth could anyone think we sinned when Adam sinned? Now that question raises the whole issue of original sin and how it is that we can be said to have participated in Adam's sin. Now in case, you don't know what I mean by original sin let me take a minute and explain.

"Original sin" is the sinful state and condition in which all people are born. It is comprised of two parts: (1) original guilt, and (2) original pollution.⁸

The doctrine of original sin attempts to explain how men and women, boys and girls became sinful. Obviously, it takes the seriously the idea that all observable men and women, boys and girls are, in fact, sinners. Now the question is, **"How did the get that way?"**

Now historically, there have been four basic views regarding original sin, only three of which have ever been taken seriously. Origin, for example, believed that men were born sinners because they had existed in a former life and fallen there.

He believed such men were consigned to the earth as a part of their purification process. I guess you could say he viewed earth as something akin to purgatory, which makes you wonder just how bad some people must have been prior to becoming human.

Pelagius, Augustine's great rival, held that there was no such thing as "**original sin**" and that every person was free to obey or disobey just as Adam had been. He did admit that all people do sin but that sin was simply a matter of imitating our forefathers. Pelagius believed that all that was needed for a person to stand right before God was simply to stop sinning, which really and truly makes me feel better. Pelagius believed in grace but thought that grace was really just God educating us to what we should do.⁹

Now the last two views are both held by some very good men. The first of the two is called the Seminal or Realistic View. It is the view, which was held by Augustine and later by W.G.T. Shedd. What it contends is that Adam's guilt and pollution are passed along to his descendants by the natural process of procreation. In other words, all mankind was in Adam biologically when Adam sinned and the result is that they share his guilt.¹⁰ That is, of course, why it is called the seminal view. Adam's guilt and pollution are passed along through his seed. They offer Hebrews 7:9-10 as a Scriptural example of the kind of thing they see happening with original sin.

^{ESV} **Hebrews 7:9**...One might even say that Levi himself, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, ¹⁰ for he was still in the loins of his ancestor when Melchizedek met him.

Now the fourth view, the correct view, is called the Federal or Representative View and holds that Adam's guilt is imputed to his descendants in exactly the same way that Christ's righteousness is imputed to sinners. That means that all people are viewed as guilty before God even before they commit any actual sin of their own. They are guilty because they were represented by Adam when he disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. Now the first impulse of critics is to say, **"Where do you find the federal or representative idea in the Bible?"** The clearest answer to that, I think, is given in the story of Achan's sin in the Joshua. Do you remember the story? God's wrath burned against the people of Israel because one of Israel's soldiers, a man named Achan, had taken plunder that was forbidden. God caused Israel to be punished for the one man's sin and then caused the man's whole family to be consumed along with the man when he was discovered by lot.

A ready response to that might be, **"That's not fair. I don't want to be represented by another."** But, of course, there's the rub as Lloyd Jones puts it. **"Adam's sin imputed to us in exactly the same way Christ's righteousness is imputed to us."**¹¹ John Owen answered the charge of unfairness this way and I am paraphrasing here, **"Let those that argue that the idea of representation is unfair remember that the fallen angels are judged guilty on the basis of their own sin and not on the basis of a representative and they are eternally damned without hope of salvation."**¹²

Now I should hasten to add that that the representative view does not deny the biological connection between Adam and his descendants. We believe the pollution of sin, an actual sin nature, is communicated to us biologically but not the guilt of sin. But let me stress the point here again. Our guilt is imputed to us

because Adam is our representative. I think you can see the representative view most clearly stated in the Westminster Confession of Faith. In fact if you will turn in your Trinity Hymnals to page 852, you can follow along as I read it.

(1) Our first parents, being seduced by the subtlety and temptations of Satan, sinned, in eating the forbidden fruit. This their sin, God was pleased, according to His wise and holy counsel, to permit, having purposed to order it to His own glory. (2) By this sin they fell from their original righteousness and communion, with God, and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the parts and faculties of soul and body. (3) They being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed; and the same death in sin, and corrupted nature, conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation.¹³

Now, I don't want to spend all of our remaining time talking about "**original sin**" but the issue is important especially as we try to ferret out the meaning of the our remaining verses. And I think, knowing what you now know may help you to follow Paul's logic the rest of the way. So let me put back in at verse 12.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:12**...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--

Now, I made the point a few minutes ago that Paul's logic is very simple. It is...

One man sinned...

Death came as the result of sin

Death has come to all men

Because all men have sinned.

And when we first started the lesson, I told you that Paul chose not to finish his comparison here but to wait till he got to verse 18. What he does do instead is to break into a digression to flesh out the point he has just made. That first parenthesis is contained in verses 13-14.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:13**...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.

Now the obvious question is, **“How can that be? How can it be that people died even when there was no law?”** Now I want you to follow Paul’s argument here. What he is arguing is that the guilt of Adam’s sin bears down on everyone, even on those who have not committed a sin like the one Adam did. In fact, says Paul, you can see that especially in the period between Adam and Moses, when there was no law. You can see it there because people still died. Now, why did they die if there was no written law to be broken? They died because they had sinned in Adam. They died because Adam’s guilt was imputed to every single person he represented. Now the Reformers, to a man, proclaimed the idea that this particular principle can also be seen when precious little babies die. They do not die because they have committed any actual sin on their own. They die because they are under the great cloud and burden of Adam’s guilt.

Can you see the heinousness of Adam’s sin? Can you see its extraordinary implications? Until Adam’s sin there was no death.¹⁴ In Adam, there is nothing but death. Every single man, woman, boy or girl that is born into this world is born into a world of increasing sorrow, sickness and gloom. That is why sensing the mood and despair associated with his argument up to this point he switches gears completely in verse 15. That is why Paul breaks out to engage in a second digression to show the wondrous superiority of Christ’s gracious work.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:15**...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 will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Oh, do you see Paul's point here? The gift of God is Christ's atoning work is greater than all my sin; it is greater than even Adam's sin. It is greater in its graciousness and it is greater scope. You see the judgment of God came after only one solitary sin and that judgment brought death, destruction and condemnation. But the kindness of Christ came after many sins. In fact, you could say that it came after the cumulative weight of all the sin of all of God's people of all times. Whatever we lost in Adam has been overwhelmed in what we have gained in Christ. In fact, I love the way Calvin purposely understates the glory of what has happened in our union with Christ.

It may indeed be justly inferred...that Christ is much more powerful to save, than Adam was to destroy.¹⁵

Then finally in verses 18-19, Paul finishes the comparison he started in verse 12. Where verse 12 had stated that and death came through one man to all that are in Adam, now justification and life extends to all men that are in Christ.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:18**...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.

Now there is no reason to fear verses 18 and 19. There are those that try to say the verses teach universalism. That is they say these verses teach that all men are

going to be saved in the end and you can see why they would say that. If Adam's sin extends to all men then by analogy justification and life must extend to all men. But surely verse 17 limits those who receive the benefits of Christ's work to those who **"receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness."**

And then finally in verse 20 and 21 Paul closes the section by saying that the giving of the law only magnified the depth of gloom and despair felt by those under the weight of its condemnation but that God's grace overwhelmed even that.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:20**...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.

Now it almost sounds here as if Paul is saying that the law is bad but we know that is not Paul's point. It is not, as F.F. Bruce says in his little commentary, a thing like the little Scottish woman who objected to the recitation of the Ten Commandments in church because it put so many terrible ideas in people's minds.¹⁶ No Paul's point is that sin had caused us to lose all sense of perspective. The giving of the law merely helped us to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin by calling sin what it was. As it did that it increased our understanding of all that was lost in Adam and at the same time increased our understanding of the wonderful reign of grace through Jesus Christ.

Just after midnight on March 24, 1989, an oil tanker called the Exxon Valdez hit Bligh Reef, ripped open its hull and subsequently dumped eleven million gallons

of Alaskan crude oil into the crystal blue waters of Prince William Sound. Observers said the dumped on the still ocean with such force it created wave of oil three foot high which spread into a gigantic oil slick over five hundred miles long polluting some 1,500 miles of shoreline. The slick killed 5,000 sea otters, 300 bald eagles, 13 killer whales, 1,000 sea lions, 500,000 sea birds, a whole generation of salmon fry and an untold number of herrings, crabs, ducks, and even bears. The ecological system in Prince William Sound has not yet recovered even after some 14 years. The Exxon Oil Company, along with the EPA, led the effort to clean up the oil and that effort took over five years and cost \$1.9 billion dollars. In 1994, a Federal jury ordered the Exxon Company to pay \$5 billion dollars in punitive damages and other settlements are still ongoing. In the end, the whole affair will probably cost some \$10 billion dollars.

Now I wanted set your mind thinking in concrete terms about the losses incurred in connection with the Exxon Valdez only to start you thinking about the losses incurred in Adam's sin. Let me help by just mentioning a few things. Adam's sin has led to the death of every person that has ever died. It has led to the sickness and malnourishment of every poor, impoverished child in the history of the world. It has led to every act of violence, every disease, every divorce, every war. It has led to every injury, every abusive act of husbands against their wives, parents against their children, and children against their parents. It has led to every estrangement, every broken heart and the alienation of every sinner before a just and holy God. And the wonder of all wonders is that Christ's justifying work is greater than all that. He has turned death into life and sorrow into rejoicing and has given to us this wonderful message of reclamation and reconciliation. You see, "**All people stand in relationship to one of two men and**

the actions of those two men determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them. You are either in Adam or in Christ. Praise be God we are in Christ.”

¹ Charles Spurgeon, “Sermon 2744” from *Spurgeon’s Collected Works* (Pasadena, Texas; Sage Digital Library in Cooperation with Pilgrim’s Publications). I have borrowed Mr. Spurgeon’s title but only because it is better than the one I had thought of myself.

² Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* in the New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1996), 315.

³ John Stott, *Romans: God’s Good News For the World*, (Downer’s Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1994), 148. “Here then are two communities, one characterized by sin and guilt, the other by grace and faith. Anticipating verses 12–21 a little, we may say that the former is in Adam and the latter in Christ.”

⁴ F.F. Bruce, *Epistle of Paul to the Romans* (London: Tyndale Press, 1963), 127.

⁵ Stott, 148-9.

⁶ James Montgomery Boice, *Romans Volume 2: Reign of Grace, Romans 5-8* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 561. “We are studying a difficult, yet extremely important section of Romans, and we have begun by an overview of the doctrine of the mystical union of the Christian with Jesus Christ. This important New Testament theme is widely neglected, no doubt because it is so difficult. But without this doctrine we cannot understand Romans 5:2–21, and without understanding those verses the truths of this second major section of the letter (chs. 4–8) will be beyond us. It works the other way, too. We must understand the believer’s union with Christ to understand verses 12–21. But, in a parallel way, in order to understand how we are “in Christ’ and what that means, we need to see how we were in Adam,” which is where the passage starts.”

⁷ C.H. Dodd, *The Epistle to the Romans* in the Moffatt NT Commentary Series (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1932; reprinted 1947), 81. Some commentators sometimes say things that are pretty outlandish to an old-timey Bible thumper. In the following quote, C.H. Dodd off-handedly comments that death could not have come into the world by Adam’s in, especially since Adam was a mythical figure. He suffered from too much sophistication. He writes: “Obviously, we cannot accept such a speculation (that death came through Adam’s sin) as an account of the origin of death, which is a natural process inseparable from organic existence in the world we know, and devoid of any moral significance. For the reason why the Jewish mind felt death to be unnatural and peculiarly horrible, we must probably go back to the stage in which the Jewish religion knew nothing of a life after death, so that death meant separation from God.”

⁸ Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishers, 1986), 143-8. This definition is adopted from several pages of Hoekema’s text and is in agreement with Berkhof’s definition. Cf. Lewis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1941; reprinted 1993), 244. Berkhof writes, “The sinful state and condition in which men are born is designated in theology by the name “original sin.” This term is better

than the Holland name “erfzonde,” since the latter strictly speaking, does not cover all that belongs to original sin. It is not a proper designation of original guilt, for this is not inherited but imputed to us. This sin is called “original sin,” (1) because it is derived from the original root of the human race; (2) because it is present in the life of every individual from the time of his birth, and therefore cannot be regarded as the result of imitation; and (3) because it is the inward root of all the actual sins that defile the life of man.” It should be noted R.C. Sproul’s definition is much shorter and seems to be in accord with the “erfzonde” spoken of by Berkhof. See R.C. Sproul, *Grace Unknown: The Heart of Reformed Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 121. He writes: “The condition of radical corruption, or total depravity, is the fallen state known as *original sin*. The doctrine of original sin does not refer to the first sin committed by Adam and Eve, but to the *result* of that first sin. Original sin is the corruption visited on the progeny of our first parents as punishment for the original transgression.”

I have no idea why R.C. makes this distinction.

⁹ Charles Finney, *Finney’s Lectures on Systematic Theology* Edited by J.H. Fairchild (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1951), 397. Finney was clearly a Pelagian. He writes: “The doctrine of a literal imputation of Adam’s sin to all his posterity, of the literal imputation of all the sins of the elect to Christ, and of his suffering for them the exact amount due to the transgressors, and of the literal imputation of Christ’s righteousness or obedience to the elect, and the consequent perpetual justification of all that are converted from the first exercise of faith, whatever their subsequent life may be—I say I regard these dogmas as fabulous, and better befitting a romance than a system of theology.”

¹⁰ A.W. Pink, *Gleanings From Scriptures: Man’s Total Depravity* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1969), 27. I wanted to include this quote because it is so wonderful. “Man is a sad failure. Even the honor of the primitive Christian church was speedily tarnished by the sin of Ananias and Sapphira. Thus it has been all through the past and there is no evidence to show that at the commencement of human history Adam and Eve were any exception. Rather are there clear indications to the contrary, so that God had reason to say of them also, “They have turned aside quickly out of the way.’”

Personally we doubt if our first parents preserved their integrity for forty-eight hours, or even for twenty-four. In the first place, they were told to “be fruitful, and multiply” (Gen. 1:28); and had they complied with that injunction and the blessing of God had been on them, *a sinless child* would have been conceived, which, following the fall of Adam and Eve, would have been part of a depraved family—a terrible anomaly, involving the utmost confusion. Second, if those words concerning Christ are to be taken without qualification, “that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18), then He is the only One who kept the Sabbath perfectly on this earth, and consequently Adam fell before the seventh day ended. Third, in Psalm 49:12, the Hebrew word for ‘man’ is *Adam*—the same as in Genesis 2 and 3 and Job 31:33, while that for ‘abode’ signifies “to stay or lodge for a night.” Manton rendered it “Adam being in honor abides not for a night” And Thomas Watson in his *Body of Divinity* said, Adam then, it seems, did not take up one night’s lodging in Paradise.” Fourth, the devil “was a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44)—not from the beginning of time, for there was no man to slay during the first five days, but from the beginning of *human history*. In the morning man was holy; by night he was a sinner!”

¹¹ D. Martyn Lloyd Jones, *Romans: Exposition of Chapter 5, Assurance* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1971; reprint 1998), 210.

¹² John Owen, *Temptation and Sin Volume 6* edited by William Goold (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1850; reprinted 1981), 433. Owen writes: “The first sin in the world was, on many accounts, the greatest sin that ever was in the world. It was the sin, as it were, of human nature, wherein there was a conspiracy of all individuals: “*Omnes eramus unus ille homo;*” — “In that one man, or that one sin, ‘we all sinned,’ Romans 5:12. It left not God one morally obedient subject on the earth, nor the least ground for any such to be unto eternity. When the angels sinned, the whole race or kind did not prevaricate. “Thousand thousands” of them, and “ten thousand times ten thousand,” continued in their obedience, Daniel 7:10. But here all and every individual of mankind were embarked in the same crime and guilt.”

¹³ Westminster Confession of Faith, 6.3. See also the Larger Catechism, Question 26. “**Question:** How is original sin conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity? **Answer:** Original sin is conveyed from our first parents unto their posterity by natural generation, so as all that proceed from them in that way are conceived and born in sin.”

¹⁴ Martin Luther, (1999, c1958). *Vol. 1: Luther’s Works: Lectures on Genesis: Chapters 1-5* (Ge 1:27). Ed. by J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House). “But this condition is the fault of original sin, and from it all the remaining creatures derive their shortcomings. I hold that before sin the sun was brighter, the water purer, the trees more fruitful, and the fields more fertile. But through sin and that awful fall not only our flesh is disfigured by the leprosy of sin, but everything we use in this life has become corrupt, as we shall point out more clearly below.”

¹⁵ John Calvin, *Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 206.

¹⁶ Bruce, 128.