

Romans 5:12-19^v

Brothers and sisters: Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and so death spread to all because all have sinned—sin was indeed in the world before the law, but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many. And the free gift is not like the effect of the one man's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the one man's trespass, death exercised dominion through that one, much more surely will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness exercise dominion in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Therefore just as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all, For just 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.

^v About the Second Reading: Romans 5:12-19

In this rather complicated passage, Paul deals with the universal human condition of sin and death and its relationship to the gift of grace. In Jewish philosophical circles, speculations were current about the "first man," Adam, and the implications of his acts for all humanity and about the "last man," expected at the end of the age. Paul uses this material as background for comparing Adam and Christ.

In verses 15-17, the comparison becomes a contrast, for the trespass of Adam is outweighed

by the superabundant free gift of grace. They are virtually in different dimensions. The free gift of righteousness, a right relationship, does not merely undo sin and death and return humanity to Eden, but offers incomparable grace and life. The role of the law was to point out the measureless mercy of God by measuring sinfulness.