

INTRODUCTION

Romans, 5:12-21 is a pretty complex, complicated passage of scripture. In fact, it is one of the deepest theological teachings in all of the book of Romans, and Romans gets pretty deep. Some people even disagree about the punctuation of the Greek text, because you have to remember there are no punctuation marks in many of the Greek manuscripts. You have to supply your own. Sometimes, a change of punctuation can completely change the meaning.

If you don't believe that, I remember what happened when I was in college in my psychology class. On the first day of class our professor wrote “woman without her man is a savage” up on the board these words with no punctuation. He said, “I want everybody in the class to write those words down and punctuate that sentence. Well, as you can imagine, most women punctuated it this way, “Woman. Without her man is a savage.” But all the guys punctuated it totally different, changing the meaning. We punctuated it this way. “Woman without her man is a savage.” Women without men are savages, so, the meaning was totally opposite according to the way it was punctuated. The same is true about this passage of scripture. It's deep, but I want us to find where the word “reign” appears four times because I am going to talk about four kings in this passage of scripture. Just as I was walking in a few moments ago somebody said, “Well, you have a full house out there.” I said, “That's great. Four kings beats a full house any day!” The word “reign” appears four times.

Let's begin reading in verse 12.

Therefore, just a sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned — for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death *reigned* from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come. But the gift [meaning the gift of grace] is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, [Adam] how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness *reign* in life through the one man, Jesus Christ. Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness [meaning the death of Jesus] was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin *reigned* in death, so also grace might *reign* through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Paul is comparing Adam and the mess he created for us when he sinned. He's comparing and contrasting Adam to Jesus and the wonderful mission and message he brought when he died.

Remember, we found the word “reign” referring to four different words. It talked about death reigning, it talked about sin reigning; it talked about grace reigning, and it talked about life reigning. So those are the four kings we are going to talk about. But any time you talk about kings, you have to understand the meaning of the word “dynasty.” Do you remember when you were in school, some of you are still in school, and you had to repeat all the kings of France, or the kings of England. Each new family started a new dynasty. In this passage of scripture we have two dynasties, each with two kings.

I. ADAM'S DYNASTY—OUR RUIN

1. King Sin ruled

First of all, let's talk about Adam's dynasty, or his family, and it speaks about our ruin. We were ruined as a human race because of Adam's dynasty. Within Adam's dynasty there are two kings. First, there is king Sin. King Sin ruled for a long time. In fact, in some peoples' lives king Sin still rules and reigns. Let's go back a bit in time by thousands of years. We find Adam and Eve in a perfect environment, in a garden. They have all of these wonderful things to enjoy, the beautiful water, the beautiful plants, the fruit, the animals, and God said, “Enjoy them all, but Adam, just so that you can remember that I am transcendent from you and I am separate from you, I am reserving for myself an area of my holiness that I don't want you to violate. I don't want you to trespass, or cross over the line.” Do you know what the line was? It was the boundary around what the Bible calls the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Only God has the right to determine what is right and what is wrong.

Well, you know what happened. Eve was tempted by the devil, and she influenced Adam and Adam ate the fruit. Have you ever heard anybody say it was an apple? The Bible never says it was an apple. We don't know what kind of fruit it was. It was just called a fruit, but when he ate the fruit, that's when King Sin took his throne in this world, and he has been ruling and reigning in many people's lives since that day.

Have you ever wondered, “Brother David, why do children get leukemia and die? Why do good people good Christian people get cancer and die in the prime of life? Why are there tornadoes and natural disasters that go through and arbitrarily destroy people's lives? Why is there pain and suffering in this world?” Do you want to know the reason why? Look back at chapter 5:12. I think it is the best answer to that question. It says, “Therefore, just as sin entered the world.” The reason there is pain and suffering in this world is because sin has entered this world. If I could mix metaphors and employ Greek mythology, when Adam sinned, he opened up a Pandora's box of pain, suffering and negative consequences that has infiltrated every person's life on planet Earth since that first time. You say, “Now, that's hard to believe. That just one little, itty bitty sin could have that kind of influence on all the rest of us. Let me try to illustrate it.

At the beginning of this century there was a man named Albert Einstein. Albert Einstein was a pretty smart guy. He came up with a sub-atomic theory, the theory of relativity that says, “ $E=MC^2$.” It is the formula for energy equals mass times the speed of light squared. When he came up with that formula it was said that only twelve people on Earth understood the implications of “ $E=MC^2$.” Did you know a few years later when American scientists took that

formula and translated it into the splitting of the atom and the creation of the atomic bomb and when that atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. did you know, in an instant millions of people understood the implications of “ $E=MC^{2?}$ ” Today, you and I realize with the presence of nuclear weapons on the face of the planet the negative implications of “ $E=MC^2$.”

You go back and you look at Adam. You say, “That one little sin.” You say, “Trivial. Insignificant.” Oh, no, friend. It was the beginning of sin and that spiritual fallout is still infecting and affecting every one of us. King Sin is still reigning and ruling today. I got this out of the *Tyler Morning Telegraph*, August 3, 1998. The headline says, “Prison Census in United States Climbs Past 1.2 Million” Isn’t it comforting to know America is second in the world in the number of people we have in our prisons? We have over a million people in American prisons today. We are second only to Russia. Listen to this. “Already the United States trails only Russia in the share of its citizens behind bars. The total U.S. incarceration rate of 645 people for a hundred thousand is 6 to 10 times higher than most industrial nations.” Most of you have something in your pocket called a key. Have you ever thought about why you need to lock your house? Have you ever thought about why you need to lock your car? Because there is sin in this world. Because there are people out there who will break into your house. There are people out there who will steal your car. The fact that you have keys, every time you read about crime, you ought to realize the reality of king Sin in this world.

Now, let’s get a little closer to home. You don’t have to read the newspaper to realize the reality of sin, just look in the mirror. We are all sinners by nature and by choice. So, the first king in Adam’s dynasty was King Sin.

2. King Death ruled

The second king was what we call King Death. After King Sin ruled, he gave birth to King Death, because the Bible says sin, when it is finished brings forth death. In this passage of scripture the word death appears seven times. Sin always produces death! The reason people die is because of sin. That’s what God told Adam. He said, “Adam, the day that you sin, you are going to die.” The Bible says, “The soul that sins, it will surely die.” Now, when we use the word death, people are confused about what the Bible means when it says death.

a. “Death” in the Bible means: Spiritual death - separation of the spirit from God

There are three usages of the word “death” in the Bible. First of all, there is what we could call spiritual death. That’s what the Bible calls, “the separation of a spirit from God.” I hope you understand you and I have a soul, we have a body and we have a spirit. A person who has never come to faith in Jesus Christ, that person has a dead spirit. There is no life in their spirit. The Bible says a person who is not a Christian is spiritually dead. That’s why it says in Ephesians, 2:1, “You who were once dead in your trespasses and sins, you have been made alive by Jesus.” Believe it or not, I am looking into the faces of some people who are dead. There are people who are watching on television who are dead. I mean not physically dead I’m talking about spiritually dead. You look around you and you say, “Well, the people I know that aren’t Christians don’t seem to be dead to me. In fact, they seem to be doing all right. They seem to be relatively happy. They seem to be prospering, many of them. I don’t understand it when you way they are dead.”

Let me compare it to something most of you are familiar with. I know you can't believe it as hot as it is outside, but you know Christmas is right around the corner. There are only about 212 shopping days before Christmas. Did you realize that? At Christmas time a lot of people go out into the forests and cut down a tree. They take that tree and they put it in their living room or some other room, and do you know what they do with that tree? They decorate it. I'm not talking about those of you who have artificial trees. I'm talking about those of you who are still traditional enough that you say, "I want a live tree." but the truth is, that tree's is not live. But, do you know what we do with those Christmas trees? We put different colored lights around on it, we hang ornaments on it; we make that tree look prettier than it ever was in the forest all by itself, but actually, the moment that tree was cut off, it died. I know you put it in water for a while, and try to keep it as living as you can make it look, but it is dead. It just hasn't expressed its deadliness yet. There are people you work with and rub elbows with every day. Listen it's sad to say, but they are dead. Oh, they look great! They have a lot of decorations on. I mean, they have the decorations of morality, they have the decorations of prosperity, they have the decorations of education, but without Jesus Christ, they are dead. That's what the Bible says, "A soul without Jesus there's spiritual death."

b. "Death" in the Bible means: Physical death - separation of spirit from the body

The second use of the word death is physical death. You know what physical death is, it's the separation of the spirit from the body. When a person dies, their spirit leaves their body. That's why the apostle Paul, said, "As long as I am away from the Lord, I am present in the body, but to die is to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord." We all know what physical death is. It is when the heart stops beating. It's when the brain stops functioning. It's when the lungs stop performing. That's physical death.

c. "Death" in the Bible means: Eternal death - separation of a person from God

There's a third kind of death in the Bible. It's what the Bible calls eternal death. That's the separation of a person from God for all eternity. Do you want a reference to write down? Revelation, 20:14. "At the great white throne judgment whoever's name is not found written in the Lamb's Book of Life, they were cast into the lake burning with fire and brimstone" and the Bible says "This is the second death."

Now, look at those three kinds of death. If you are spiritually dead, never fear. Today, you can find life in Jesus Christ. You can be saved today. You can do something about that problem right now. Number two. You know if Jesus tarries, we're all going to die physically. And the Bible says for a Christian that's not all that bad either. Honestly. That's why Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the light. He that believes in me though he were dead, yet shall he live." No problem. But, friend, number three eternal death. That's the death you had better make sure you do not experience. That is the ultimate result of sin.

Here's the quotation. Guess who first wrote these words so familiar to so many people: "No man is an island entire of itself." He's the same man who wrote later in the same quotation "Never send to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee." An English poet-preacher named John

Donne wrote it. But, few people know when he spoke those words, he wasn't talking about music when he talked about the bell, and he wasn't talking about an island he was talking about death. This is what the entire quote says by this brilliant poet and preacher. He said, "No man is an island entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod [meaning a clod of dirt] be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less." What he means is as every piece of dirt that gets washed away by the sea, the continent gets smaller. Listen to what he says, "Even so, any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved with all of mankind. Never send to know for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for thee." You say, "What does that mean? Well, you know back in those days whenever somebody died, they rang a bell in the little village signifying someone died. When they heard the bell ring, people would say, "Who's that bell for? Who died?" Well, John Donne says anytime you pass a cemetery, anytime you hear a bell toll signifying a death, you don't have to ask who it is tolling for because it is for you and it is for me. This life is short and death is a reality.

God said to Adam, "Adam, the day that you sin, you are going to die." A lot of people have read that, and have said to me, "Pastor, I don't understand that. Because God said to Adam, 'the day you eat of that fruit you are going to die'. Wait a minute, pastor. Doesn't it say in Genesis 5:5 that Adam lived to be 930 years old? Yes, it does. "Well, then how then can the Bible say that the day he sinned he's going to die and he kept on living 930 years?" Now, there's a reason you need to write this down and understand it. You'll know why a little bit later.

- 3. When Adam sinned, he died:**
- a. Immediately in his spirit**
 - b. Gradually in his soul**
 - c. Eventually in his body**

When Adam sinned, he died, number one, immediately in his spirit. Boom! The light went out. No longer did he walk with God and talk with God in the cool of the evening and have that intimacy. Boom! It was gone. Number two, he died gradually in his soul. More and more he became aware of what a rotten person he was. He looked at himself and said, "Oh, no. I am naked." He tried to cover himself up. He had all kinds of family problems and troubles. In fact somebody said the shortest poem in the world is entitled, "Troubles." Here's the poem. "Adam had 'em." And that's true—troubles—Adam, had 'em. He had all kinds of troubles. It got worse. Number three, he died eventually in his body. That's right, 930 years later, he did die eventually, but you have to understand the different kinds of death. Well, that's Adam and his dynasty.

II. CHRIST'S DYNASTY—OUR RESCUE

1. King Grace rules

Number two, let's talk about Christ's dynasty, which is a statement about our restoration. What Adam ruined, Jesus restored. Now, here are the two kings in Christ's dynasty. Number one is King Grace. King Grace rules today. Look down there at verse 21 one more time. Romans 5:21. "So, that just as sin reigned in death, even so also grace might reign." Now, let me make a statement about good old King Grace. Don't you ever fear, friend. King Grace is stronger than King Sin. You may think, "But I'm so bad. I've done all these terrible things, I've thought

all these heinous thoughts, I’ve committed all these wicked acts. I can’t be saved.” Oh, no, friend. That’s what it says in verse 20. It says, “Where sin increased, grace just increased even more.”

I like telling people Bible stories which are so obscure, and maybe unknown they don’t even know this Bible story exists. Have you ever heard the story in the Bible of a king names Adoni-Bezek? Adoni-Bezek was a Canaanite king, and he was such a powerful, strong king he conquered thirty other kings. You know what Adoni-Bezek did to these thirty other kings? This is all in the Bible. He cut off their thumbs and he cut off their big toes. Now, you are saying, “Is this really in the Bible?” Trust me, it is. Maybe you have never heard it. Why did he cut the thumbs and the big toes off of these other kings? Why is that worse than killing a king? I’ll tell you why. because when you cut somebody’s thumb off, they can no longer grasp something. When you cut somebody’s big toe off, they cannot walk properly, they lose their balance, and they lose their ability to grip. I’m sure many of these kings would have preferred death to the slaves they became once their thumbs and toes were cut off, and they had to resort to begging at the table of King Adoni-Bezek. Adoni-Bezek was a wicked, mean king to do that.

He is a picture of what I am calling King Sin. But, did you know King Grace is stronger than King Sin? You say, “Pastor, where is this in the Bible?” It is in Judges 1. God’s man, whose name was Judah, came on the scene with the army of Israel and King Grace was stronger than King Sin and they conquered King Adoni-Bezek. So, can anybody just guess or surmise what Judah did to Adoni-Bezek when they captured him? Sure, you know exactly what they did. They cut off his thumbs and they cut off his big toes. Be not deceived, God is not marked for whatsoever a person sows, that’s what he’s going to reap. We say it like this. “What goes around comes around.” Suddenly, King Adoni-Bezek was a beggar himself. The strongest king in that part of the world was conquered by God’s king.

No matter how bad you have been in the past, you may be thinking, “My sin is so bad that grace cannot cover it.” Oh, no, friend. There is no sin so great that grace cannot overcome it. You look at the cross of Jesus. That Roman soldier took those nails and pounded them into the flesh of Jesus. That’s sin at its worst. But, grace at its best when Jesus said, “Father, forgive them. They don’t know what they are doing.” You listen to that thief hanging on the cross, turning to Jesus and saying, “If you are the son of God, save yourself and us.” That’s sin at its worst. But, you listen to what Jesus says when he says to the other thief, “Today, you will be with me in Paradise.” That’s grace at its best. You watch as those Roman soldiers put the crown of thorns on his head, and pluck the beard out of his face, and spit in his face, drive that spear up under his rib cage. There, you see sin at its worst. But, you look at Jesus and you see grace at its best when he hung there, and he said, “It is finished.” You see, friend, there was never a sin in the world that was stronger than the grace of God. King Grace is a lot stronger.

2. King Life rules

Well, there’s one other king in this passage of scripture. Can you guess what it is? Just as King Sin brought about King Death, in the dynasty of Jesus, King Grace gives birth to King Life. That’s why it says in the last verse that we have eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. It

says in verse 17, "that we might reign in life." Now, in the Bible you have to understand what eternal life is. Let me make three real quick statements about eternal life.

a. Eternal Life begins when you receive Jesus

Number one, eternal life begins when you receive Jesus. It doesn't start when you die. Some people have the misconception that you live physically, and then when you die, that's when eternal life begins. Oh, no. It starts when you meet Jesus.

b. Eternal Life is a gift that cannot be earned

Number two, eternal life is a gift that cannot be earned. Three times in this passage Paul says, "The gift is not like the sin. The gift is not like the trespass." Hey, folks. Just go ahead and quit trying to earn it. Have you ever received a gift from somebody, and when you received the gift, you said something like this or you thought something like this, "That wasn't a very good gift. I really think I deserved something better than that." Friend, that is the most ungrateful attitude you can have. Because, if you know the true nature of a gift, you don't ever earn or deserve a gift. A gift is something that is simply given because the giver loves you, cares for you. If you have the attitude, I deserve something better, you're not talking about a gift; you're talking about payment. You're talking about wages. You're talking about something you earn. Eternal life is not something you earn, it's a gift. So, you can never say to God, "God, I deserve something better than I am getting right now." Instead, you ought to just be thankful for the gift.

c. Eternal Life is knowing God personally

Number three, eternal life is knowing God personally. It says in John 17:3, when Jesus is praying, "And this is eternal life that they may know you and may know your son, Jesus Christ." Now, I'd guess and I estimate since I have been your pastor, I have told you at least thirty times that eternal life is knowing God. It is knowing Jesus Christ. The reason I am telling you that is because, God forbid that anyone of you should stand before God in heaven, and if he is given some kind of quiz and God says to you, "What is eternal life?" For you to say something like, "Living forever" I'll be so disappointed in heaven if you say that. But for every one of you who are members of Green Acres Baptist Church, if God says to you, "Tell me, what is eternal life?" If you say, "Knowing God," I'm going to be over in the background saying, "Yea, they learned it!" That's what eternal life is. It is knowing God. It's having a personal relationship with God.

3. When you receive Jesus, you receive life:

a. Immediately in your spirit

Do you remember what happened to Adam when he sinned? He died immediately in his spirit, he died gradually in his soul, and he died ultimately in his body. Now, let me tell you what salvation is. It reverses it. Look at it. When you receive Jesus you receive life immediately in your spirit. Instantaneously, you are justified. Immediately, you receive life in your spirit.

b. Gradually in your soul

Number two, gradually, in your soul, you receive life and that is the process of sanctification. That is something that takes place over a long period of time. You and I become more like Jesus. Are you more like Jesus today than you were last week? Are you more like Jesus today than you were one year ago? Are you more like Jesus today than you were ten years ago? That’s the process of sanctification.

c. Eventually in your body

Number three, you and I actually will receive life eventually in our bodies. Even this body is going to be buried, and it might decay, and corrupt, but even this body is going to be resurrected and renewed and become an eternal body like the body of Jesus, and the Bible calls that glorification.

Some people are living in Adam’s dynasty. They are in the wrong family. But some people have moved over, and they are under the rule and the reign of King Jesus, King Grace, King Life.

Are you really living? I didn’t ask you are you *existing*. Are you really living? This has been a little bit deep for some of you. I realize that. Maybe I can get on some of your levels right now. Actually, what I’m about to share with you is more my level. This is exactly what I think this passage of scripture is saying to all of us today. See if you can understand this.

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king’s horses and all the king’s men
Couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.

Pretty descriptive of a lot of people I know today, isn’t it? They have fallen, broken marriages, broken homes, broken hearts, broken hopes, broken dreams, broken health, broken plans, and all that this world has to offer, King Sin and King Death are powerless to restore that person’s life. Isn’t it sad? Isn’t it sad to look around and see millions of people trying to have their life rebuilt using the wrong tools, going to the wrong source? Every one of us is a Humpty Dumpty in one way or another. I don’t know about you, but when it comes to me, I revised that poem a little bit so it goes like this:

Jesus Christ came to my wall
And Jesus Christ died for my fall
He whipped King Death; He crushed King Sin
And through His grace
He put me back together again.

Folks, that’s what salvation is all about. Jesus restores what sin ruined!

OUTLINE

I. ADAM'S DYNASTY—OUR RUIN

1. King Sin ruled
2. King Death ruled

"Death" in the Bible means:

- a. Spiritual death - separation of the spirit from God
- b. Physical death - separation of spirit from the body
- c. Eternal death - separation of a person from God

3. When Adam sinned, he died:

- a. Immediately in his spirit
- b. Gradually in his soul
- c. Eventually in his body

II. CHRIST'S DYNASTY—OUR RESCUE

1. King Grace rules

(King Grace is stronger than King Sin)

2. King Life rules

Eternal Life:

- a. Begins when you receive Jesus
- b. Is a gift that cannot be earned
- c. Is knowing God personally (John 17:3)

3. When you receive Jesus, you receive life:

- a. Immediately in your spirit (Justification)
- b. Gradually in your soul (Sanctification)
- c. Eventually in your body (Glorification)



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To put it in Texas terms, “You’re mighty welcome to use any and all of my ingredients; just make your own chili!”

For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes