

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

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The Last Adam Brought Abounding Grace

by Dan Trygg

“For if by the transgression of the one (i.e., Adam), death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.¹⁸ So then, as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all people, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all people.¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.²⁰ The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace super-abounded,²¹ so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 5:17-21

In Romans, Paul makes an effort to present in a clear and organized fashion what his understanding of the work of Christ entailed. In order to do this, he had to explain the backdrop of sin which was initiated by Adam's first transgression. **Adam's choice to disobey God's express command to him was a watershed decision. It affected everything over which Adam had any authority or relation.** Not only did the original human couple experience the loss of their inner glory, feeling instead a sense of nakedness and separation (Gen. 3:7; Rom. 3:23), but *the entire creation was rocked by their decision.* **When sin entered the world, death came with it** (Rom. 5:12). Before the fateful choice of that day, there was no death in the entire world. The entire world order was fractured and broken because of Adam's sin. The Bible says that the entire creation was subjected to futility (Rom. 8:20). The Greek word for “futility” refers to what is “devoid of truth and appropriateness; frailty, lack of vigor or vitality; perverseness, twistedness, or depravation”. **All of creation was affected by the fall of Adam and Eve.** The natural balance of God's finely tuned ecosystem was shattered, irreparably broken by humankind's abandonment of their proper function and role as keeper, protector and ruler of the earth (Gen. 1:26; 2:15). We can't fully grasp the significance of what happened, but Paul tells us that creation longs for the redeemed children of God to be revealed at the coming of Jesus, because God intends to recreate, refashion and restore everything to its intended glory, balance and purpose (Rom. 8:18-24; cf. Matt. 24:7,8; Acts 3:19-21; II Pet. 3:10-13).

Not only did death enter the world through human sin, but verse 17 tells us that through Adam's sin death actually reigned over the creation. From that day onward, sin, brokenness, death and decay spread throughout the world, and has held sway ever since. When Adam obeyed the serpent, he unwittingly gave him legal authority to rule over him. As the scriptures declare, “...by what a person is overcome, by this he is enslaved” (II Pet. 2:19), and “Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone *as* slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey...?” (Rom. 6:16). **Adam was looking to become like God, but instead he enslaved himself to the devil, giving him the dominion over the earth that had belonged to humankind** (Lk. 4:5,6; Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; II Cor. 4:3,4; Eph. 2:1,2), and putting into his hand the awful power of death, which he has used to keep us under his dominion (Heb. 2:14,15). Adam thought that disobeying God's commandment would lead to greater freedom, wisdom and fulfillment, but the resulting inner brokenness has made all his descendants easy prey for the trickster's schemes, and he has led us into further foolishness, degradation, bondage, and death. **Satan knowingly has deceived and manipulated people so that their choices would bring them under God's wrath** (Rom. 1:18-32; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-19; 5:3-6), so that God's justice would be compelled to bring judgment upon the very ones He has created and loves. He has become the “accuser of the brethren” (Rev. 12:10), demanding day and night that God punish sinners for their offenses (The very transgressions which he himself has suggested and tempted them with!). **He takes perverse delight in trying to use God's own righteousness to wound His heart, attempting to compel Him to judge those made in His image.** Satan is a master logician and a manipulative legalist. When we violate God's commandments, we put ourselves outside of His protection, and into the hand of the enemy. **Satan loves to prosecute us. He wants nothing more than to use our foolish choices to tie us up into heavier consequences, hoping to break us and destroy us.** He knows he will receive judgment for his activities. At this point, he doesn't much care about that, anymore. He is living for *now*. His current dominion is planet earth, and his preoccupation is with deceiving, degrading, dominating and destroying us. It gives him a feeling of power, and if it appears that he can hurt God, or get one over on Him, then he feels like he must be pretty good. I mean, outwitting God, or forcing Him to do what you want, wouldn't that mean that you are pretty smart? That is where Satan is coming from, attempting to show that he is like God, ...or maybe even smarter. **In this life, the ultimate weapon is death,** and in all the years he has been doing this, Satan has only had a handful of people escape from death. Death has been the ultimate weapon.

All of this is just the backdrop for the grace message. **God is the ultimate chess player. He knows exactly what He is doing.** He has had a master plan from before the creation of planet earth, something that Satan could not have possibly conceived of or fully understood. God is no goody-two shoes patsy that can be jerked around by anyone, no matter how crafty his opponent may be. **God is wiser. He is the Creator, and in the universe that He has made, good will ultimately triumph over evil, and love is as strong as death** (Sol. 8:6) (Actually, it is even *stronger!*). Even before the foundation of the world, God knew we would sin, and He already determined to come as a sacrificial Lamb to redeem us from bondage to sin, death and the devil (Rev.13:8). Again, **instead of being forced to condemn the entire race of humanity, God devised a way for our debt to be justly paid** (Rom. 3:23-26), **...yet a way which also allowed for our escape and freedom.** By coming as a perfect, sinless human child, growing up in society with all its ugliness and injustice, the Word was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin (Heb. 4:15). **Jesus was able to identify with us so completely that He could be our substitute. This is the key to understanding Romans 5: Jesus became like another Adam** (I Cor. 15:21,22,45-49), **a corporate personality**, ...so that what He did, and what was done to Him, involved and affected all who are in Him. **He represented us all, taking not only our sins upon Himself** (I Pet. 2:24), **but even taking our broken humanity into Himself.** In so doing, as He was judged, we ourselves were judged. As He suffered and experienced the torment of the cross, and the actual full weight of the wrath of God against all human sin was poured out upon Him, **He took the punishment** that was levied against us, and **paid it in full** (II Cor. 5:14,15,21; Isa. 53:4-12). He did it *so completely and thoroughly* that *there is no sin which has not been paid for.*

Beyond suffering, however, the ultimate consequence of sin is *death* (Rom. 6:23), so **not only did Jesus die for us, He actually took us into Himself so that when He died, we died, ...thus forever moving our sinful self beyond any legal claim against us** (Rom. 7:4-6; Gal. 2:19,20; Col. 2:11-15). **That old self was put to death in Jesus** (Rom. 6:3-11). It does not matter what that old person *did*, or *might do*, because ultimately *it has been consigned to death in Him.* As a final *break with that old self*, in Jesus we are raised from death by being *united with Him in His resurrection.*

Resurrection power creates a new, sinless self, which is who we now are in Christ. It is by resurrection power that we are born again (literally, “born from above” – Jn. 3:3,7,8), and become true sons and daughters of God, members of His household and joint-heirs with Christ. **As new creatures in Christ, we now live by the power of the Christ-life in us, the inexhaustible Holy Spirit** (II Cor. 5:14-17; Gal. 5:25). Paul sums it up nicely in Romans 8:1-4, “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. ³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God *did*: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and *as an offering* for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴ so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” **We can now live a godly life, because God Himself dwells inside of us to help us do what we could never do on our own.**

How does this become ours? It is important to see that **all that I have described has already been done for us in Christ. It does not entail anything from us.** We cannot do anything to put our old sinful selves to death, and we are powerless to make ourselves new and righteous on our own. **God has done all this for us, and offers it to us, as a gift.** If we want this applied to us, **if we want it to become real in our lives, then we simply, humbly ask for Him to be our Savior and our Master.** It is important to recognize that what we are choosing to do is to turn away from sin and a self-directed life. **To accept God’s deliverance means nothing less than to ask Him to fulfill His purpose in our lives.** We have to really mean it. If you really want to be free from the bondage of sin, the condemnation of the devil, and the consequence of death, then *you must really desire to make a break from that old way, and purpose to find out God’s will for your life.* **This is repentance, a change of mind and heart, a new perspective about who God is and who you could become. Next, we must humbly ask Him to take us as His own and lead us in His ways and in His truth.** To do that, we must believe that He *will do* as He said. We are taking Him at His word, and trusting in Him to act on our behalf. **This is faith.** We believe God exists, and that He will reward those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). That is the most basic elements of beginning on the walk with God. **To walk in faith would entail pursuing more of God,** for example, learning more about Him and His revealed truth by studying the Bible, or developing a relationship with Him by prayer and listening. **Faith is not just a decision, it is a direction. Faith is not a doctrinal stand, it is a journey.**

The salvation that God has made available for us in Jesus is so **much more powerful** than the damage that has happened as a result of sin and the work of Satan. Whereas originally death entered the world, and reigned over people, now in Christ resurrection and life are poured out and reign in those who trust in Him. **Where sin increased, now grace overflows to not only cover, but to heal, transfigure and transform us into God’s glory-bearers.** Grace reigns and rules in the Kingdom of God, both for us at the present time, and on into the eternal future.