

Nuggets and Gems from the Bible

THE GIFT
IN CHRIST
SURPASSING
THE HERITAGE
IN ADAM

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Living Stream Ministry

Anaheim, CA • www.lsm.org

THE GIFT IN CHRIST SURPASSING THE HERITAGE IN ADAM

The book of Romans reveals that we have both the heritage in Adam and the gift in Christ. We must realize that the gift in Christ surpasses the heritage in Adam. Since we were all born of Adam and in Adam, we have inherited all that he is and has. What are the items of our inheritance in Adam? Two dreadful things—sin and death. Regardless of whether we are good or bad, as long as we were born of Adam's race we have sin and death as our heritage. Praise God for the gift in Christ! The gift in Christ surpasses the heritage in Adam.

TWO MEN

In [Romans 5:12-21](#) we have two men, two acts, and two results. This passage is difficult to remember because everything in it transcends our understanding. Have you ever thought that in the whole universe there are only two men?

Nevertheless, in the eyes of God there are just two men—Adam and Christ. We are all included in either the first man or the second. Everything depends on where you are. If you are in Adam, you are a part of Adam. If you are in Christ, you are a part of Christ.

Adam

Adam was the first man ([1 Cor. 15:47](#)). He was not only the first man, but also the first Adam ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). Adam was created by God ([Gen. 1:27](#)), and had nothing of the divine nature and life of God. He was merely God's creation, a work of His hand.

Christ

Christ is the second Man ([1 Cor. 15:47](#)) and the last Adam ([1 Cor. 15:45](#)). What does it mean to say that Christ is the second Man and the last Adam? It means that Christ is the last man. After Him, there is no third man, for the second Man is the last. This excludes the possibility of a third man. Christ is the second Man and the last Adam. Following Him, there is no third Adam.

This second Man is a man mingled with God. He is God incarnated to be a man ([John 1:14](#)). The first man had nothing of the divine nature

and life of God, for he was merely God's creation. The second Man is the mingling of God with His creature, full of the divine nature and life of God. He is a man mingled with God, a God-man. The fullness of the Godhead is embodied in Him ([Col. 2:9](#); [John 1:16](#)).

TWO ACTS

Adam's Transgression in the Garden

[Romans 5:14](#) mentions Adam's transgression, referring to Adam's transgression of eating the tree of knowledge of good and evil in the garden. After God created Adam, He placed him in front of the tree of life, indicating that Adam should partake of this tree. This would have enabled him to receive God's life and to live with God. Adam failed. He forsook the tree of life that denoted God as life and turned to the tree of knowledge that signified Satan as the source of death. Thus, Adam's transgression consisted in leaving the tree of life and pursuing the tree of knowledge ([Gen. 2:8-9, 17](#); [3:1-7](#)). The issue of the tree of life is life, but the issue of the tree of knowledge is death. This means that Adam gave up life and chose death.

Christ's Obedience on the Cross

The second act was Christ's obedience on the cross ([Phil. 2:8](#)). This act of obedience, a righteous act performed by Christ, terminated the man of knowledge ([6:6](#)). Adam brought man to knowledge, making him a man of knowledge. Christ, by His obedience on the cross, terminated the man of knowledge and brought man back to life. [First Peter 2:24](#) tells us that Christ's death restored man to life, and [John 3:14-15](#) says that Christ was lifted up on the cross in order to bring man back to eternal life. Therefore, the obedience of Christ on the cross terminated the fallen man of knowledge, the man of death, and recovered man back to life, making him a man of life.

TWO RESULTS

These two men have two acts, and the two acts have brought forth two results.

The Result of Adam's Transgression

Sin Entered

Sin entered through Adam's transgression ([5:12](#)). It seems that sin is mentioned in [Romans 5 through 8](#) in a personified way. It is like

a person who can reign (5:21), who can lord it over people (6:14), who can deceive and kill people (7:11), who can dwell in people and do things against their will (7:17, 20). Sin is alive and exceedingly active (7:9). Thus, this sin must be the evil nature of Satan, the evil one, dwelling, acting, and working in fallen mankind. Sin is actually an evil person. Through Adam's transgression sin entered.

Many Were Constituted Sinners

As a result of Adam's disobedience the many, including us, were constituted sinners (5:19). We not only were made sinners; we were constituted sinners. We were not created sinners, but constituted sinners. An element not created by God was injected into our being and constituted us sinners. We are not sinners by accident; we are sinners by constitution. Sin has been wrought into us and constituted into our being. Therefore, sin is not just an outward deed, but an inward, subjective element in our constitution.

All Men Were Condemned unto Death

Furthermore, all men have been condemned to death (5:18). All men are born of Adam and in Adam. So, through Adam's one offense all men

have been condemned to death in him as he was condemned.

Death Reigned over All Men

Thus, death reigns over all men (5:14). Death has become a king ruling over all. “As sin reigned in death” (5:21), so death reigns through sin.

In Adam All Die

The final result of Adam’s transgression is that in Adam all die (1 Cor. 15:22). Everyone has died in Adam. Sometimes we say of a certain person, “He is dying.” In a sense, people are not living but dying. We are all born to die, because we have a powerful king over us named death. He was inaugurated by sin, his forerunner. Sin brought death into power. Thus, all men are under the reign of death. When we were born in Adam, we began to die. Before people die absolutely, they sin, and sin hastens the hour of death. The more you sin, the faster you die; the less you sin, the slower you die. If you do not want to die quickly, you should stay away from sin.

The Result of Christ’s Obedience

Praise the Lord that we have the second Man,

the second act, and the second result! What is the result of Christ's obedience?

Grace Came

Grace came ([John 1:17](#)) through the obedience of Christ. The grace of God has abounded to many ([Rom. 5:15](#)). Paul does not say that life has abounded. This is similar to Adam's transgression, in which sin came first and death followed. Likewise, through the obedience of Christ, grace came first, and life followed. Death is versus life, and grace is versus sin. Sin came from Adam's transgression, but grace came through Christ's obedience. Sin is Satan personified, come to poison us, damage us, and bring death into us. Grace is God personified, come to give us life and enjoyment. Through Adam's transgression, sin entered the human race as poison for man's destruction, but through Christ's righteous, obedient act God came as grace for our enjoyment.

Many Were Constituted Righteous

[Romans 5:19](#) tells us, "through the obedience of the One shall the many be constituted righteous." We are not only righteous; we are constituted righteous. If you paint my skin green,

that will not affect my inward constitution. However, if you inject green paint into my blood, my whole being will be eventually constituted with green paint. This would not be outward painting, but inward constituting. When the living God comes into our being as grace, we are constituted righteous.

Many Were Justified unto Life

A further result of Christ's obedience is that we have been justified unto life (5:18). Since we have been constituted righteous, we have come up to the standard of God's righteousness and now correspond to it. Thus, we are justified unto life. Justification is for life. First we have justification; then we have life. Justification changes our outward position, and life changes our inward disposition. Now we have both justification outwardly for our position and life inwardly for our disposition.

Grace Reigned through Righteousness unto Life Eternal

[Romans 5:21](#) says, "grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Grace reigns. We have another

king because we are now in another kingdom. Once we were in the kingdom of death, and sin was our king through death. Now we are in the kingdom of life, and grace is our king. “Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.” This thought is very deep. Why must grace reign through righteousness? Because we were sinners. If we had not been constituted sinners, we would have been clean and righteous, with nothing in our being contradicting God’s character. If such had been the case, we would not have needed righteousness. However, we were constituted sinners. How can grace, which is God Himself, reign over such unrighteous people? Grace needs an instrument, a means, to reign. This instrument, this means is God’s righteousness. Thus, grace reigns through God’s righteousness unto eternal life. Because Christ has died on the cross to accomplish redemption for us and because God’s righteousness has been revealed to us, we have a position to enjoy God as grace. We even have the position to claim God as our grace. Therefore, grace can reign through righteousness unto eternal life.

Let us apply this to our experience. Suppose I am a sinful, dying man. I am condemned to death, and death reigns over me. One day I

realize that Christ died for me on the cross to accomplish God's redemption, and God's righteousness is revealed to me. As a sinner, I come to God under the redeeming blood of Christ. Immediately, the righteousness of God binds Him to justify me, and He becomes my portion. I can claim Him as my portion because the redemption of Christ has fulfilled all the requirements of His righteousness. I now have the position to claim Him as my portion. He has no choice. Because of His righteousness, He has to come to me as grace for my enjoyment. Grace means that I receive a gift which I do not deserve. If I work for you, you owe me my wages as a debt, not as a grace. However, if you present me five hundred dollars as a gift, that is grace, for I do not deserve it. Through God's righteousness I receive grace, which I do not deserve.

God has given Himself to us as a grace that we do not deserve. We never worked for it, and we cannot pay for it. The price is too high. God simply gives Himself to us as grace through righteousness. This grace becomes our portion for our enjoyment and reigns through righteousness, resulting in eternal life. This does not refer to eternal blessing, but to eternal life, which we may enjoy today. It is not the human life or the

created life; it is the divine, eternal, and uncreated life.

Under the blood of Christ, we claim God as our portion, and we receive from God a measure which we do not deserve. This measure is grace as our enjoyment. The issue of this enjoyment is life eternal, a life which will transform our whole being. It will sanctify us completely and deal thoroughly with our disposition. Thus, we will become sanctified, transformed, conformed, and glorified persons.

In Christ All Shall Be Made Alive

In Adam all die, but in Christ all shall be made alive ([1 Cor. 15:22](#)). Adam's transgression caused and still causes all his descendants to die, but Christ's obedience causes all men to live. In Adam all are dying; in Christ all are living. The result of Adam's transgression is death unto all. The result of Christ's obedience is life unto all.

FOUR REIGNING THINGS

We have seen two men, two acts, and two results. These two men with their two acts and two results have brought in four reigning things.

Sin

Having Entered through the First Man

As we have seen, sin entered through the first man (5:12). Through the disobedience of Adam, the evil one, as sin, entered into the world. The world here refers to mankind in general, for, in a sense, the word world in the New Testament means mankind. For instance, John 3:16 says that God loved the world, meaning that God loved mankind. Thus, sin has entered into mankind, into human nature, through the first man Adam.

Dwelling in Man's Fallen Body

After entering into the human race, sin made its dwelling place in the fallen body of man (7:17, 18, 20, 23). Sin does not dwell in our mind, soul, or spirit. Sin's lodging is our body. Paul said that sin dwelt within him, that the law of sin was in the members of his body, and that in his flesh was nothing good, only sin (7:17, 18, 23). Sin dwells in our body. Although our body was created by God as good, it became flesh once sin had been injected into it and had made its home there. Although God created our body, He did not create the flesh. The flesh is a mixture of

God's creation with sin, the evil one. Thus, the body has become the flesh, and sin dwells in this flesh. Every kind of lust has its source in the flesh.

Having the Law as Its Power

Sin has the law as its power (1 Cor. 15:56; Rom. 7:11). Without law, sin is powerless. According to Romans 7:11, sin kills us through the law because the law gives sin its power. Sin uses the law as a knife to kill us. First Corinthians 15:56 says, "The strength of sin is the law." Do not touch the law, for if you do, you will touch the killing knife of sin. We are absolutely unable to keep the law, and it is foolish for us even to try. If we attempt to keep the law, sin will use the law to kill us.

Reigning in Death

Sin reigns in death (5:21; 6:12). Sin, like every other king, needs an authority in order to reign. The authority of sin is death. Sin has authority to reign as a king in death. Romans 5:21 and 6:12 show sin reigning as a king.

Sin is in our flesh, our fallen body. This sin is not an act of wrongdoing; it is the personification of the evil one. In Romans 7:21 Paul said

that “the evil” was present with him. The Greek word translated “the evil” in this verse is *kakos*, a word denoting that which is evil in character. This must refer to the evil character of Satan himself. I have no doubt that the sin which has entered into our body is the incarnation of Satan. When man ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, that fruit entered his being. In fact, everything we eat comes into our body. As we have already seen, the tree of life in the garden denoted God, and the tree of knowledge signified Satan. Therefore, when man partook of the tree of knowledge, man took Satan, the evil one, into him. The body created by God originally had no evil in it. The Bible says that the man created by God was very good and upright ([Gen. 1:31](#); [Eccl. 7:29](#)). However, after the fall another element was injected into man’s body. That element was sin, the very nature of the evil one. This sin reigns in us. Its power is the law, and it reigns in death.

Death

Having Come through Sin

The second reigning thing is death. Death came through sin ([5:12](#)), for sin opened the way for death to enter mankind. The sting of death is

sin (1 Cor. 15:56). A sting, such as the sting of a scorpion, contains poison. Sin likewise has the element of poison. Once sin poisons us, we experience death.

Reigning through One Man over All Men

Through Adam's offense death reigns over all men (5:17, 14). According to Hebrews 2:14, Satan has the power of death. Hence, Satan is intimately related to death. Sin ushers in death, and death reigns with power in the hands of Satan. Thus, Satan is related to death, death is related to sin, and the power of sin is the law.

Grace

Having Come through the Second Man

John 1:14 tells us that when Christ was incarnated as a man, He was full of grace. John 1:17 says that the law was given by Moses, but that grace came through Jesus Christ. Grace came with Christ. This means that when Christ is present grace also is present. As sin is the personification of Satan, grace is the personification of Christ. Therefore, grace is Christ, the embodiment of God. What is grace? Grace is

God incarnated to be our enjoyment. God has given Himself to us for our enjoyment. If we compare [1 Corinthians 15:10](#) with [Galatians 2:20](#), we see that the grace of God is Christ. In [1 Corinthians 15:10](#) Paul says that he labored more abundantly than the other apostles, although it was not he himself, but the grace of God that was with him. In [Galatians 2:20](#) Paul says that it was no longer he, but Christ living in him. Therefore, grace is the living Person of Christ. [Second Corinthians 13:14](#) also mentions the grace of Christ. Therefore, Christ is the grace of God. When Christ comes to us as God embodied for our enjoyment, that is grace. This grace has come through the second Man.

***Abounding and Reigning
through Righteousness unto Eternal Life***

This grace abounds, multiplies, and reigns through righteousness unto eternal life ([5:15, 20, 21](#)). We have seen that through the redemption of Christ we have the righteousness of God and that this righteousness gives us the ground to claim Christ as our grace. This grace is constantly abounding and multiplying. The abounding of grace results in reigning unto eternal life. The result is not something that is material and

temporal, but something in the reign of grace that is eternal and divine—God’s divine life. The more grace we enjoy, the more life we have. This life is a sanctifying life, a transforming life, a conforming life, and a glorifying life.

The Believers

Having Received the Abundance of Grace and of the Gift of Righteousness

Romans 5:17 says, “those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.” How can we reign in life? We reign in life by receiving the abundance of grace. We need to consider the practical significance of the abundance of grace. Suppose you have a certain problem. If you find it easy to care for this problem, it means that you have an adequate supply of grace. If you find your situation unbearable, it proves that you lack the abundance of grace. Although you have grace, you have only a small portion. You do not have the abundance of grace. Many times a brother is offended when we speak a frank word to him. Why is he offended? Because he is short of grace. If he has the abundance of grace, that grace will sustain him and

enable him to bear a hard word. The most difficult thing for us to bear is a hard word. We all like to hear soft, sugar-coated words. However, if you like sugar-coated words, you will be cheated. It is much better to speak salty words. In [Colossians 4:6](#) Paul tells us that our speech should always be seasoned with salt. This means that we must be restricted in our speech. Helpful words are salted words, not sugar-coated words. Learn to accept salty words. If you are filled with grace and have the abundance of grace, you will be happy with any kind of word.

Paul had a certain trouble, a thorn in the flesh, and he asked the Lord three times to remove it ([2 Cor. 12:7-9](#)). The Lord seemed to answer him, “I will not remove the thorn. You must suffer it by My grace. My grace is sufficient for you.” What is this grace? It is the incarnation of Christ. It is nothing less than Christ Himself as our enjoyment. When you enjoy this grace, the issue will be life. You will be rich in life. The more you endure hardships by grace, the more you will be filled with life.

Thus, Paul said that grace not only “abounded to the many,” but also that “grace might reign through righteousness unto life eternal.” Life continually issues out of the multiplication of grace.

Grace must abound. [Romans 5:20](#) says, “where sin abounded grace has more abounded.” Grace always exceeds sin. Although sin is powerful, grace is more powerful. Grace is stronger than sin. We need to open ourselves to the grace and enlarge our capacity to receive grace upon grace. [John 1:16](#) says, “of His fullness we all received, and grace upon grace.” Christ is the source of grace, and Christ is grace itself. If we open ourselves to Christ and receive “the abundance of grace,” we shall be filled with life.

Reigning in Life through the Man Christ

As grace reigns unto life, so we who “receive the abundance of grace...shall reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ” ([5:17](#)). From the beginning of Romans through [5:11](#), there is little mention of life. [Romans 5:10](#) says that we shall be saved in His life, and [Romans 1:17](#) tells us that the just shall have life and live by faith. We find a strong word in [Romans 5:17](#), telling us that we “shall reign in life.” Hence, we can “walk in newness of life” ([6:4](#)). We reign in life and walk in newness of life because we have received the abundance of grace in Christ. Today through the man Jesus Christ, by the abundance

of His grace, we not only have eternal life, but we can reign over all things and all situations in this life and walk in its newness.

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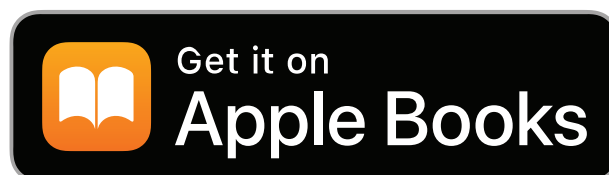
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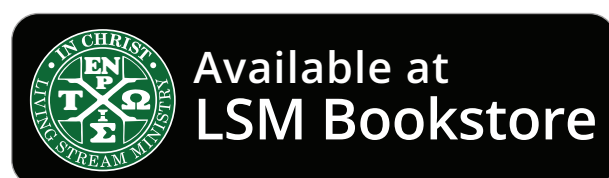
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