

Romans 5:12-19 ¹² Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned— ¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, 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! ¹⁶ 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. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ 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.

Two Men Who Changed the World

- 1. Adam**
- 2. Jesus**

As the masterpiece of God's creation people get to change the world. Sometimes those changes are for the better. And at other times those changes are for the worse. People like Washington, Carver, Patton, and Reagan. Like Lincoln, Gate, Jobs, and Franklin. Like Ross, Palin, and Oprah. Names that are well known right now in our country which wait to see if they will survive like Darwin, Alexander the Great, Luther, Nero, Socrates, and DaVinci. All brought change to their world. The degree of change different for each one but nothing compared to the two that brought about the biggest changes the world has ever seen.

These two changed the world more than any others. Their changes are not forgotten and never will be. They aren't just important to one part of the world. Two men who changed the world, one for the better and the other for the worse.

The first one started out well in his wonderful home all perfectly prepared. His life was good. He was able to get up each morning and look at the world around him with joy and contentment. All his needs were covered. All his happiness was complete. He didn't have a difficulty in the world. He could get to his job each day with satisfaction that everything would work out as it should. Nature responded so well to his every touch as he cared for his garden home. Fruit for food and trees for shade. Animals to watch and a wife who loved him in every way. Perfect peace of a perfect life.

Then one day it all changed. While spending time in the garden with his wife something so suspicion snuck into his life. A serpent slithered in and spoke to his spouse. Satan's words were smooth and sounded smart. He said that God was unkind and holding back from Adam and Eve.

The LORD was an unloving being who was saving the best for only himself. So came the snake's solution: throw off God's oppressive rule and be the masters of their own fate. So simple. So succulent. It didn't seem like much but Adam's one act of sinking his teeth into that fruit changed the whole world. He had tried to get what seemed to him a better life only to fall.

The Apostle Paul describes this foolishness, **Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned.** Paul is very clear. Although we might think people are guilty in God's eyes because they sin so much, or because their sin was so great, it only took one sin to corrupt the whole world. We might think a murderer is a really bad person because murder is a really bad sin but each of us in no better or worse because we too come from Adam. It only took one sin to do this. He partook of a piece of fruit. That disqualified all of us from God's grace.

Sin makes such empty promises to us. Satan dangles the promise of freedom in front of us. "Don't listen to God," we're told, "follow your own desires." And so we do—we sin. Then comes the bait and switch. Sin rewards our foolishness all right, but it's not with freedom or happiness. Sin rewards us with death.

That death is ours death of our original sinfulness. It's the state into which we all are born. Born in the likeness which Adam became. We are born sinful, corrupt, and immoral just as Adam changed. Even know we were not there when he first sinned, that guilt is passed down to us. We inherit it from him just as we have inherited our physical features.

Sin is here and real whether we see it or not. **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.** We see death reign in our lives. It becomes a part of our lives and dominates. We are laid low in the ashes of death, even while living. Death sits as the greatest change that has been brought into this world through Adam. Its cold grip extends to every part of us. It marches in and does not leave as with experience firsthand sickness and disease. Colds and flu, cancer and weakness. We endure the loss of a loved one with those painful trips to the graveside. All while, death encircles us.

Because of sin we too might be tempted to blame God for being unfair. We might be tempted to hate him and put our faith at risk. All while death draws closer. It reigns worse than any tyrant. Death desires to hold unto us for all time and eternity The sad fact is that we cannot overthrow death. No matter how we try to turn the tide, we can't free ourselves. All because Adam brought about this change into the world.

But then came the other man to change the world. It is Christ, our Savior. As true man, Jesus lived for us. He did all the things we couldn't do ourselves. He gladly obeyed his heavenly Father's will; keeping each commandment in our place. He loved all people. Christ was perfectly obedient by what he didn't do as well. He refused to be tempted to sin in any way. He even won where Adam had lost.

Having been lead out into the desert by the Holy Spirit, he fasted. Forty days and forty nights, he did not eat and he was hungry. In all the weakness of his human flesh his body yearned for food. He craved what God had not given him at that time. So started the second scene for Satan to shatter holiness. Seductively he spoke, “If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread” (Matthew 4:3). He tried the same trick that had worked all those years before. What always to try to ruin God’s world again!

Then look how completely Jesus fulfilled the requirement of God to live a perfect life in our place. With the same temptation right in front of him, he didn’t turn in unbelief. He didn’t place himself above what God had said to him. Instead he chose to stay with God. Jesus expressed his trust in God, “It is written: ‘Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.’” That was Christ doing more than just going through action on this earth untested.

Jesus lived for us. He gladly obeyed his heavenly Father; keeping every commandment. We see that in his temptation but also in the rest of his life. As Satan assailed him and tempted him to sin. As he was popular with the crowd and wanted him to have earthly glory as king. As he tried to get Jesus to turn from the suffering and death on the cross. He refused to give into the temptation. In that process, Christ fulfilled God’s Law. He lived for his Father. He worshipped, honored and obeyed his Father in every way. He loved his neighbor as himself. He kept himself pure from the stain of sin. He paid the dues to be able to walk right up to God and say look I have done what pleases you.

Then he walked to the place where Satan reigned over sinners. Into the pit of the broken lives of sinners and gave his life. He bore our guilt and shame. And the change he brought permeates our lives. We died with Christ; we were crucified with Christ; we rose with Christ; we are seated with him in heaven. When Christ died, he died for us. When he rose, he rose for us. **the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, 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!** Jesus has overthrown the rule of death and the devil.

That’s the greatest change this world has ever seen! We read: **Just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification for all men.** Because of what Jesus did, you are justified in the eyes of God. God looks at you and says, “Not guilty!”

Adam’s sin was the worst mistake in human history. But what Jesus did – his death on the cross – that is the best thing that has ever happened in human history. The single most important event in the history of the world – right here – Jesus taking on our sin and dying on the cross. How many people are affected by this? Billions. The lesson says: **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. God offers this solution to all people. Because one man, Jesus Christ, changed the world, all who believe are made righteous in the eyes of God.

That's what Jesus changed. More than anything else, you want to be at peace with God, don't you? You want to escape that sin that Adam brought into the world and leave it behind, don't you? All that sin makes this an impossible dream. Then, Jesus steps into the picture and wins for us. He gets rid of your sin. He changes you and gives you peace and joy and hope. May God bless you, as he reminds you of how he changed the world. Amen.