

## The Reigns of Sin and Grace

Romans, Part XXX

Romans 5:20-21

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### I. Two Humanities

By His grace, God divided humanity into two immediately after the fall. God spoke to the serpent:

*“And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel”* (Gen 3:15).

God established a division, an \_\_\_\_\_, between the *seed of the serpent* and the *seed of the woman*. This is a result of His grace. Jesus is the head of humanity at peace with God even as Adam is the head of humanity at enmity with God. So, now, what about the law?

*<sup>20</sup>Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, <sup>21</sup>so that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### II. The Reigns of Sin and Grace

A. The law highlights the severity of our fallenness

Paul writes that *“the law entered that the offense might abound.”* *“The offense”* refers back to Adam’s rebellion against God in the garden (v. 15). The law did not make us sinful, but the law does – apart from the grace of God at work in salvation – cause sin to abound. In Adam, therefore, we witness *the reign of sin* and death. The law simply accentuates that reign. *“Think of sin as a small color transparency,”* one commentator writes, *“the law puts a bright light behind it and a large screen in front of it”* (Wright, 442). The law, in other words, cannot solve our sin problem. *“Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are in the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in [God’s] sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin”* (Rom 3:19-20). The law highlights the severity of our fallenness, but it is powerless to save us from our fallenness.

B. The law prepares the way for the grace of God

But the law prepares the way for the grace of God. Paul writes, *“but where sin abounded, grace abounded much more...”* The law drives us to the forgiving and transforming grace of God in Christ (cf. Gal 3:24). What the law cannot accomplish weak as it is because of our fallen nature in Adam, God accomplishes through His Son and by His Spirit so that *“grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (cf. Rom 8:3-4). Christ accomplishes that which the law cannot. Hence, Paul contrasts *sin and \_\_\_\_\_* not *sin and righteousness*. Why? Because our righteousness comes as a gift of \_\_\_\_\_ and not a result of our own effort. *Grace reigns through righteousness* – we are declared righteous through faith in Jesus and then Jesus begins to enable us to practice righteousness by His Spirit. Forgiving and transforming grace.

#### An Outline of Romans

- I. Introduction
  - A. Opening Greeting (1:1-7)
  - B. Travel Plans (1:8-15)
  - C. Theme (1:16-17)
- II. Credenda: “The Righteous by Faith” Shall Live
  - A. God’s Wrath vs. Unrighteousness (1:18-3:20)
  - B. The Revelation of God’s Righteousness (3:21-4:25)
  - C. The Triumph of God’s Righteousness (5-8)
  - D. The Universality of God’s Righteousness (9-11)
- III. Agenda: The Righteous “Shall Live by Faith”
  - A. Transformed not Conformed (12-13)
  - B. Patient not Proud (14-15:13)
- IV. Conclusion
  - A. Paul, Minister to the Gentiles (15:14-21)
  - B. Travel Plans (15:22-33)
  - C. Closing Greetings and Benediction (16)

### III. Grace Abounding

So here's the long and the short of what Paul wants us to understand: **in \_\_\_\_\_, the law causes sin to abound; in \_\_\_\_\_, grace causes righteousness to abound all the more.** As surely as Adam's sin has corrupted the old humanity, so Christ's righteousness will transform the new humanity (5:17). Christ's transformative work is even more powerful than Adam's corruptive work.

Old Humanity in Adam Reign of Sin & Death	The Functions of God's Law	New Humanity in Christ Reign of Grace
Bad news! Increases our fear of God because His holiness assures that we are guilty and that we cannot escape His judgment for our sin and corruption.	Further reveals God's holy character. (Rom 2:17-20)	Good news! Increases our love for God as we learn more of the greatness and grandeur of the God who has created us and redeemed us.
Bad news! Exposes our failure to do that which we ought to do; increases guilt; accentuates our sin. Law is a weight, a burden. What to do? Hide from it. (Jn 3:20)	Further exposes human sinfulness. (Rom 7:7-12)	Good news! Exposes our sin so that we (1) openly confess our sin and receive Christ's forgiving grace and (2) depend increasingly upon the Spirit to transform our character by His grace and make us personally righteous. (Jn 3:21)
Bad news! Ritual performance that tries to buy God off and get him to weigh our sins less than our good deeds. (Ps 50:7-15)	Promised forgiveness in the sacrificial system. (Heb 9:15-22)	Good news! Sacrifices called us to trust that God Himself would provide atonement for our sin. (Ps 51:14-17)
Bad news! The Gospel is the stench of death, convicting us of our sin and unbelief. (2 Cor 2:15-16)	Fulfilled through Jesus and in His people. (Rom 8:3-4) (Heb 10:1-10)	Good news! The Gospel is the aroma of life for Jesus is the final sacrifice and by His Spirit empowers us to live in newness of life. (2 Cor 2:15-16)

If you are in \_\_\_\_\_, if you are part of the old humanity, subject to the reign of sin and death, then what does the law do? The law intensifies your rebellion, accentuates your sin, increases your guilt, multiplies your transgressions, and deepens your shame.

But if you are in \_\_\_\_\_, if you are part of the new humanity, subject to the reign of God's grace and of righteousness and life, then what does the law do? The law graciously reveals more of your God, more of your own sin, and more of Christ's remarkable work of redemption. The law, for those who know the forgiveness of God in Christ, is a \_\_\_\_\_. The grace of God teaches us to sing with Moses, "*Yahweh is the Rock, His work is perfect; for all His ways are justice, a God of truth and without injustice; righteous and upright is He*" (Dt 32:4). The grace of God moves us to sing with David, "*Oh how I love your law; it is my meditation day and night*" (Ps 119:97). The grace of God enables us, like Ezekiel and the Apostle John, to eat the scroll of God's judgments and for even His judgments to taste like honey in our mouths (Ezek 3:3; Rev 10:10).

### IV. Conclusion