

## **ROMANS: RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH FROM START TO FINISH**

### **V. God's Righteousness Applied By Justification, Romans 3:21-5:21**

#### **D. The Applicability Of Justification**

#### **1. The Headship Of Adam In The Fall**

**(Romans 5:12)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. The theme of the epistle to the Romans is that God's righteousness is available to man by faith from start to finish (Romans 1:16-17; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 441).
- B. This belief is often not accepted in Christendom: Some claim that one must have faith plus works to be justified, and others say that though we are justified by faith, we cannot righteously live a godly life by faith.
- C. In Romans 5:12-21, Paul discussed the applicability of justification, showing that as in Adam all mankind stands condemned for Adam's act of sin, so all who trust in Christ are justified by His work on the cross.
- D. However, Romans 5:12 is hard to interpret, producing different views, so we study the verse for clarification:

#### **II. The Headship Of Adam In The Fall, Romans 5:12.**

- A. The last phrase of Romans 5:12 KJV, ". . . for that all have sinned," translates the Greek words, *eph ho* ("for that") *pantes* ("all") *hemarton* ("have sinned"), and this phrase has been the source of great theological debate as to its interpretation and resulting theological meaning.
- B. There are five major ways to interpret this phrase, so we view and evaluate each one to arrive at the truth:
  1. First, Jerome's (Roman Catholic) Vulgate interprets *eph ho* to mean "in him," that is, in Adam. However, the antecedent "one man" in the context is far removed from the phrase, making this interpretation unlikely. (Albert Barnes, Barnes' Notes on the N. T., 1962, reprint (Kregel, 1975), p. 584)
  2. Second, one can grammatically interpret "death" to be the antecedent of *ho*, but that would reverse the Biblical idea that death is sin's product, not its cause. (Ibid.)
  3. Third, the Pelagian view takes the phrase idiomatically to mean "because" to teach that death passed upon all **because** "all men have sinned in their own persons." (Charles Hodge, Com. on the Epist. to the Rom., rev. ed., 1886, reprint (Eerdmans, 1974), p. 149) However, Romans 5:13-14 claims the opposite, that death reigned over those who had not sinned like Adam, and the Pelagian view that one can avoid sinning and not need salvation counters the Romans 3:9 claim that all men are under the power of sin. (John Murray, The NIC on the N. T.: The Epist. to the Romans, 1968, reprint (Eerdmans, 1980), vol. I, p. 183-184)
  4. Fourth, one can treat *eph ho* as an idiom with causal meaning so that all men are reckoned to have sinned in Adam though they did not personally commit Adam's act of sin, Ibid., p. 184. Many evangelicals adopt this Augustinian interpretation that contrasts with the errant Pelagian one, but they disagree over its minor "federal" and "seminal" headship views of Adam: the federal view holds that God treated Adam's sin as representing the sin of all his descendants so that Adam's penalty of death was judicially made the penalty of all mankind where the seminal view holds that the human race, being *physically* in Adam, was treated by God as being involved in Adam's act of sin so that all have received God's penalty of death. (Ibid., Bib. Know. Com., N. T., p. 458) However, this interpretation strains against the meaning of *hemarton*, for everywhere else that Paul uses this verb he never means a single trespass in Adam, but personal acts of sin by individuals. (Wm. Hendriksen, NTC: Exp. of Paul's Epist. to the Rom., Vol. I, Chs. 1-8, 1980, p. 178-179) Also, in Ezekiel 18:14-20, God labors to clarify that a **SON** is **NOT ACCOUNTABLE** for his **FATHER'S SINFUL ACTS**, what in principle strains against the federal and seminal headship views.
  5. Fifth, one can view *hemarton* as personal acts of sin, **but not with Pelagian theology**: if *eph ho* is taken idiomatically to be causal, but in the **inferential sense** where *eph ho* equals *epi touto hoti*, "for this reason that" or "since," Paul would thus claim that as by Adam sin entered into the world, and death by sin so that death spread unto all men as is **evidenced** by the fact that all men since Adam have sinned. This rendering treats "sinned" (*hemarton*) like Paul's other uses of this verb and explains why Paul abruptly broke his train of thought at Romans 5:13-14 to explain that men committed sinful acts between the time of Adam and the Mosaic Law though sin was not defined as sin until the Law. (Ibid, p. 178, fn.152; Ibid., p. 179)

**Lesson: Avoiding the trap of siding with the Augustinian interpretation just because it opposes the errant Pelagian one, Romans 5:12 teaches that all men inherited Adam's depraved nature and thus that all commit acts of sin.**

**Application: May we believe in mankind's inherited sin nature from Adam, holding to the doctrine of original sin.**