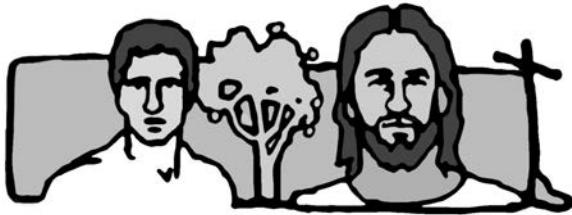


# Adam *and* Jesus



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## SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *Romans 5.*

**Memory Text:** “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God” (*Romans 5:1, 2*).

Paul has established the point that justification, or acceptance with God, comes only through faith in Jesus Christ, for His righteousness alone is enough to give us the right standing with our Lord. Building on that great truth, Paul now expounds more on this theme. Showing that salvation has to be by faith and not by works, not even for someone as “righteous” as Abraham, Paul steps back to look at the big picture—at what caused sin, and suffering and death, and how the solution is found in Christ and what He has done for the human race.

Through the fall of one man, Adam, all humanity faced condemnation, alienation, and death; through the victory of one man, Jesus, all the world was placed on a new footing before God. By faith in Jesus, the record of their sins and the punishment due for those sins could be remitted—could be forgiven and forever pardoned.

Paul contrasts Adam and Jesus, showing how Christ came to undo what Adam did, and showing that by faith the victims of Adam's sin could be rescued by Jesus, the Savior. The foundation of it all is the cross of Christ and His substitutionary death there—which opens the way for every human being, Jew or Gentile, to be saved by Jesus, who, with His blood, brought justification to all who accept Him.

Surely this is a theme worth expounding upon, for it's the foundation of all our hope.

\* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, November 11.

## Justified by Faith

**Read** Romans 5:1–5. On the lines below, summarize Paul’s message. What can you take from that for yourself now?

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“Being justified” is literally “having been justified.” The Greek verb represents the action as being completed. We have been declared righteous, or regarded as righteous, not through any deeds of law but through our having accepted Jesus Christ. The perfect life that Jesus lived on this earth, His perfect law-keeping, has been credited to us.

At the same time, all of our sins have been laid on Jesus. God has reckoned that Jesus committed those sins, not us, and that way we can be spared the punishment that we deserve. That punishment fell on Christ for us, in behalf of us, so that we never have to face it ourselves. What more glorious news could there be for the sinner?

The Greek word translated as “glory” in Romans 5:3 is the one translated as “rejoice” in Romans 5:2. If it also is translated “rejoice” in Romans 5:3 (as in some versions), the connection between Romans 5:2 and Romans 5:3 is more clearly seen. Justified people can rejoice in tribulation because they have fixed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ. They have confidence that God will work all things for good. They will consider it an honor to suffer for Christ’s sake. (*See 1 Pet. 4:13.*)

Notice, too, the progression in Romans 5:3–5.

1. *Patience.* The Greek word thus translated as *hupomone* means “steadfast endurance.” This is the type of endurance that tribulation develops in the one who maintains faith and who does not lose sight of the hope he or she has in Christ, even amid the trials and suffering that can make life so miserable at times.

2. *Experience.* The Greek word thus translated, *dokime*, means literally “the quality of being approved”; hence, “character,” or more specifically, “approved character.” The one who patiently endures trials can develop an approved character.

3. *Hope.* Endurance and approval naturally give rise to hope—the hope found in Jesus and the promise of salvation in Him. As long as we cling to Jesus in faith, repentance, and obedience, we have everything to hope for.

**What is the one thing in all your life that you hope for more than anything else? How can that hope be fulfilled in Jesus? Or can it? If not, are you sure you want to be putting so much hope in it?**

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## While Yet Sinners

**Read** Romans 5:6–8. What does this passage tell us about the character of God, and why is it so full of hope for us?

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When Adam and Eve shamefully and inexcusably transgressed the divine requirement, God took the first steps toward reconciliation. Ever since, God has taken the initiative in providing a way of salvation and in inviting men and women to accept it. “When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son” (*Gal. 4:4*).

**Romans 5:9** says that we can be saved from God’s wrath through Jesus. How do we understand what that means?

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On the eve of their departure from Egypt, the blood on the doorposts of the Israelites in Egypt protected the firstborn from the wrath that befell Egypt’s firstborn. In the same way, the blood of Jesus Christ guarantees that one who has been justified and retains that status will be protected when God’s wrath finally destroys sin at the end of the age.

Some people struggle with the idea of a loving God having wrath. But it’s precisely *because* of His love that this wrath exists. How could God, who loves the world, not have wrath against sin? Were He indifferent to us, He would not care about what happens here. Look around at the world and see what sin has done to His creation. How could God not be wrathful against such evil and devastation?

**What** other reasons are we given to rejoice? *Rom. 5:10, 11.*

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Some commentators have seen in Romans 5:10 a reference to the life that Christ lived on earth, during which He wrought a perfect character that He now offers to credit to us. Although this is certainly what Christ’s perfect life accomplished, Paul seems to be emphasizing the fact that whereas Christ died, He rose again and is alive forevermore (*see Heb. 7:25*). Because He lives, we are saved. If He had remained in the tomb, our hopes would have perished with Him. Romans 5:11 continues with the reasons that we have to rejoice in the Lord, and that’s because of what Jesus has accomplished for us.

## Death Through Sin

Death is an enemy, the ultimate one. When God created the human family, He designed that its members should live forever. With few exceptions humans do not want to die; and those who do, do so only after the greatest personal anguish and suffering. Death goes against our most basic nature. And that's because from inception we were created to live forever. Death was to be unknown to us.

**Read Romans 5:12. What is Paul describing here? What does this explain?**

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Commentators have argued more over this passage of Scripture than over most others. Perhaps the reason is, as noted in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 529, that these commentators “attempt to use the passage for purposes other than Paul intended.”

One point they argue over is: In what way was Adam's sin passed on to his posterity? Did Adam's descendants share the guilt of Adam's sin, or are they guilty before God because of their own sins? People have tried to get the answer to that question from this text, but that's not the issue Paul was dealing with. He had a whole other object in mind. He is reemphasizing what he already stated: “for all have sinned” (*Rom. 3:23*). We need to recognize that we are sinners, because that is the only way that we will realize our need of a Savior. Here Paul was trying to get readers to realize just how bad sin is and what it brought into this world through Adam. Then he shows what God offers us in Jesus as the only remedy to the tragedy brought upon our world through Adam's sin.

Yet, this text tells only of the problem, death in Adam—not the solution, life in Christ. One of the most glorious aspects of the gospel is that death has been swallowed up in life. Jesus passed through the portals of the tomb and burst its bonds. He says, “I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death” (*Rev. 1:18*). Because Jesus has the keys, the enemy can no longer hold his victims in the grave.

**What has been your own experience with the reality and the tragedy of death? Why, in the face of such a relentless enemy, must we have hope in something greater than ourselves or greater than anything this world offers?**

## From Adam to Moses

**Read** Romans 5:13, 14. What is Paul teaching us here about the law?

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What is Paul talking about here? The phrase “until the law” is paralleled with the statement “from Adam to Moses.” He is talking about the time in the world from Creation to Sinai, before the *formal* introduction of the rules and laws of the Israelite system, which included, of course, the Ten Commandments.

“Until the law” means until the detailing of God’s requirements in the various laws given to Israel at Sinai. Sin existed before Sinai. How could it not? Were lying, killing, adultery, and idolatry not sinful before then? Of course they were.

It is true that, prior to Sinai, the human race generally had only a limited revelation of God, but they obviously knew enough to be held accountable. God is just and isn’t going to punish anyone unfairly. People in the pre-Sinai world died, as Paul here points out. Death passed upon *all*. Though they had not sinned against an expressly revealed command, they had sinned nevertheless. They had the revelations of God, in nature, to which they had not responded and thus were held guilty. “The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen . . . ; so that they are without excuse” (*Rom. 1:20*).

**For** what purpose did God reveal Himself more fully in the “law”? *Rom. 5:20, 21*.

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The instruction given at Sinai included the moral law, although it had existed before then. This was the first time, however, according to the Bible, that this law was written and widely proclaimed.

When the Israelites began to compare themselves to the divine requirements, they discovered that they fell far short. In other words, “the offense” abounded. They suddenly realized the extent of their transgressions. The purpose of such a revelation was to help them to see their need of a Savior and to drive them to accept the grace so freely offered by God. As stressed before, the true version of the Old Testament faith was not legalistic.

**How do the laws in your own country reveal to you a human conception of right and wrong? If human laws can do that, then what about God’s eternal law?**

## Jesus, the Second Adam

**“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous” (Rom. 5:18, 19). What contrast is presented here to us? What hope is offered us in Christ?**

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As humans, we received nothing from Adam but the sentence of death. Christ, however, stepped in and passed over the ground where Adam fell, enduring every test in behalf of humans. He redeemed Adam’s disgraceful failure and fall, and, thus, as our Substitute, He placed us on vantage ground with God. Hence, Jesus is the “Second Adam.”

“The second Adam was a free moral agent, held responsible for His conduct. Surrounded by intensely subtle and misleading influences, He was much less favorably situated than was the first Adam to lead a sinless life. Yet in the midst of sinners He resisted every temptation to sin, and maintained His innocency. He was ever sinless.”—Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 1074.

### **How** are Adam’s and Christ’s acts contrasted in Romans 5:15–19?

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Look at the opposing ideas here: death, life; disobedience, obedience; condemnation, justification; and sin, righteousness. Jesus came and undid all that Adam had done!

It is fascinating, too, that the word *gift* occurs five times in Romans 5:15–17. Five times! The point is simple: Paul is emphasizing that justification is not earned; it comes as a gift. It is something that we don’t merit, that we don’t deserve. Like all gifts, we have to reach out and accept it, and in this case, we claim this gift by faith.

**What was the best gift you ever received? What made it so good, so special? How did the fact that it was a gift, as opposed to something you had earned, make you that much more appreciative of it? Yet, how could that gift even begin to compare with that which we have in Jesus?**

**Further Thought:** Read Ellen G. White, “Help in Daily Living,” pp. 470–472, in *The Ministry of Healing*; “Christ the Center of the Message,” pp. 383, 384, in *Selected Messages*, book 1; “The Temptation and Fall,” pp. 60–62, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*; “Justification,” pp. 712–714, in *The SDA Encyclopedia*.

“Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character.”—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 320.

“There is great need that Christ should be preached as the only hope and salvation. When the doctrine of justification by faith was presented . . . , it came to many as water comes to the thirsty traveler. The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, seemed a precious thought.”—Page 360.

“*Who is the figure of him that was to come* (5:14). How is Adam a figure of Christ? As Adam became a cause of death to his descendants, though they did not eat of the forbidden tree, so Christ has become a Dispenser of righteousness to those who are of Him, though they have not earned any righteousness; for through the Cross He has secured (*righteousness*) for all men. The figure of Adam’s transgression is in us, for we die just as though we had sinned as he did. The figure of Christ is in us, for we live just as though we had fulfilled all righteousness as He did.”—Martin Luther, *Commentary on Romans*, pp. 96, 97.

## Discussion Questions:

- 1 How do we understand this Ellen G. White quote: “There is need of a much closer study of the word of God; especially should Daniel and the Revelation have attention as never before in the history of our work. We may have less to say in some lines, in regard to the Roman power and the papacy; but we should call attention to what the prophets and apostles have written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God.”—*Evangelism*, p. 577.
- 2 Think about the reality of death, of what it does not only to life but to the meaning of life. Many writers and philosophers have lamented the ultimate meaninglessness of life because it ends in eternal death. How do we as Christians respond to them? Why is the hope we have in Jesus the only answer to that meaninglessness?
- 3 Just as Adam’s fall imposed a fallen nature on us, Jesus’ victory offers the promise of eternal life to all of us who accept it by faith, no exceptions. With such a wonderful provision right there for us, what holds some back from reaching out and eagerly claiming it? How can we help those who are seeking to better understand that which Christ offers and that which He has done for them?

## From Mafia Men to God's Messengers: Part 2

Every week, Igor brought his gun to church, keeping it securely on his lap. One Sabbath, a church member told him that he shouldn't bring his gun. "Let your hold be on God, not guns," he said.

The following week, Igor left his gun at home, but he found it difficult to come to terms with being unarmed. Returning home, he saw a dark silhouette following him. Deciding not to be afraid, Igor turned toward the silhouette—only to find a man carrying a sack of potatoes!

As his faith grew, Igor told others about the truth he had found. Igor's wife and sister started visiting the Seventh-day Adventist church, and after a year they were baptized. His niece and nephew also came to church—and many more with whom he shared his faith.

One day, Igor was sharing with a friend things he had learned from the Bible, but the friend wasn't interested. However, a man standing nearby was listening and wanted to learn more.

Vasily, who had been eavesdropping on Igor's conversation, had been living a very hard life. He was involved with the mafia, and crime had taken its toll. Scars and disfigurement marked where enemies had used broken glass to cut deep gashes all over his head, face, eyes, and an ear. Other scars showed where bullets had grazed his scalp without inflicting fatal wounds.

Vasily was involved with big money. He worked in a company that created contracts worth millions of Russian rubles. Trained as a bodyguard, Vasily spoke with company leadership in code. He had expensive equipment that allowed him to eavesdrop into closed rooms. People who wanted to ruin this company recognized that Vasily was a key player in winning the big contracts, and because he was an obstacle, they tried to kill him—twice.

The first time was when he went to the outdoor market with his daughter. Although viciously attacked, he survived.

During the second attempt, Vasily was shot multiple times. Running to his apartment, he collapsed on the floor. Fearing he was about to die, he begged his mother to forgive him, but she assured him that he was going to live. With renewed hope, Vasily began fighting for his life. He was quickly taken to the hospital where he received treatment and was eventually released.

One day, Vasily met a Baptist man who asked him, "Do you want to kill the guys who did this to you?"

"Of course!" Vasily replied.

"Don't do it," the man said. "Forgive them. If you kill them, you can never live peacefully."

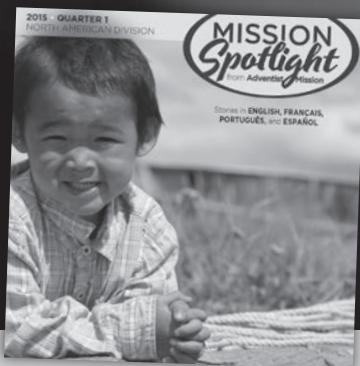
*To be continued in next week's Inside Story.*





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