

Romans 5:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Analysis

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression—death's universal reign proves universal guilt. Even those who didn't commit explicit transgression παράβασις (parabasis, 'violation of known command') like Adam (Genesis 2:17) still died, demonstrating inherited Adamic guilt and corruption. The verb ἔβασίλευσεν (ebasileusen, 'reigned') personifies death as a tyrant exercising dominion.

Who is the figure of him that was to come—Adam is τύπος (typos, 'type/pattern/foreshadowing') of Christ. Federal headship unites the two: Adam's one act affects all his descendants, Christ's one act affects all His people. But the analogy is one of contrast (verses 15-19 emphasize 'not as... so also...'): Adam brought condemnation, Christ brings justification; Adam's act resulted in death's reign, Christ's in grace reigning through righteousness.

Historical Context

Paul's Adam-Christ typology became foundational for Christian theology. The church fathers used it to explain the incarnation's necessity: only a new Adam could undo the first Adam's work. Where Adam failed in the garden, Christ succeeded in Gethsemane; where Adam's disobedience brought curse, Christ's obedience brought blessing. This typology appears throughout Scripture (1

Corinthians 15:22, 45-49) and informs doctrines of original sin, federal representation, and Christ's active obedience.

Related Passages

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. What does Adam being a 'type' of Christ teach about God's plan from creation for salvation through representative headship?
2. How does federal headship (one person's act affecting many) challenge Western individualism that rejects corporate solidarity?
3. If you accept being affected by Adam's sin, on what grounds would you reject the offer of being affected by Christ's righteousness?

Interlinear Text

ἀλλ' ἐβασίλευσεν ὁ θάνατος ἀπὸ Ἀδάμ μέχρι
Nevertheless reigned death from Adam to
G235 G936 G3588 G2288 G575 G76 G3360

Μωσέως καὶ ἐπὶ τοὺς μὴ ἀμαρτήσαντας ἐπὶ τῷ
Moses even after not sinned after G3588
G3475 G2532 G1909 G3361 G264 G1909 G3588

όμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ ὅς ἐστιν τύπος τοῦ
the similitude G3588 transgression Adam who is the figure G3588
G3667 G3847 G76 G3739 G2076 G5179

μέλλοντος
of him that was to come
G3195

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 15:45 (Parallel theme): And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Hebrews 9:27 (Parallel theme): And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

Romans 5:17 (Kingdom): For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

Romans 8:22 (Parallel theme): For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaleth in pain together until now.

Genesis 7:22 (Parallel theme): All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.

Romans 5:21 (Kingdom): That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Romans 8:20 (Parallel theme): For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope,

Genesis 19:25 (Parallel theme): And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground.

Genesis 4:8 (Parallel theme): And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.

Jonah 4:11 (Parallel theme): And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?

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