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The Consequences of Adam

5: 12-14

The consequences of Adam DIG: What is the logic behind the “bad news” in these verses? What is “The Fall?” What is “original sin?” How could what one man did at one time in history have such an absolute effect on mankind? If Eve ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil first, why does the Bible say that “Sin entered the world through one man?” Who was the First Adam? Who was the Last Adam? What is the age of accountability?

REFLECT: When have you made a decision that affected others in a bad way? How does that help you understand verse 12? Does the message of the Good News excite you the way it does Paul? Why? Why not? What could help you regain its life and vitality once again? Why is it important to you to understand that all of mankind fell with the First Adam? How have the consequences of Adam’s sin affected you? How has Messiah rescued you?

Modern Judaism says you are a sinner because you commit acts of sin; but the B’rit Chadashah says you commit acts of sin because you are a sinner.



There was no **sin** in **the Garden of Eden**. It was a perfect environment, and **Adam** and **Eve** were free to live in perfect happiness, having fellowship with **YHVH**, and with each other. **They** were capable of perfect obedience. How long **they** enjoyed this Dispensation (see the commentary on **Genesis, to see link click Ap - The Dispensations of God: The Dispensation of Innocence or Freedom**) is unknown. **Paul** explains the sequence of events at the point where **sin** entered **their** lives as the consequence of **their** action. This is

what we refer to as “The Fall” (see the commentary on **Genesis Ay - The Fall of Man**), the historical event when **Adam** and **Eve sinned**, and **death**, both spiritual and physical, entered **the human race**. This is also referred to as “original **sin**” - original because it was the very first **sin**. The entrance of **sin** into life on earth created an immediate need for a new approach to **Ha’Shem**, who knew no **sin**. **God** began to make a way for **sinners** to be received into **His** holy Kingdom through grace.¹²⁶

These verses reach back in **Romans** where the subject of total depravity was first discussed (see **Aw - The Religious Jew’s Lack of Understanding: The verdict**). After describing the appalling **sin** and lostness of **mankind** (see **Aj - The Universal Need of Mankind**), **Paul** has revealed how **Messiah**, by **His death** on the cross, provided the way of salvation for everyone who comes to **ADONAI** in **faith** (see **Ax - The Universal Solution: Justification**). The inevitable question that then arises is, “How could what **one man** did at one time in history have such an absolute effect on **mankind**?” **Paul** now shows in this passage that **sin** and **death** come from **the First Adam**, and **righteousness** and **life** come from **the Second Adam**.

God gave Adam the power of attorney to act for the entire human race. We are participants in Adam’s sin, and therefore, guilty of that same sin. We have all become sinners because we have inherited the sin nature that has been passed down from Adam. Sin infected everyone; therefore, we are all born with the terminal disease of sin.

Sin entered the world through one man (5:12a): Therefore, sin was imputed, or transferred to another’s spiritual bank account, through one individual. The word **therefore** connects what follows with what has just been stated, namely as believers we have been declared **righteous** by the sacrifice of **Yeshua Messiah** (see **Bj - The Restoration of Justification**). Now, **Paul** begins the analogy of **Messiah** with **Adam**, the common principle being that, in each case, a far-reaching effect on countless others was generated **through one man**.

In the case of **Adam**, it was **through one man that sin entered** (the Greek aorist tense: *eiselthen*) **the world**. **The Greek aorist tense, referring to a single past action, occurs in all three verbs in verse 12.** It is important to note that **Paul** does not say that **sin** originated with **Adam**, but only that **sin in the world** began with **Adam**. **Sin** originated with **the Adversary**, who **from the very beginning, has kept on sinning (First John 3:8)**.

It was through one man that sin entered the world (5:12a). The writer to **the**

Hebrews knew that his Jewish audience would understand this concept, when he wrote about the tithes **Levi** paid to **Melchizedek**. **And it is beyond all dispute that the one who blesses has higher status than the one who receives the blessing. Moreover, in the case of the priests, the tenth is received by men who die; while in the case of Melchizedek, it is received by someone who is testified to be still alive. One might go even further and say that Levi, who himself receives tenths, paid a tenth through Abraham; inasmuch as he was still in his ancestor Avraham's body when Melchizedek met him (Hebrews 7:8-10).** In other words, although **Melchizedek** lived many years before **Levi** (the father of the priestly tribe) was born, along with all the other descendents of **Abraham**, **Levi** being in the seed of **Abraham's** body, shared in the tithe paid to **the ancient king**.

In the same way, although with enormously greater consequences, the **sin** of **Adam** was passed on to all of **his** descendants. When **he sinned in the Garden of Eden, he sinned** not only as a **man**, but as **mankind**. When **he** and **his** wife, who were **one flesh (Genesis 2:24)**, **sinned** against **YHVH**, all of **their** descendents - that is, **the entire human race in their loins** - would share in that **sin**, the alienation from **God**, and the subjection to **death** that were its consequences. **In Adam all die, Paul explained to the Corinthians (First Corinthians 15:22).** Thus, as far as guilt is concerned, every **human** being was in **the Garden with Adam**, actually in the loins of **Adam**, and shares in the **sin he** committed there.

The fact that **Adam** and **Eve** were not only actual historical figures, but were the original **human** beings from whom all others have descended, is absolutely critical to **Paul's** argument here, and is critical to the effectiveness of the Good News of **Yeshua Messiah**. If a historical **Adam** did not represent all **mankind in sinfulness**, a historical **Messiah** could not represent all **mankind** in righteousness. If all **mankind** did not fall with **the First Adam**, all **mankind** could not be saved by **the Second, and last, Adam (First Corinthians 15:20-22, 45)**. In other words, all of **Adam's sin** was transferred to us when **he** was lost, and all of **Messiah's righteousness** is transferred to us when we are saved.¹²⁷

Death entered the world through sin (5:12b): The second element of **Paul's** argument is that because **sin entered the world through one man**, so also **death**, the consequence of **sin (6:23)**, **spread** (Greek aorist tense: *dielthen*) **to the world through that one man's sin (5:12b)**. **YHVH** didn't create **Adam** as a mortal being, that is, subject to **death**. But **He** explicitly warned **Adam** that disobedience by eating of the fruit of **the knowledge of good and evil** would make **him** subject to **death (Genesis 2:17)**. And contrary to the lie of **the Adversary (Genesis 3:4)**, that was exactly what happened. **Death** is the unfailing fruit of

the poison that entered **Adam's** heart and the heart of every one of **his** descendants. Later, **Paul** will expound on this verse and say: **Because of the offense of one man, death ruled through that one man (5:17a), and because of the disobedience of the one man, Adam, many were made sinners (5:19a).**

Sin brings spiritual separation from **God**, which Adam experienced immediately after his disobedience. Physical separation from **human** beings. Although **Adam** did not immediately lose **his** physical life, **he** became subject to **death** the moment **he sinned**. Physical **death** will bring to an end the opportunity for salvation. The third kind of separation not only brings separation from **God**, but brings eternal torment in hell (see the commentary on **Revelation Fp - The Lake of Fire is the Second Death**). The unbeliever has reason to fear all three **deaths**. Spiritual **death** prevents **his** earthly joy; physical **death** will bring an end for the opportunity to be saved, and eternal **death** will bring everlasting punishment. But no kind of **death** should be feared by believers. We are saved forever **by Messiah** (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Ms - The Eternal Security of the Believer**) from spiritual and eternal **death**, and our physical **death** (or rapture) will usher us into **His** divine presence.¹²⁸

*Dear Loving Heavenly **Father**, Praise **Your** great love that rescued us! **Your** holiness is fantastic! **Your** love is a very comforting thought; but **Your** perfect holiness and my **sin** creates a distance between us and makes me want to move far away from **You**. How thankful I am that **You Yourself** opened the door to heaven by providing the path for forgiveness for all who would choose to love and to follow **You** as **Lord** and **Savior**. **He made the One who knew no sin to become a sin offering on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21)**. Thank **You!** I bow in worship of **You**. In **Your** holy **Yeshua's** name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

Death spread to all mankind because all sinned (5:12c): The last clause in **verse 12** tells us that we were involved in some way in **Adam's sin**. In other words, it was in some sense our **sin**. And because **Adam's sin** was imputed to us at conception, we **sinned**, and as such, each of us deserved to **die**. As **Ezeki'el** says: **The person who sins is the one that will die (Ezeki'el 18:20)**. **And in this way death passed through to the whole human race, inasmuch as everyone sinned through Adam (5:12c)**. The verb **sinned** (Greek aorist tense: *emarton*) refers to a single past action . . . **Adam's sin**. Had **Paul** intended to refer to a continued process of **sin**, and *not Adam's sin*, the present and imperfect tenses were available to **him**. But **he** chose the aorist tense, and it should be taken at face value. Indeed, if we regard the **sin** of all **mankind** and the **sin** of **Adam** as

one-and-the-same, **verses 12** and **verses 15** and **17** dove-tail together nicely.

The status of miscarriages, babies and infants needs to be addressed. If the reasoning that precedes is correct, then all begin life with both a corrupted nature and the guilt that are the consequences of **sin**. Does this mean that should these little ones **die** before making a conscious decision to **receive the overflowing grace, that is, the gift of being considered righteous (5:17)**, that they are lost and condemned to eternal **death**? No, heaven forbid! Indeed, our **Lord** did not regard them as basically **sinful** and guilty. **He** held them up as an example of the type of person who will inherit the Kingdom: **Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:3)**. In addition, **David** had confidence that he would again see **his child** that had **died** (see the commentary on [the Life of David De - David's Son Dies](#)).

The Bible teaches that there is an age of accountability for each person. **King Ahaz** needed something that would serve as a **sign** that **Isaiah's** prophecy that **he** would not be dethroned would take place in **his** lifetime. When **Isaiah** went to meet **the king, he** prophesied that **his son, Shear-Jashub** was a sign to king **Ahaz**. **He will eat curds and honey until he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right**. Within about three years, **the boy** would know the difference between **right** and **wrong**, have the ability to make moral choices, and thus be accountable for them. At that time, **Isaiah** said, **the land of Ahaz's** enemies would **be laid waste** and the northern alliance between Isra'el and Syria would be broken (**Isaiah 7:15-16**).

We become responsible and guilty when we accept the fact that we have a **sin** nature. There is a time in the life of each one of us when we become aware of our own tendency toward **sin**. That is the age where **YHVH** holds us accountable for our moral decisions. At that point, we may despise the **sinful** nature that has been there all the time. In that case, we would repent of it and might even, if there is an awareness of the gospel, ask **God** for forgiveness. At the very least, there would be a rejection of our **sinful** makeup. But if we submit to that **sinful** nature, we are, in effect, saying that it is good. In placing our unspoken approval upon **it**, we would also be approving or agreeing with the action in **the Garden of Eden** so long ago. As a result, we would become guilty of that **sin** without having to commit a **sin** of our own.

There is no condemnation until one reaches the age of accountability. If an embryo, a baby, or a child dies before he or she is capable of making genuine moral decisions, there is only innocence, and the child will experience the same type of future existence with **ADONAI** as will those who have reached the age of accountability and had their **sins** forgiven as a result

of accepting the offer of salvation based upon **Messiah's** atoning **death**.¹²⁹

The Jewish view is that **mankind** enters the world free of sin, with a soul that is pure, innocent, and untainted. While there were some Jewish teachers in Talmudic times who believed that **death** was a punishment brought upon mankind on account of **Adam's sin**, the dominant view by far is that **man** sins because **he** is not a perfect being, and not because **he** is inherently sinful. The closest Jews come to a doctrine of original sin, is that since no one is perfect, everyone has "an inclination" to do evil from his youth (Genesis 8:20).

The rabbis teach that babies are born with a *yetzer ha'ra*, or the "evil inclination," and later develop a *yetzer ha'tov*, or the "good inclination." While still in the womb, the "evil inclination" begins to develop. From birth until 13 years later, nothing hinders the **sinning**. But at the Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah, the child's moral sense has developed sufficiently to hold him or her responsible for their actions. R. Isaac Arama, the fifteenth century Spanish philosopher and commentator, connected this change around Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah to the well-known beginning of the Mishnaic tractate on the Passover, "For the first thirteen years of life, one rebels, but in the fourteenth year, the light of intelligence appears in him, and then he becomes a bar mitzvah (or son of the covenant), and subject to the punishment of a human court. Similarly, our sages, of blessed memory, hinted at this when they said, 'On the evening of the fourteenth, we search the *hametz* [leaven] by the light of a candle' (Mishnah Pesachim 1:1)" (Sefer Akedat Yitzhak 61).¹³⁰

Eve is not mentioned because **Adam** was responsible to **take care** of the **Garden** (Genesis 2:15), which implies to **take care** of **his** wife because **Eve** was in **the Garden** (see the commentary on **Genesis Lv - I Do Not Permit a Woman to Teach or Have Authority Over a Man, She Must Be Silent**).

History proves that death reigns over all mankind (5:13-14): Having made that statement, **Paul** now sets out to prove it. **Sin was indeed present in the world before Torah was given, but sin is not counted as such when there is no Torah (5:13)**. This shows that **Adam's sin** was imputed. They **died** even though they were not guilty of committing a specific act of **sin** as given in the Torah. Why? Because they had a **sin** nature. **Nevertheless, death ruled from Adam until Moshe, even over those whose sinning was not exactly like Adam's violation of a direct command.** Because **Adam** and **Eve** were evicted from **the Garden of Eden** after they sinned, they had no more opportunity to disobey **God's** single prohibition. They no longer had access to the forbidden

fruit of **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil**, nor have any of their descendants. Consequently, it has been impossible for any **human** being, either before or after **Moses**, to have **sinned exactly like Adam sinned**. Which, again, points to the fact that **Adam's sin** was imputed, or transferred to our spiritual bank account, at birth.¹³¹

In this, Adam prefigured the one who was to come, but there are very significant differences between the two (**5:14**). **Adam** was one **man**, who committed one act of **sin**, with one result. But in that one act, **he** became a type of yet another **man**. The last **Adam**, **Yeshua Messiah**. **He** was **one man**, committing one act, with one result. Next, **Paul** brings out the contrast between **Adam** and **Messiah**.