**4The Effects of Sin**

**What Does Rom. 5:12-19 Teach?**

Introduction:

1. Those holding to the theory of “original sin” use this as a crux passage, a fundamental proof text, for the doctrine.

2. Is that what it teaches? Our real concern is for what the Bible says. Not so much about our personal observations and experiences with the sin that is so prevalent in the world. It is gross. It is repulsive. And it is pervasive. But we cannot allow these experiences to define our theology of sin. Only Scripture should do that.

Discussion:

I. The emphasis throughout the text of Romans is on what God has done in Jesus Christ. Chapters 1-11 stress this point clearly. Chap. 12:1-2 is the transition point between what God has done and what we are to do. (This is a pattern that repeats itself throughout Scripture, beginning with the writings of Moses, extending to the sermons in Acts and into the Epistles.)

 A. Chapters 1-2-3 bring all men under the condemnation of sin.

 1. 3:19-20 summarizes: “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to

 those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world

 may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be

 justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”

 2. 3:23 is even more succinct: “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

 B. Out of such a dire circumstance God redeemed us through the blood of Christ (3:24-

 26). Thus, our hope rests squarely on God’s action in Jesus Christ. It is not founded

 upon any good within us, but on God’s gracious provision.

 C. Rom. 5 continues the same emphasis. Since God acted in this way while we were

 helpless, ungodly, sinners and enemies “much more then having been reconciled, we

 shall be saved by His life” (6-11).

 D. Our confidence rests on what God has done and not on our ability to be “good

 enough” or on our ability to redeem ourselves in any way.

 E. Paul’s reasoning in 5:12ff is to emphasize what we have gained in Christ. He does this

 by calling attention to the fact that what was lost as a result of Adam’s sin has been

 regained in Christ.

II. Does this teach the doctrine of “original sin”?

 A. Does Paul’s statement mean that every child is conceived and born sinful? That he/she

 is guilty before God and condemned to death and eternal punishment?

 B. No doubt, he is affirming that Adam’s sin brought severe consequences.

 1. Some say Paul is affirming that physical death is the only effect.

 2. Others say it involves more than physical death.

 3. Did Christ only relieve us of physical death? It would appear that more than

 physical death is under consideration.

 C. Did Adam’s sin bring only physical death on us? Or did it bring spiritual depravity—

 partial or total? Did it make us guilty, condemned to eternal punishment? Fact is,

 whatever we lost in Adam has been regained in Christ. That’s Paul’s point!

 1. The emphasis is on what God has done.

 2. He has reversed the effects of sin. It is through the abundance of His grace and

 the gift of righteousness through Jesus Christ. As verses 18-19 says, “So then as

 through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through

 one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as

 through the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so

 through the obedience of the One the many were made righteous.”

 3. What this means is this passage does not teach “original sin.” It teaches that God

 has released us from the effects of Adam’s sin, whatever they are, and He has

 done it by means of Jesus Christ.

 D. What is Paul saying in Rom. 5:12ff?

 1. He is saying that Adam introduced sin and death into the world. It spread to all

 men because all sinned. To use the imagery of Isa. 1:5 we became sick. Like an

 infection sin spread.

 2. But God introduced the cure through Jesus Christ.

 E. Does this mean that everyone will be saved then?

 1. No. Paul emphasizes that it is for all those who believe (3:22ff).

 2. Throughout Romans he emphasizes faith (or belief) in what God has done (1:16-

 17).

 3. “He is just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus” (3:26).

 4. Does this faith merit salvation? Certainly not! It (salvation) is the gift of God (6:23).

 So men must trust in what God has done in paying the penalty for our sin in Jesus

 Christ. We must accept the gift trusting in God’s power to save. The great

 commission said, “He who has believed and been baptized shall be saved; but he

 who has disbelieved shall be condemned” (Mk. 16:15-16).

 5. Note the summary in 11:33-36 immediately preceding the transition (12:1-2) to

 what we are to do founded upon the mercies of God (12:3ff).

III. “I just don’t see what all the fuss is about.”

 A. The theory of “original sin” prompts some to baptize infants.

 B. Pelagius objected because he saw people being morally lax on the basis of being

 unable to do any different and therefore not accepting responsibility to do differently.

 C. On the theory of “original sin” some contend that God must act to give you new life

 contrary to your will. (Geisler does not accept this and refers to God’s grace being

 irresistible “on the willing.”)

 D. On the basis of “original sin,” for some, faith is redefined. No longer is it you trusting

 in God’s sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Now it is something given to you contrary to your

 will. Not all who hold to “original sin” are willing to accept this.

 E. On the heels of “original sin” the theory of the perseverance of the saints is founded,

 namely that one can never fall away.

Conclusion:

1. The theory of “original sin,” as traditionally understood, is not consistent with the biblical text.

2. It questions the sufficiency of the blood of Christ to reverse the effects of sin.

3. It challenges the biblical concept of faith.

4. It creates the necessity for “supplemental doctrines” to prop it up that are inconsistent with biblical teaching.