

Contrast

Romans 5:18-21

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I. Transgression vs. Righteousness v. 18

- a. One Transgression -ordinarily of offenses against God, collectively
 - i. Result Condemnation - **judicial pronouncement upon a guilty person, condemnation, punishment, penalty** *there is no death-sentence for those who are in Christ Jesus Ro 8:1.*
 - 1. To All Men
- b. One Act of Righteousness - **an action that meets expectations as to what is right or just, righteous deed**
 - i. Justification of Life-*v found in the right, be free of charges be acquitted, be pronounced and treated as*
 - 1. Just as the one sin of Adam brought condemnation, so also did the one righteous act of Christ bring justification. Just as condemnation spread to all, so also is the divine acquittal offered to all.
 - 2. that is, they relate to the law court and the act of acquitting or vindicating someone. It has to do with the innocence or virtue of a person.
 - 3. Justification is by grace alone. Rooted in the nature of God, it is also made available through the work of Christ as God's gift.
 - 4. Justification by faith is set primarily against the background of Jewish legalism and its attempts to make the law the basis of salvation

II. Disobedience vs. Obedience v. 19

- a. Disobedience - **refusal to listen and so be disobedient, unwillingness to hear**
 - i. Made Sinners- humanity'; 'the one', Adam) *were constituted sinners* (=were exposed to being treated as sinners)
 - 1. *general sense of "sinners" (as in 5:8), but it is quite possible that Paul intended to recall the more specific sense in which it was then current within Judaism to denote those ignorant of or disobedient to the law (see on 3:7),*
 - ii. As in v. 15 we are to understand "the many" in terms of all who are in Adam (everyone who is born into the human family) and all who are in Christ (everyone who has been born into the family of God by faith in Christ

- b. Obedience - obedience to God and God's commands
 - i. Obedience –
 - 1. Christ's death as an "act of obedience" and as a "righteous act" (v 18), both stressing that whereas Adam acted in breach of a divine ruling, Christ acted in accordance with God's will revealed in the law (cf. again 3:24–26).
 - 2. We take it that by Christ's δικαίωμα Paul means not just His atoning death but the obedience of His life as a whole, His loving God with all His heart and soul and mind and strength, and His neighbour with complete sincerity, which is the righteous conduct which God's law requires.
 - ii. Made Righteous - *justification, vindication, acquittal*
 - 1. The righteousness of which Paul spoke is a right standing before God (cf. 2 Cor 5:21). It is imputed by God as a result of faith

III. Law vs. Grace vs. 20-21

- a. Law- law that Moses received from God and is the standard according to which membership in the people of Israel is determined
 - i. Transgression Increased
 - a. Increased- After all, God gave the Israelites an extended code of legislation with the expectation that it would guide their life and conduct. The answer is that law was brought in so that the offense might increase. Law actually makes wrongdoing all the worse.
 - b. So the law was given in order that πλεονάσῃ¹¹ τὸ παράπτωμα, in order that in one people (for their own sake and also for the sake of all others) sin might be known as sin.
 - c. Later Paul would write that apart from the law we would not have known the nature of sin (Rom 7:7; cf. Gal 3:19). The law was never intended to provide salvation but to convince people of their need for it. Law increased sin
 - d. He may have meant, as in vv 13–14, that the law increases sin by turning sin into transgression—increase in the sense of intensify, by making visible as sin, or make worse by injecting the dimension of guilt
 - e. He could also think of sin as being increased quantitatively, with the law being seen actually to provoke sin, just as the command of Gen 2:16 could be said to have provoked

¹¹ πλεονάσῃ could here be transitive with τὸ παράπτωμα as its object; but, in view of the fact that it must be intransitive in the next clause, it is more probably intransitive.

Adam's transgression by encouraging him to see that which had been forbidden as desirable. This is a contentious line of thought he would develop later on (7:7–12). But more likely here Paul is recalling the actual effect of the law on his own people—their pride in the law which caused them to identify righteousness too much with distinctively Jewish actions. By letting their dependence on the law obscure the more direct and fundamental dependence on God they were no better off than the Gentiles (chap. 2); indeed they were much worse off, since having the law should have made them all the more conscious of their condition as sinners than Gentiles who have not the law (cf. 3:20).

- f. but Paul may also intend to imply that the law's purpose (to increase the trespass) is a lesser role than that of grace, or indeed that the law's entry was later and more temporary than grace's

2. Reigned - **to exercise authority at a royal level**

a. In Death

- i. And always through Jesus Christ as Lord: if the agency of Adam's trespass gave free rein to sin and death, it is precisely the force which continues to come through the one man who defeated sin and death, which sustains the believer against their continuing claims upon him and which will prove finally triumphant.

ii.

- iii. The first act of the human drama ends in darkest tragedy—sin reigning with death the final word. The gospel of Christ for Paul is that that power has been broken: God's grace has more than matched the intensification of sin through the law and so given sure promise of life beyond the cold grasp of death

b. Grace Abound

- i. Grace- Grace that which one grants to another, the action of one who volunteers to do not otherwise obligatory.
 - a. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise, grace would no longer be grace.
 - b. In the apostle's mind, grace is found not only in justification by faith; it also means that those whom God elects are chosen without regard to their religious zeal. Saving faith is also regarded as a gift of God: in Eph 2:9 the

whole process of salvation through faith is a gift of grace;
Acts 18:27

2. Abound - **to be very high on a scale of amount, *be in great excess***
3. Reigned -**to exercise authority at a royal level**
 - a. Righteousness
 - b. Eternal Life
 - i. Jesus Christ