

"For Until The Law Sin Was In The World ..."

Romans 5:13 is tied to the previous verse by the word "for;" an explanation of why "*death passed unto all men for that all sinned.*" The "death" of the passage is spiritual death. The reason death passed to all men was because "*all sinned.*"

Paul is reminding his Roman readers that sin was in the world BEFORE THE LAW, and his additional statement, "*but sin is not imputed where there is no law*" does not mean those pre-law men were not imputed to be sinners; they were imputed to be sinners, and they were such because there was law, law before the law was given at Sinai! Else, why would death have passed unto them? Since "*the wages of sin is death*" and since "*sin is the transgression of law*" it must be admitted that the "pre-law" world had law which they had broken, albeit not the law which Moses gave (Rom. 6:23; 1 Jn. 3:4).

"Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam unto Moses, even over them that had sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him who was to come" (Rom. 5:14). Death reigned! The subject has not changed. The "death" which reigned was spiritual death. The world from Adam to Moses was under the sentence of spiritual death and no remedy prior to Christ's atoning sacrifice released them from its grip. The great theme of Scriptures is that God passed over some sins that were done aforetime and was righteous to do so in light of the fact that His Son, whom He would send, was an appropriate sacrifice (Rom. 3:21-26). What the apostle herein accomplished was to show that all men; those who lived before Moses; those who lived after Moses and those who shall ever live, benefit in the same way through the sacrifice of Christ. God has always had law. Invariable men have always broken that law, thereby bringing upon themselves separation from God and no man, in any age, can be spared from sin's wages save through the sacrifice of Christ!

Paul's words in verse fourteen shows that Calvin's conclusion that men are sinners because of Adam's sin is a false position. His words are emphatic: "*even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgressions ...*" What could be clearer? The "pre-law" world sinned and died spiritually -- but their spiritual death was the result of what they had done, not the result of what Adam had done!

Adam is said to be "*a figure of him who was to come.*" The "*one who was to come*" is Christ. In what way is Adam a "*figure*" of Christ? Adam and

Christ are type and antitype because both of them affected the whole of mankind; Adam adversely, Jesus beneficially. The apostle shows this contrast by writing, "*But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one, the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, abound unto the many*" (Rom. 5:15). The "*many*" died because of the trespass of the one. The same "*many*" were justified by the gift (grace) of Christ.

Is salvation universal? NO, but it is universally offered. Whether one receives that gift or not is conditioned upon his obedience to the one who made it possible. In exactly the same way the trespass brings death to the many, not because we are sinners because Adam sinned but because, like Adam who "broke law," so we also have broken the law God has given to us. There is a second significant difference. Whereas all do not accept the grace offered by Christ: all responsible beings are disobedient like Adam was!

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