

Dec 16, 1984

INTRODUCTION

1. The world stands guilty before God (v. 19). No human effort can justify (v. 20). It is for this reason that God has declared men righteous through faith on the Lord Jesus Christ (vv. 21, 22).

2. It is God's right to declare people righteous through Christ. It is His right to declare people sinners also. He announces and that is it. It is His Word which decides who is righteous and who is sinful. There are no distinctions made in God's dealing with men.

3. Now, the text is brief, to the point, and allows for no embellishment. Right to the heart of things, it states three important truths:-

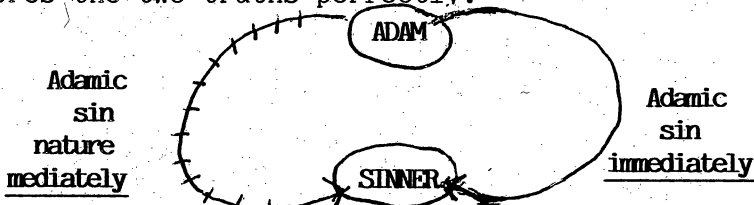
1. UNIVERSALITY OF SIN "All have sinned"

a. All

There is no exception to this declaration by God. Whatever one's own evaluation or estimation may be, God has made a forthright declaration. That's it. The previous verses (9-12) give assurance that Scripture declares total universal sinfulness.

b. Have Sinned

The verb is aorist and points to a once for all sinning by the entire human race. The tense of the verb indicates an historical event (Gen. 3). The implications are enormous and extremely important. It is as though only two persons existed--Adam and any particular member of the human race. It's as if two private lines run between Adam and every individual person resulting in the transmission of the Adamic nature mediately and imputed Adamic sin immediately. The present text underscores the two truths perfectly.



Abraham is illustrative of this "Federal" headship of Adam for the race. The truth is clearly outlined in Hebrews (7:9-10). Now, none would claim that Levi consciously or purposefully paid tithes to Melchizedek, yet God declares that he did pay tithes. In the same way God reckons that each member of the race sinned in Adam's transgression (cf. 1 Cor. 15:22).

2. NATURE OF SIN "Come Short"

Actually, this is a present tense middle voice verb. It indicates continued action. Humanity continues to fall short i.e. they are falling short. It notes a complete lack of being devoid of something. When liabilities exceed assets, one is bankrupt. Such is the case here. Papyri indicate the word was used of an illiterate; here it would mean a person is illiterate of God. The word was used in Christ's day of a farmer who failed to get his seed in the ground on time and missed the season. Here one would miss the season of God's glory.

It is perfectly clear, then, that God's required standard has been missed. God's standard is not education, culture, possessions, etc., but His own perfect glory (cf. Mt. 5:20). No man has ever made a gesture toward God that reached God. All are falling short all the time. The Greek word is translated with nine different English words. All are true of all men toward God: come behind, come short, be destitute, fail, lack, suffer need, want, to be in want, and to be the worse.

3. THE FAILURE-GOAL OF SIN "Glory of God"

a. Defined

A dictionary defines "glory" as "exalted, and, in modern use, merited praise, honor, or admiration accorded by common consent to a person or thing; honorable fame; renown." Three Greek words are translated "glory." These same Greek words are rendered by 10 other English words. One of these three Greek words is used here. It means glory, praise, honor, but originally it came from "opinion," hence glory, honor, praise resulting from a good opinion.

b. Associated

Here it is the "glory of God." to have a right opinion of God is to have a correct estimate of His greatness and majesty i.e. to have praise of God for all that He is, thinks, and does. "Glory of God" includes all the fullness of God philologically. It is related to the "worth" of God, therefore, with "worship" (Luke 17:18; Rom. 4:20; Jn. 9:24). It is also related to the O.T. idea of "splendor, brightness" (Shekinah glory; cf. Lk 9:31; Acts 7:55; 2 Cor. 3:7).

CONCLUSION All have sinned. That's done. All are continually coming short of God's inner (His Being) and outer (splendor) glory. How great is our need.