

# PEACE ON EARTH

## *A New Age Has Dawned*

Romans Series  
PBC 2025

**Text:** Romans 5:12, 18-21

*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—<sup>18</sup> **Therefore**, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the **many were made sinners**, so by the one man's obedience the **many will be made righteous**. <sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, **as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness** leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

### **Introduction:**

Two thousand years ago, an army of angelic warriors appeared to a group of humble shepherds who were watching their sheep on a cold night outside Bethlehem.

Those angelic warriors had a message for the Shepherds to proclaim to the world—*"Peace has arrived on Earth!"* (Luke 2:14)

You may be thinking, "But that isn't how I remember the story! Wasn't it a *choir* of angels? And weren't they expressing a *wish* for peace on earth and goodwill among men? I am not sure how you got from a choir to an army, and I am even less sure how you got from a wish for peace to a proclamation of it! And if it was a proclamation of peace, then boy, did someone get it wrong, given the obvious absence of peace for more than 2000 years!"

But the text in Luke is clear – and so were the angelic messengers! God, through these Angelic Warriors, was announcing that Peace/Shalom had come to a world ravaged by sin and in open hostility toward Him!

**Luke 2:10–14** *And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”*

These angelic warriors arrived on the scene of a world broken by the curse, ruined by sin, and under the bondage of death to declare the birth of Someone who would wage war against those enemies and bring peace to the earth and among men who would turn to Him through the gospel.

BUT . . . if you had asked the Shepherds to tell you the gospel and explain how it brings peace on earth to sin-broken, death-tasting sinners, they would have been at a loss for words. And so, to help us understand the magnificent announcement made by these angelic warriors, God inspired Paul to write Romans!

***Romans is the greatest letter ever written for seven reasons:***

1. *It reveals profound grace from God*
2. *Mediated through a life-changing Gospel*
3. *Provided by a Magnificent Savior*
4. *Obtained by faith alone*
5. *Bringing immense glory to God*
6. *By reconciling men to God and each other*
7. *And changing their present lives and eternal destinies*

***The theme of Romans is in 1:16-17:***

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes because it reveals a righteousness from God available to sinners who turn from sin and place full faith in Jesus Christ as the only One who can save them from the penalty of their sins and justify them in the sight of God.

***OT verification:*** Citation of Hab 2:4 – *“The just shall live by faith.”*

## **Romans 1-8 is the unpacking of that citation.**

- **Romans 1-4** unpack what it means to be “just” by explaining how we are justified and made just before God – by faith.
- **Romans 5-8** unpack what it means for a man who has been justified by faith to live according to that faith, showing what the justified life looks like in terms of its blessings (5:1-11), its foundations (5:12-21), its relationship to the realm of sin (6), the Law (7), and living as a new creation while still present in the old, which is groaning under the curse (8)
- **Romans 5:12-21** gives us the story in three parts:
  - o *Ruin of Man by Sin of One Man (5:12-14)*
  - o *Rescue of Man by Obedience of One Man (5:15-17)*
  - o *Restoration of Man by the Reign of Grace (5:18-21)*

There are many things we could say about the four verses before us this morning, but their focal point is the statement Paul makes when he contrasts the reign of sin in the old age with the reign of grace that matched and expanded the proclamation made by the Angels.

- It matched the Angel’s proclamation by explaining that Peace on Earth was made possible by the arrival of the Reign of Grace.
- It expanded their proclamation by revealing that the Reign of Grace meant the dawn of a new day, the arrival of a new age, and the founding of a new kingdom for the sons of Adam who had been born again as Sons and Daughters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam – *“So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (5:21)*

This morning, I want to explore what Paul meant when he announced that ***“grace would reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*** And to do that, I want to ask four important questions about this text:

## **I. What does Paul mean when he announces the Reign of Grace? (v. 21)**

*so that, as sin reigned in death, **grace also might reign through righteousness** leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

These four verses announce the arrival of the reign of Grace by directing our attention to an unexpected yet vitally important comparison between two Adams, which ultimately led to the establishment (καθίστημι) of two very different ages (kingdoms), in which people are born into two very different spiritual statuses and live their lives under two very different ruling powers.

### ***A. Two Great Kingdoms are Established***

- ***The Kingdom of Sin and Death:*** This entire section (5:12-21) describes a kingdom where sin and death reign as governing powers over everything and everyone born into this spiritually dark, morally wicked, and religiously defiled realm.

And every human being ever born since Adam is born into this kingdom, lives under the rule and bondage of sin, and suffers the destruction and devastation of death.

And for many people, this kingdom is the only kingdom they know. They live their entire lives in the darkness and under the crushing bondage of these crushing ruling powers that are Satanic in origin, nature, and intent.

But there is a second, better kingdom Paul points to here in these verses (5:12-21) – a kingdom where grace and life rule and reign.

- ***The Kingdom of Grace and Life:*** This section also reveals the establishment of a second, magnificent Kingdom ruled by grace, marked by righteousness, and characterized by peace (shalom) over everything and everyone born into this Kingdom.

This kingdom was announced by those angelic warriors, established by the life and death of the baby born that night, and inaugurated at His resurrection, when God appointed Him and gave Him all authority (power) in this new kingdom as Lord of Lords and King of Kings!

Which begs the question, *“How did these two vastly different kingdoms come about? What is the story of their origin?”*

***B. On the basis of a single action by the Founder of each Kingdom***

- Paul reveals that each kingdom originated and that its ruling power was established on the basis of a single action by its constituted, appointed representative.
- Paul began this section by explaining that sin and death came through a single trespass by the appointed representative, Adam, whom God charged with protecting, promoting, and propagating life in the Kingdom over which he had been appointed to rule.
- In 5:18, Paul completed the comparison he began in vs 12 between Adam's one trespass and Christ's one act of righteousness by pointing out that Christ's one action reversed the consequences of Adam's one action.

*Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.*

- The complete obedience of this second representative, Christ, would reverse the curse, rescue the race from the ruin of sin and the power of death by defeating and destroying the ancient enemy responsible for it (Satan), and in doing so, would bring about the dawn of a new Age and the inauguration of a better kingdom!

***C. That Installed the ruling powers over each Realm (sin and death; righteousness and life)***

***The Kingdom of Darkness is ruled by Sin and Death.*** At the Fall (Gen 3), Adam was defeated by Satan when he yielded to temptation and sinned.

- At that moment, two entities were introduced and installed as ruling authorities in that broken kingdom – sin and death.
- Sin filled the entire kingdom with spiritual darkness, moral depravity, and religious defilement, and it was worthy of condemnation and eternal death for every act of sin and every individual sinner. This is why Paul describes the citizens of this kingdom as “dead in trespass and sin . . . sons of disobedience. . . children of wrath.” (Ephesians 2:1-3)
- One commentator noted, *“Thanks to the reign of sin and death, the world is full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness, gossip, slander, insolence, haughtiness, ever-newer forms of evil, faithlessness, heartlessness, and ruthlessness Rom 1:29–31). The reign of sin and death brings not only guilt and death but also these and other kinds of pain, suffering, and brokenness that we inflict on others or that others inflict on us.”*

***The Kingdom of Grace is ruled by Righteousness and Life.*** Christ inaugurated a new kingdom in which righteousness marks the character and governs the lives of its citizens.

- In this kingdom, citizens are not dead in trespasses and sins but alive in Christ, enjoying not only the promise of eternal life but also the abundance of that life now!
- Every member of the human race is born into one or the other of those kingdoms at birth, on the basis of his or her relationship to the appointed representative head of that kingdom!

**D. *Which determine the nature and govern the lives and destiny of those living under its sway.***

*For as by the one man's disobedience the **many were made sinners**, so by the one man's obedience the **many will be made righteous**.*

***Our identity:*** For as by one man's disobedience **the many** were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience **the many** will be made righteous.

- We divide people by race, language, social standing, economic power, educational achievement, vocation, political positions, theological values, sexual orientation, etc.
- But in this text, there are only two categories of people: "The Many" in Adam and "The Many" in Christ. And your relationship to those Adams explains everything about your life this morning.

***Our nature:*** For as by one man's disobedience the many **were made (constituted) sinners**, so by the one man's obedience the many **will be made (constituted) righteous**.

- Your relationship to the First Adam explains all that is wrong in you, with you, by you, and around you.
- Your relationship to the Second Adam explains all that is right in you, with you, by you, and around you.

## **II. How is this reign of Grace established and Sustained?**

*so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign **through righteousness** leading to eternal life **through Jesus Christ our Lord**. (5:21)*

Paul tells us the reign of Grace is established on two unshakeable, immovable foundations:

- Through (by means of/because of) Righteousness
- Through (on account of / brought about by) Jesus Christ Our Lord

Grace reigns in the New Age and in the Kingdom established by God through a righteousness obtained by Christ that reverses the effects of Adam's unrighteousness, removes the condemnation for Adam's sin, and fully pays the penalty for that sin on our behalf.

And there are at least three massive effects that happen in the life of a person when they are granted permanent standing in the kingdom of Grace (5:2 – *"Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand . . . ."*)

**A. Grace reverses the spiritual status of people who were made sinners by Adam but who are now made righteous by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Adam.**

**B. Grace reverses the kingdom status of those who are born again, rescuing them from the kingdom of darkness and moving them permanently into the kingdom of God's dear Son (5:2; Col. 1:13-14).**

**C. Grace reverses the personal character of people who are made righteous by God through Christ**

*2 Cor 5:17 "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come!"*

- Righteousness **for us** – imputed to our account
- Righteousness **in us** – imparted to us in our character
- Righteousness **through us** – expressed by us in our lives (thoughts, values, words, deeds)
- Eventually Righteousness **around us** (in lives that display shalom and in a world that will one day re-experience full orbbed shalom)

***We could say it this way: "Grace reigns through a righteousness that leads to eternal life for those who have a personal relationship and persevere in a life-long association with Jesus Christ!"***

### **III. How does Grace-Sourced Righteousness lead Sinners to Eternal Life in this New Kingdom?**

*So that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

**A. By Removing Sin's condemnation over us (5:18-19).**

<sup>18</sup> *Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.* <sup>19</sup> *For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.*

- By means of the Righteousness Obtained by Christ our Representative by His obedient death on the Cross as our perfect, righteous substitute.
- When that Righteousness was imputed to us, so that we were Justified by God and made righteous before Him.



## **B. By Satisfying the Law's Demand for Us (5:20)**

<sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

- The Law revealed sin to us (1:32; 7:7)

**Romans 1:32** Though **they know God's righteous decree** that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.

**Romans 7:7** What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! **Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin.** For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

- The Law defined sin as disobedience by us (5:20 "now the Law came in to increase the trespass . . .)
- The Law incited sin in us (Romans 7:5)  
**Romans 7:5** For while we were living in the flesh, **our sinful passions, aroused by the law, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.**

## **C. By defeating death's power over us (5:17)**

**Romans 5:17** For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, **much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life** through the one man Jesus Christ.

- By suffering its penalty for us
- By conquering its power over us
- By reversing its effect in and on us by imparting eternal life so that death can never harm us again

## **D. By Conquering Sin's Mastery over us through the enabling power of Grace so that we live righteously and joyfully in the kingdom where grace reigns! (5:20b-21a).**

but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, **as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness**

## **E. Through our association with Jesus Christ Our Lord (5:1, 21)!**

Our association with His obedient life and substitutionary death grants us access to and standing in this amazing Kingdom, ruled by grace, established in righteousness, and teeming with abundant life!

Listen to Paul describe what happens to a person who is personally, positionally, and permanently associated with the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, and its implications for dealing with the old powers of sin and death that had mastery over us in the old kingdom:

**Romans 6:1–12** *What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, **in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.** <sup>5</sup> For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. <sup>6</sup> We know that our old self was crucified with him **in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin.** <sup>7</sup> For one who has died has been set free from sin. <sup>8</sup> Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. <sup>9</sup> We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. <sup>10</sup> For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. <sup>11</sup> **So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.** <sup>12</sup> **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions.***

Which brings us to the final question this morning:

### **Conclusion: What are the implications of the Reign of Grace for us?**

- A. Because I have been justified by grace through faith and not by my own righteous works, **I can rest confidently and joyfully in Grace!**
- B. As I live the justified life through the enablement of grace by refusing to let sin reign in me, and through me, **I should display the freeing power of grace humbly and consistently.**
- C. As a citizen in the Kingdom of Grace, I should live by its values, strive for its purposes, cultivate its effects in my relationships, and spread its benefits with others. **I should be shaped by Grace, showcase Grace, and spread Grace to others.**
- D. Because I have received grace from God that I did not deserve, **I should gladly and graciously give grace** to those who don't deserve it from me.
- E. As an ambassador of Grace, **I must eagerly share grace with others** and announce it throughout my part of the world.