

Romans 5

Read Romans 5:1-5: We just finished talking about how the faithful believers trace their spiritual roots back to Abram (by blood or by common beliefs). We also discussed that Abraham was considered to be a man of faith because he trusted God; not just because he got circumcised. Some have confused the cause and the effect of circumcision. Circumcision (like baptism) does not save you. It's generally what saved people do. Any born-again believer is happy to get into heaven any way that we can. We are not holding out for an honorable mention...because it is probably not merited. We are just happy to be included. Its all about getting to see God...not about being recognized in any way myself.

How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts! ² My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. ³ Even the sparrow has found a home, And the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young— Even Your altars, O LORD of hosts, My King and my God. ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You. Selah For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness. ¹¹ For the LORD God is a sun and shield; The LORD will give grace and glory; No good thing will He withhold From those who walk uprightly. (Psalm 84)

Those who choose to live in a legal relationship to God are under the harsh and inflexible Mosaic Law. They try to check every box and observe every law. They desperately want to be worthy. Those who want to know God personally and draw near to him are choosing the Abrahamic spiritual lineage of faith. It is all about a personal choice; and a living relationship. The Abrahamic spiritual family consists of believing Jews and Gentiles. It includes those who are circumcised and those who are not circumcised. It includes good examples of faith and also those who are in need of improvement.

Overview of the Covenants

The Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants are two significant agreements in the Bible that illustrate different aspects of God's relationship with His people.

Abrahamic Covenant

- **Nature:** Unconditional promise
- **Key Features:**
 - Made with Abraham, promising that he would be the father of a great nation.
 - His descendants would be as numerous as the stars.
 - This covenant does not require any conditions for fulfillment; it is based solely on God's promise.

Mosaic Covenant

- **Nature:** Conditional agreement
- **Key Features:**
 - Established with the Israelites at Mount Sinai.
 - Requires the Israelites to obey God's laws in exchange for blessings and protection.
 - The blessings are contingent upon their adherence to the commandments given by God.

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, ⁹not of works, lest anyone should boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

In the end, what we all want is peace of mind about our future. Those under the Mosaic Law are on a treadmill of continual sin-covering activities. Everything is always subject to the next bad decision. Under Abraham's friendship with God, the connection is voluntary, and not under compulsion. Having a family-style bond is completely different than a law enforcement arrangement. Family members receive a ton of grace. Mistakes are seen as good lessons; instead of disqualifiers.

Paul transitions into trials and challenges for some reason. He is making the point that compliance does not necessarily look like *garden strolls and peaceful tidings*. It can involve very rocky and abrupt and unwelcomed life events. The Jews mistakenly equated setbacks and trials as the results of sin. King David's life was an example to dispel that notion. Jesus reiterated that trials are not always negative

reinforcements on bad behavior. We should not strive to earn a pat on the back either.

² And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” ³ Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him. (John 9)

More accurately, harsh circumstances produce resistance and character and strength in reliance on God. We have to have setbacks and disappointments to grow. We are compared to grapevines that experience a massive annual pruning to be productive.

Read Romans 5:6-11: Paul is putting the nail in the coffin here. He is saying that God did not save the best candidates or the worthiest. He saved us when we were guilty as charged. We have no basis for bragging. There are *moral Eagle Scouts* who may end up in hell; and there are questionable characters who will end up in heaven. It does not seem fair to the higher achiever. It's more than fair to us. It is like God picked some of the worst players for his team. We are the antithesis of our belief system in many ways.

Read Romans 5:12-21: This is the portion of scripture explaining the *Adam Effect* on all mankind. It also explains how Jesus is the antidote for the curse upon all mankind. Adam was the first man to commit sin. He ruined the paradise and fellowship that man had with God. I cannot blame him. By all accounts, he was a far superior being. Men have not evolved. They have devolved.

Saying that Adam's eating of the apple ruined everyone's life thereafter is an overstatement. That is not exactly true. Adam was always a sinner, but nobody knew it. Adam was actually declared to be a sinner when he was given his first law he could break. If God never put a Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden he would still be an untested sinner. You can tell by the curse of the ground as a remedy; that Adam fell in love with his work; and God became a diminishing part of his life. You can't be a law violator unless there are rules. There were some areas of highway in the middle of nowhere in Eastern Montana with no speed limits. That has since changed. That does not mean that you could have still been an unsafe driver who should not have a driver's license. God put some markers in our lives just to show us how poorly we were living. The Law did not bring me down. It turned on the light. My bearings were way off. Sin can be as innocuous as being off target. Sin is contagious. Adam's son Cain killed his brother, before there was any law against murder. Even so, God judged him. God has written his laws into all men's hearts. Consider how we might feel that all is well, until someone cuts us off on the highway. Our over-reaction shows what

was brewing inside of us. The diminishing returns in this life was a treatment for Adam and all men. God had to bring down the desirability factor.

17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat of it All the days of your life. 18 Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, And you shall eat the herb of the field. 19 In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread Till you return to the ground, For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, And to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3)

So, Adam and Eve pulled that stunt in the Garden of Eden. It also revealed that Eve was dissatisfied in a paradise situation. God had to show her real life outside of paradise to get her to appreciate what God has set up.

Is that all on them? Is there any truth to the old Flip Wilson line: The Devil made me Do it'? Some. The Devil is an opportunist and a catalyst. He can tease out what lies deep within us. He can bring our notion into action. Our worst enemy is not the devil. It's our sin nature. The Devil just wants to kill us by showing God how bad we are, by continuously luring us into the Sheriff's spotlight.

14 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. 15 Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1)

Sin is compared to leprosy, because it is so contagious and deadly. It deadens you to the world and it makes you ugly to everyone. Adam sinned and the world died.

For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. (Romans 8:22)

This shows that God largely made earth and the universe for men. This dispels much of the potential alien conversations.

Jesus solved an impossible situation by satisfying the death penalty for all men's sins. Jesus died for all sinners so that anyone can live and have eternal life. Whoever believes in him shall be saved. In the end, the Law was necessary to show us how messed up we were....not to show us that we are A+ students of the Spirit. We were sinners without a citation. We were living for things other than God. Jesus created a massive friends and family sin amnesty program.

