

Doctrine of Sin Observations from Romans 5:12: Briefing on Hamartiology

Geoffrey R. Kirkland
Christ Fellowship Bible Church

God unequivocally announces that all humankind has plunged into a hopeless state of sin and depravity. So bad is this condition that no mere man, in his own strength or by his own cooperation, can ever bring himself to God. The sinful condition of man is such that man is a vile rebel, a corrupt blasphemer, and a hellbound Lawbreaker.

In this brief writeup, I must give some declarations from a key text on the doctrine of sin: Romans 5:12.

1. **Sin came through one man, Adam.** — God declares, through the pen of the Apostle Paul as he wrote under the guidance and careful direction of the Holy Spirit, that through one man sin entered into the world. Where did death, dying, decay, evil, pain, suffering and all the results of the curse come from? Simple answer: Adam's sin. All sin in human history had its beginning point with Adam in the Garden of Eden. Genesis 3 recounts this story in great (and, very clear) detail. Sin entered the world because Adam sinned before God. He disobeyed God and thus sin entered the world when it was not previously known at all. God had declared: in the day that Adam eats of the fruit, he would surely die (Genesis 2.17). This happened, and so sin entered through Adam.
2. **Sin brought death.** — When sin broke into human history, sin brought forth death. The Bible says in Romans 5:12 that death came through sin. Literally: through *the sin* death came. What did Adam's sin produce? What was the result? Death. Yes physical death would one day come to Adam but at the very instant that Adam disobeyed God and ate, spiritual death invaded and pervaded the world. Death came through one man's sin. The wages of sin is death (Rom 6.23). The soul that sins will die (Ezek 18.4). Sin produces death.
3. **Death spread to all men.** — Adam's sin was very personal but it did not remain individualistic. His sin spread to all men. Literally the texts says that death passed through to all men. From Adam, our leader and head, all his posterity and children for endless generations to come would thus be contaminated with the depraved nature, the corrupt nature and the sinful nature of evil. In Adam, sin spread to all mankind. No one, naturally born of a woman, has ever nor could ever escape this sinful nature.
4. **In Adam, all mankind sinned.** — The text concludes in Romans 5:12 by affirming that all mankind sinned in Adam. In an amazingly mystical yet undeniably real way, all humankind has sinned in Adam's sin. Adam thus is our corporate representative. He is our federal head. When he sinned, we actively sinned in Him. Later in Romans 5:19 we see a parallel with the glorious ray of hope: Through the one man's disobedience, the many were *made sinners* (in Adam), even so through the obedience of the One, the many will be made righteous (in Christ). Just as in Adam, our federal head, we all were imputed with the sin and guilt of Adam, so also in Christ, our federal head for all the

elect, we all are imputed with the righteousness of Christ. In Adam all sinned, in Christ all are made alive.