

The Gospel Project® for Adults

Leader Guide ESV, Unit 19, Session 1

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Jesus Is the Last Adam

Summary and Goal

Adam was created by God, placed in this world, and commissioned as an image-bearer of God. Adam initially lived without the presence of sin and enjoyed the full presence of God, yet he failed to remain pure. This resulted in the marring of God's image within him and introduced sin into the world, which brought death and condemnation to all humankind. Centuries later, the Son of God, the last Adam, also entered this world pure. Yet Jesus succeeded in remaining sinless. Christ not only rescued us from death and eternal separation from God, He also gifted to us His perfect life of obedience. Now, in Christ, we stand before our holy God as if we had lived that perfect life ourselves.

Session Outline

1. The Son of God came to overcome the transgression of the first Adam (Luke 3:23,38; Rom. 5:12-15).
2. The Son of God came to make the dead alive (Rom. 5:16-17).
3. The Son of God came to make sinners righteous (Rom. 5:18-21).

Background Passages: Luke 3:23-38; Romans 5

Session in a Sentence

Jesus is the last Adam, who was born to overcome what the first Adam brought into the world through his transgression.

Christ Connection

The first Adam's transgression brought sin, death, and condemnation upon the world. Jesus is the last Adam, the long-promised offspring who overcame Adam's transgression through His life of perfect obedience and His payment for sin on the cross. Through Jesus we have life and are declared righteous before God.

Missional Application

Because we have been forgiven of our sin through Christ and have been given His righteousness, we proclaim Jesus as the long-awaited offspring of Adam, in whom alone salvation is found.

Group Time

Sin is neither a popular word nor a topic of conversation sought after by most, but the concept is important and affects everything we see around us and within us. The primary word for *sin* in the New Testament has roots as an archery term. ¹ Sin is "missing the mark" of God's holy standard; it is anything less than perfection. As hard as we might try, we will never hit the bullseye of God's righteousness every time we act, speak, or think. But this assumes a genuine desire to get it right in the first place. The reality of our sinful state is not that we fail because we are incompetent; rather, we miss the mark because we usually aim at the wrong target.

Some of us have a hard time grasping the problem of our sin and the proper rescue needed. We try so hard to get it right but find ourselves looking at the wrong target—self-righteousness. Not only will our best performance continually miss the mark, but the very attempt to save ourselves is also, in itself, offensive to God (Isa. 64:6).

INTERACT:

Why do you think we tend to downplay the severity of our sin problem and attempt to fix things on our own?

SUMMARIZE: The first human being, Adam, was created by God, placed in this world, and commissioned as an image-bearer of God. Adam initially lived without the presence of sin and enjoyed the full presence of God, yet he failed to remain pure. This resulted in the marring of God’s image within him and introduced sin into the world, which brought death and condemnation to all humankind. Centuries later, the Son of God, the last Adam, also entered this world pure. Yet Jesus succeeded in remaining sinless. Christ not only rescued us from death and eternal separation from God, He also gifted to us His perfect life of obedience. Now, in Christ, we stand before our holy God as if we had lived that perfect life ourselves.

Point 1: The Son of God came to overcome the transgression of the first Adam (Luke 3:23,38; Rom. 5:12-15).

Through the fall of our forefather Adam, we’ve each inherited a nature broken and bent toward sin, and along with it, the penalty of death that sin deserves. Humanity needs a new “Adam,” one neither compromised by nor predisposed to sin, to deliver us from death and corruption and to restore our wholeness and integrity as God’s image-bearers.

READ

Luke 3:23 Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli ... **38** the son of Enos, the son of Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God.

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Romans 5:12 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— **13** for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. **14** Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. **15** But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man’s trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ abounded for many.

INTERACT:

How does the biblical view of sin and death compare to the world’s?

Until sin entered the scene, Adam and Eve impeccably reflected God’s character and enjoyed God’s presence. But then paradise was shattered with the fall of Adam. The perfect fellowship he and Eve enjoyed with their Creator and each other was lost. Sin opened their eyes, hardened their hearts, and affected all of humanity to come (Gen. 3). Because of sin, now every soul deserves God’s just punishment—death and hell.

Nature of Hell: The punishment that awaits [unbelievers](#) in hell is an eternal, never-ending [suffering](#) that comes from sins committed against an infinite God. In hell, sinners are forever [separated](#) from God.

Essential Doctrine “Nature of Hell”: For those who are not found in Christ at the time of their death, the Scriptures say that God’s condemnation remains upon them (John 3:36) and that they will be judged according to their deeds done on earth (Heb. 9:27). The punishment that awaits **unbelievers** in hell is an eternal, never-ending **suffering** that comes from sins committed against an infinite God (Matt. 25:41,46). In hell, sinners are forever **separated** from God.

Point 2: The Son of God came to make the dead alive (Rom. 5:16-17).

READ Romans 5:16-17

16 And the free gift is not like the result of that one man’s sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brought justification. 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.

Christ came to overcome the destruction from Adam, both in terms of our guilt and our corruption. The condemnation for our guilt as sinners must be corrected first through **justification**, our being declared to be in a right legal standing with God. By this declaration, God *imputes* our sin and guilt to Christ and His righteousness to us. Yet our diseased spiritual DNA must be fixed through a spiritual transfusion of sorts, namely, through the Spirit-led process of renewal and change known as **sanctification**.

- **Justification** is a permanent, once-for-all declaration of righteousness (i.e., *imputation*).
 - **Sanctification** is an ongoing work by which the Holy Spirit transforms us and makes us more and more righteous in our person, more and more like Jesus (i.e., *transfusion*, or *transformation*).
 - The good news of the gospel is that God grants both **justification** and **sanctification** to anyone and everyone who believes on Christ, the second and last Adam.
 - The first Adam entered this world without the presence of sin yet failed to remain sinless. The last Adam, however, entered this world holy and succeeded, allowing Him to make what theologians call, with reference to the doctrine of **justification**, “the Great Exchange”: Jesus took on our sin, guilt, and condemnation, surrendering Himself to the death penalty we deserve, and we, by faith, receive His perfect righteousness He achieved through His obedience to His Father. Through the shedding of His sinless, life-giving blood, the Messiah provides spiritual restoration to all who accept His gift of grace.
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Imputation: When God [pardoned](#) sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed, or transferred, to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ’s [righteousness](#) was imputed to us.

Essential Doctrine “Imputation”: When God **pardoned** sinners at the cross, our sins were imputed, or transferred, to Christ, who became sin on our behalf. Our sin was imputed to Christ, and Christ’s righteousness was imputed to us (Rom. 5:17; 1 Cor. 1:30). When God the Father looks at those who have trusted in Christ, He does not see their sins but the **righteousness** of Christ as belonging to them (Rom. 4:6).

Through Christ we now have a choice: **continue identifying with the first Adam** or **become united by faith with the last**

Adam. We *either* continue on with the guilt and condemnation that come with affirming Adam’s sinful choice by our own sinful choices *or* we repent and accept the righteous imputation of Christ that brings eternal life. Jesus’ sacrifice in the place of sinners means the presence, peace, power, and perfection of Christ may now become an inseparable part of who we are because we are in Him and He is in us.

Voices from Church History

“When God looks upon the human race, He sees but two men—Adam and Christ. Every human being is either ‘in Adam’ and lost, or ‘in Christ’ and saved; there is no middle ground.”²

–Warren Wiersbe (1929-2019)

How have you experienced the blessings and benefits of being in Christ by faith?

Point 3: The Son of God came to make sinners righteous (Rom. 5:18-21).

READ: Romans 5:18-21

18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men. **19** 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. **20** Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, **21** so that, as sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FILL IN THE BLANKS:

| FIRST ADAM | LAST ADAM—JESUS |
|---|--|
| <u>Sin</u> and <u>death</u> (vv. 12,17) | <u>Grace</u> and <u>life</u> (vv. 15,17) |
| <u>Condemnation</u> (vv. 16,18) | <u>Justification</u> (vv. 16,18) |
| Made people <u>sinners</u> (v. 19) | Makes people <u>righteous</u> (v. 19) |

Jesus took our sins upon Himself and gave us His righteousness—all so God could declare “not guilty” over us (2 Cor. 5:21). Now when God looks upon us, if we are in Christ, He sees us just as if we had never sinned. This is the depth of our **justification** before the Father that the Son earned on our behalf.

But more than just our justification—being *declared* righteous—Jesus has done all that is necessary for our **sanctification**—being *made* righteous (2 Pet. 1:3). He has saved us and given us His Spirit. We’ve been called to live out the holiness of God through displaying the righteousness of Christ, and we’ve been given the Holy Spirit to strengthen and guide us on this journey. Our new inward identities in Christ are to become outward realities in obedience so we display the glory of our great God of grace.

What is the difference between a gospel view of sanctification and rules-based approach?

My Mission

Because we have been forgiven of our sin through Christ and have been given His righteousness, we proclaim Jesus as the long-awaited offspring of Adam, in whom alone salvation is found.

- **What steps of faith will you take because God declares and makes sinners righteous on account of Jesus?**
- **How can your group help one another to “show off” the righteousness of Christ in your community?**
- **With whom will you share the good news that Jesus came to overcome our sin problem and give us eternal life?**

Voices from Church History

“Paul speaks of an abundance of grace to show that what we have received is not just a medicine sufficient to heal the wound of sin, but also health and beauty and honor, and glory and dignity far transcending our natural state ... There is not a trace of death left, nor can any shadow of it be seen, so entirely has it been done away with.”⁴

–John Chrysostom (c. 347-407)
