

# **What is Death?**

Rom. 5:12-19 (text: 5:12)

*Theme: Because of Adam all have sinned and, because all have sinned, all will experience physical death.*

**Death is universal – everyone dies.**

What is death?

Death is not:

- a natural part of the cycle or rhythm of life;
- the cessation of life.

We get an understanding of what death is as we examine Paul's flow of thought in Romans 5:12.

The apostle makes a number of important points:

1. Sin came into the world through the disobedience of one man (5:12a).

We need to understand three key terms before we can grasp what Paul is saying:

**(i) Sin:** here sin is personified. It is a horrible thing that corrupts human nature and ensures its failure to conform to the moral law of God in actions, attitude, nature.

**(ii) World:** the human race.

**(iii) Man:** Adam.

Sin used Adam as a doorway to enter into and infect the human race, *cf.* Genesis 3:1-7.

## 2. Death is a Consequence of Sin (5:12b).

Death is a consequence of sin and a punishment for sin, *cf.* Gen. 2:17.

There are two kinds of death:

**i) Spiritual death.**

*Cf.* Ephesians 2:1-2.

**ii) Physical death.**

Death of the body. This is the primary meaning here, *cf.* Romans 5:14; Genesis 3:19; 5 & refrain.

### **3. Death comes to all because in Adam all have sinned (5:12c).**

Why do all suffer because of what Adam did?

There are differing explanations:

**Calvin's view.** We inherit sinful tendencies from Adam and this leads to death. This is not a *full* explanation and not what Romans 5:12 says!

**Pelagianism.** We all follow Adam's example and sin. We then die because of our own sins. This is not what Romans 5:18a says.

**Realistic View.** Future generations of the human race were in Adam's loins when he sinned,  
*cf.* Hebrews 7:9-10.

**Federal Representative View.** Adam was appointed head of the human race by God. On the basis of his obedience or disobedience the human race would be counted obedient or disobedient. We bear the same consequence as Adam – death.

The last two are Biblically acceptable.

*Physical death is the cessation of life in a body, that comes as a consequence of Adam's sin being put to our account by God.*

Death is proof that all humanity is guilty of Adam's sin.

# Conclusion – With Adam or With Christ?

All our trouble arises from our union with Adam.

But we cannot end on a hopeless note!

When we are united to Christ He  
becomes our new Head or  
Representative and we experience  
salvation.

*Who is your head?*

Adam or Christ?