Elder's Corner

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—
(Rom. 5:12)

Throughout the annals of human history there have arisen humans who committed a single act that had lasting effects on many others. Examples can be given from the field of politics, or of military heroes on the battlefield, or even of splendid athletes who won the game or event with their superb ability. One singular example certainly would be Martin Luther nailing his 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg church in 1517, and the effect his action generated in the realm of "Christianity."

However, try as we might, no single action has had a more profound and all-encompassing effect than the one I read this morning that is found above. There are two key words in that phrase, **"one" and "all."** The **one** referred to of course is **Adam**. Those familiar with the account of the fall of **man** in Genesis 3 might object, pointing out that Eve was first to eat the forbidden **fruit.** But we must consider that Eve **ate** because she **was deceived,** while **Adam was not deceived, and he ate** willingly **the fruit** that Eve gave him **(1Tim. 2:14; Gen. 3:6).** Through the **one man, Adam, sin and death entered the world**, they being two matters entirely unknown before Adam's fall. A note in my Bible emphasizes the effect that the first man's disobedience had on God's perfect creation, "The first sin wrought the moral ruin of the race. The demonstration is simple. (1) Death is universal (vv. 12, 14, all die—little children, moral people, and religious people equally with the depraved. For a universal effect there must be a universal cause; that cause is a state of universal sin (v. 12).[1] William MacDonald writes of the reality of universal **sin**, "Man is condemned on three grounds: He has a *sinful nature*. Adam's sin *is imputed* to him, and he is a *sinner by practice.*[2]

If the verse above was the end of the story, its conclusion would not be good, because the verse speaks of man's guilt and the condemnation that is due him because of one man's action. But man's story does not end there, instead it takes a wonderful turn. The Apostle Paul, who wrote of the first **man**, the first **Adam,** also writes of the second Man, the second **Adam:**

> **But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Gal. 4:4, 5)**

Formerly, because of our natural descent from our first father, we humans **were born dead in trespasses and sins, were children of wrath, and sons of disobedience (Eph. 2:1-3**). By virtue of the new birth which is brought about by **the Holy Spirit** when one **believes** in the second **Adam,** the Lord **Jesus Christ (John 3:3-7, 15, 16),** the formerly dead one receives **eternal life;** those formerly **sons of disobedience** are adopted as **children** of the living **God (Rom. 8:14-17).**

This article began with, "throughout the annals of human history there have arisen humans who committed a single act that had lasting effects on many others," and up to this point the article focused on the disobedient act of **Adam** that brought **sin and death** and the curse of **sin** upon mankind. The second **Adam**, the Lord **Jesus Christ,** who is **God** as well as **Man**, accomplished an even greater one-time act—an act that brought redemption and **eternal life** in contrast to the **death** and condemnation that the one act of the first **man Adam** brought. The second **man,** by **obedience,** died the physical **death** that the first **man** brought by his **disobedience (Rom. 5:19),** but He rose triumphantly from that **death**, defeating it, prompting the Apostle Paul to write:

> **But now Christ is risen from the dead and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (1 Cor. 15:20-22)**

Think of this. The second **Adam** came to undo what the first **Adam** brought into God's creation—**sin and death.** What the second **Adam** accomplished through His finished work at Calvary—forgiveness of sins, redemption, justification, bodily **resurrection, and eternal life** can never be undone. Have you put your faith in the second **Man**, the second **Adam,** and what He did for you**?** Maranatha.

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[1] *Scofield Study Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 1557.

[2] William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1990) 514. (Italics in the original).