

Digging Deeper: The Greater Meaning of Romans 5:12

Sunday, October 25, 2026

“That is why, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because they had all sinned —.” (Romans 5:12)

In his letter to the Romans, Paul explains where sin and death came from and how Jehovah undoes the damage. The main point is that one man’s choice brought ruin, so it took one man’s obedience to set things right. As the day’s text explains, Jehovah’s perfect justice would not simply ignore Adam’s disobedience. Instead, Jehovah lovingly provided the ransom through Jesus.

1 “Sin”: Missing the Mark (ἁμαρτία, *ha·mar·ti'a*)

The Greek word for “sin” is ἁμαρτία (*ha·mar·ti'a*). It comes from a verb that means “to miss the mark,” like an archer whose arrow falls short of the target. Sin is falling short of Jehovah’s perfect standard.

Adam had no excuse. He was perfect and knew God’s clear command. (Genesis 2:17) When he chose to disobey, he didn’t just miss once; he passed that flaw on to all of us. “Sin is lawlessness,” and it brings a sure result: “The wages sin pays is death.” (1 John 3:4; Romans 6:23)

- My mistakes show that I fall short too. That keeps me humble and grateful for the ransom.

2 “Spread”: Death Passed Through to Everyone (διέρχομαι, *di·er'kho·mai*)

The word translated “spread” is διέρχομαι (*di·er'kho·mai*), which means to go through or pass through. Paul pictures death moving through the whole human family, reaching every one of Adam’s children. No one is left out.

That is why no amount of good effort on our part can fix the problem. We all inherited it. The day’s text notes that it might seem kind to just let good-hearted people live forever. But that would mean ignoring sin, and “all his ways are justice.” (Deuteronomy 32:4)

- Jehovah doesn’t cut corners with justice. I can trust that his way of saving us is both loving and right.

3 “Corresponding Ransom”: An Exact Match (ἀντίλυτρον, *an·ti'ly·tron*)

The day's text quotes 1 Timothy 2:6, where Jesus “gave himself a corresponding ransom for all.” The Greek word ἀντίλυτρον (*an·ti'ly·tron*) means a ransom that matches what was lost. One perfect man, Adam, lost perfect life for us, so one perfect man, Jesus, gave his perfect life to buy it back.

Paul puts it simply: “Just as through the disobedience of the one man many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one person many will be made righteous.” (Romans 5:19) The price fit the loss exactly.

- The ransom wasn't a loophole. It shows Jehovah's justice and his love working together.

Key Spiritual Reflections

- **Seeing My Need:** How does knowing that I inherited sin help me be more patient with my own weaknesses and with others? (Romans 5:12)
- **Trusting His Justice:** Why can I feel secure knowing that Jehovah never ignores what is wrong? (Deuteronomy 32:4)
- **Showing Thanks:** What is one way I can show Jehovah this week that I value the ransom Jesus paid for me? (1 Timothy 2:6)