

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Between Adam and Moses

### Between Adam and Moses - posted by rhGRAY2, on: 2009/10/31 22:15

So my wife and I have been going through the Bible, beginning from Genesis, and have run into a couple of BIG questions.

So, I'm going to begin with a question from Romans 5, dealing with the book of Genesis (and Exodus until the Law).

Question #1: What does it mean when it says death reigned from Adam to Moses, even those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam? Specifically what does "death reigned" mean?

Question #2: Why does it seem that God overlooks the sins of man after Adam? (i.e. all the pluralism in marriage, Genesis 29 why God blesses Leah even through Sin of Jacob having multiple wives)

Question #3: Does God just not care about the wickedness of Abraham's offspring?

Question #4: Does God just have His way with the people regardless of what they do? It seems that He destroys Sodom and Gomorrah for being "wicked," but basically everyone in Genesis seems to be deceitful, why not punish them?

Any help with these, or further explanation to clear things up for me would be great.

Thanks,  
Rhgray

### Re: Between Adam and Moses, on: 2009/10/31 23:01

Question #1: What does it mean when it says death reigned from Adam to Moses, even those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam? Specifically what does "death reigned" mean?

Answer: In verse 12 and 13 is the answer. Paul is pointing out that death reigned from Adam to Moses because of the "Law of Sin". The law of Moses came to make sin "exceedingly" sinful.

To the other questions I am going to give a simple, yet probably unsatisfactory answer. The human race was like a giant newborn child. Then from Moses on, human race became a teenager then grows up through the prophets. Now with Jesus the human race is viewed as full adult.

In Acts 17:30 it says, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

Now even though God "winked" at it He did still discipline them and judge them when He decided.

I'm sure others on SI can give better answers than I have on this.  
God bless,

**Re: Between Adam and Moses - posted by Laviver, on: 2009/11/1 0:58**

1. It means even though the Law had been given, all men still died because of sin. Officially they hadn't broken commands of God. They hadn't eaten the fruit like Adam did when told not to and had not the commandments. But death reigned, because of inborn sin.

2. Romans 3:23-27 "23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, >>>>because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."

He passed them over because Christ was coming.

3. God cares about all wickedness.

4. Yes and no. We're not supposed to talk about Calvinism here ;) But I believe God is sovereign. As for Genesis, they got it the worst. Remember the flood? He wiped em all out and started again. As for Covenant people, they seemingly got by with their wicked because of the promises and were later vindicated by Christ as per the Romans passage up there ^\_. But depending on the situation they did have small prices to pay along the way. The consequences are just woven into the narrative so it seems different. Like Judah's sin and losing his firstborn blessing.

**Re: Between Adam and Moses - posted by twayneb (), on: 2009/11/1 7:42**

Welcome RHGray.

The period of time between Adam and Moses is, obviously, pre-law. The point Paul makes in Romans 5 is this. He says that it was by one man that sin entered the world, and the result of that sin was death to all men, spiritually and physically. Then he makes this statement. Even though sin was in the world, it was not held to the account of the sinner since there was no law yet given. Nevertheless, the physical consequence of sin, death, reigned even before there was a law under which the transgression could be imputed. It is interesting that Paul says that sins were not imputed before the law. Recall the attitude of Lamech in Gen. 4:23 and 24. Instead of lamenting his own sin of murder, he points to God's protection of Cain and boldly states that God will protect him seventy and seven fold. Paul says in Galatians 3:9 that the Law was added because of transgressions until Christ should come. The law made sin exceedingly sinful. It both made us painfully aware that we were sinners and hopelessly so, and it also restrained sin in the earth because of the severity of the consequences of breaking the law. So Paul is basically saying that although there was not a law given at this time, yet sin was still sin and was evident by the consequence of death that reigned over mankind.

As to God's apparent oversight of the sins of many of the patriarchs in the Old Testament, I am not sure I can give you an entirely satisfactory answer, but I can share some thoughts that I have had on the issue. We as born again believers have something that none of the men and women of who lived either before the law or under the law had, although some like Abraham and David had a revelation. We have righteousness and right standing with God through Christ and the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. This prompted Jesus to say this in Luke 7:28 "For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." Me, greater than John the baptist??? According to Jesus YES!!! Now look at Acts 17:30. Paul tells the gentiles at Athens that at one time God winked at their ignorance but now calls men everywhere to repent. Before the law, there was great ignorance of the ways of God. Noah and his sons had known God, but much of that knowledge had been abandoned. {This is extrabiblical, but my opinion. Noah still had, I believe, the writings of Adam, Enoch, etc., but very few had access or regarded these things.} The law brought in a standard and through His dealings with the Jews and the statements of the prophets, God showed the world who He was and what He was like. It is not that God has changed. There is just a different level or degree of revelation now than then. It was a difference in how God dealt with man.

Hope that helps brother.

**Re: Between Adam and Moses - posted by Lysa (), on: 2009/11/1 10:26**

You may like to listen to this, I've found these very helpful.

Zac Poonen's ([http://www.cfcindia.com/web/mainpages/verse\\_by\\_verse.php](http://www.cfcindia.com/web/mainpages/verse_by_verse.php)) Verse by Verse Bible Study

Zac Poonen's ([http://www.cfcindia.com/web/mainpages/topical\\_bible\\_study.php](http://www.cfcindia.com/web/mainpages/topical_bible_study.php)) Topical Bible Studies

God bless your studies!

**Re: - posted by rhGRAY2, on: 2009/11/1 12:05**

Quote:

Nevertheless, the physical consequence of sin, death, reigned even before there was a law under which the transgression could be imputed.

This makes sense. I guess my follow-up question to this would be; Was there knowledge of Heaven at this point (between Adam and Moses)? I can't recall a mentioning of Heaven, besides the creation account. Because when God curses man, he says "to dust you shall return." Does that mean that there wasn't a Heaven men went to?

Other than Enoch being "taken up" I don't really remember a mention of a Heavenly realm.

Another follow-up question is this:

If God "winked at" sin previously committed. Or God "passed by" former sin, does that bring into question His justice? I know now that God is not subject to our view of His justice, but it seems like it's out of His character to just pass by sin.

And if the Law made sin exceedingly sinful, wouldn't that mean that God's view of sin changed? Because if He's that same yesterday, today and forever, isn't that a contradiction?

Or are all these things just in tension with one another?

Sorry I'm kinda of theological vomiting on everyone, but I'm just curious.

Interested in the replies.

Thanks all.

-R.H. Gray

**Re: Between Adam and Moses, on: 2009/11/1 12:38**

SI was stuck in limbo, two posts.

**Re: Between Adam and Moses, on: 2009/11/1 12:39**

Quote:

-----Specifically what does "death reigned" mean?

There was no law. Every man did what he thought was right in his own eyes. The acts of the law brought about a temporary truce between God and man, death was staid to them that performed the law. The same is true in the New Testament. Death is swallowed up in victory through the death of Jesus Christ and by His accomplished work on the cross we obtain justification through faith and not by the works of the law. But in the Old Testament, the performance of the law is what staid the hand of God from killing man. There is a relationship between the Law and Jesus Christ.

Quote:

-----Why does it seem that God overlooks the sins of man after Adam?  
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If there is one thing that God has a hard time doing it's killing anyone that believe in Him yet do stupid things. David was a man after God's own heart and yet God spared David from the law when He committed adultery and murdered a man. I can see God pulling out a loop hole for this man by saying, "Did I not say, touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm"?

I speak as a man.

**Re: Between Adam and Moses, on: 2009/11/1 13:23**

Hello Mr Gray,

Some random thoughts come to mind, after reading your questions. I won't try to organise them too tightly, as I'm sure they will fit in and around some of the other contributors' replies.

First, about 'Heaven'. I guess I know what you mean, but, scripture has many references it, eg Gen 1:1, 8 and Deu 10:14. A word search shows 'heavens' appears 129 times in the KJV (and 'heaven of heavens' a few times), and, 2 Cor 12:2 (Paul's experience), and John's visions in Revelation.

So... I would like to draw to your attention that Adam lived until about 5 decades before Noah was born. Noah's father, and all the other children since Adam, must have known him personally. They all must have known what happened in the garden of Eden, and as the 'world' population increased, and there were more and more mouths to feed, no doubt some of them were incredulous he had given up a life of tending a garden rich in fruiting trees, for the hard graft of digging up brambles and thistles, tilling, planting, watering and waiting, before any kind of harvest appeared, year on weary year. That's why Methuselah's name is significant, and his son called his firstborn 'Rest' (!). How they longed for 'rest'. But what a price. The great Flood **was** God's judgement. He had not forgotten 'the sin'.

God never saw all the bloodshed from animals under the Law, as sufficient payment (or punishment) for sin Heb 10:4. But also remember that He had promised Eve, that her descendant would bruise the serpent's head. That promise, also, was being passed down the generations - which is one of the reasons God can have no pity on those who rejected Him when Messiah finally appeared. Right from Cain's murder of Abel, it is clear that God intended to take the punishment for the outworking of 'the sin', upon Himself. That's one reason He seems to have been lenient to mankind. But, nevertheless, we see prominent examples (kings, priests, prophets) *not* being let off the consequences of personal sins. And, this is why 'the remission of sins' is the good good news to the whole of mankind. Matt 5:45. God still knows who is just, and who is 'unjust'. Rev 22:11. But, 'The just shall live by faith.' (Rom 1:17, 10:17.)

About polygamy, it was legal. There is nothing we can do about that. But, a woman could be married to only one man. However, there were differences in status of the women a Jewish man was free to marry, and all the social rules had to be obeyed, according to the scripture. If he defaulted on one of them, God was *most* displeased. The pictures in scripture, arising from God's longing to have Israel desire to be His only spouse, provide deep communication between God and man, especially as to our understanding of just how much He longs for us, and has kept Himself for one bride (spiritually speaking), only, (once we are divorced from sin, of course).

God blessed Leah because she succumbed to her father's wishes, and was very much a victim of the circumstance of Jacob falling in love with her younger sister. Leah had soft eyes, but although Rachel was very beautiful, she was an idolatress and a liar, even after having been married to Jacob for many years. Even when it was obviously not Jacob's fault that she had no children, she did not acknowledge God in her situation (which Jacob had done the night he ran away from Esau). Not until Lev 18 do we see in God's word, a clear connection between idolatry and childlessness. Sarai (Abraham's wife) had been unbelieving (despite God's word), also, until challenged by the Lord Himself; yet, it seems that when Rebekah had left her father's house to be joined to Isaac, she had naturally adopted his God as her own. Before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and the bringing of many sons to glory Heb 2:11, there was only 'natural' family. Yet, certain men (such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses) really did have a speaking relationship with God, and they were straightened by it, to believe Him, despite their other shortcomings. All of these men *chose* to believe God.

Re: - posted by Laviver, on: 2009/11/1 18:09

Quote:  
-----If God "winked at" sin previously committed. Or God "passed by" former sin, does that bring into question His justice? I know that God is not subject to our view of His justice, but it seems like it's out of His character to just pass by sin.  
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Not at all and no loopholes are necessary to explain it. The Romans passage I mentioned earlier details it. Rom. 3:23-27 . God passed over all sins of His saints, not just David, looking forward to the sacrifice of Christ. Up until then, it could have seemed like God was unjust, BUT when Christ became a propitiation (bore the just wrath for those sins and ours as well) God could freely justify the wicked and remain just.

This was His plan from the beginning. No one was ever to be justified by the law but through faith alone ( Gal. 3:11 ). The law exists to reveal sin, man's hopelessness to overcome it, and thereby cause him to look at God for redemption. This is the plan now and was His plan in the Old Testament too. For the just shall live by faith ( Hab. 2:4).

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2009/11/1 20:20

Quote:  
-----Was there knowledge of Heaven at this point (between Adam and Moses)? I can't recall a mentioning of Heaven, besides the creation account. Because when God curses man, he says "to dust you shall return." Does that mean that there wasn't a Heaven men went to? Other than Enoch being "taken up" I don't really remember a mention of a Heavenly realm.  
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Good question. In the creation account we find that God created the heavens (plural). Some believe this to mean the atmosphere and space. The heavens are also used scripturally to refer to the spiritual real which we cannot see but with which we interact regularly. John 4:23-24, Eph. 6:12. It is also used to refer to the place that Jesus said He goes to prepare for us (John 14:3). Genesis is filled with references to heaven, so the concept was alive and well. I guess it might arguably have been more common a concept and more near the heart of man than it is even now since it was so close in time to a time when God walked and talked with man face to face. I am not sure we can know. As to heaven in an eternal home sense I am not sure. Obviously God gave some men a revelation of what salvation was about (Enoch probably and Abraham specifically as evidenced by what Jesus and the writer of Hebrews had to say about him.) I have not found any Biblical evidence that people who lived pre-law spoke in these terms. One scripture is interesting.

1Pe 3:19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;  
1Pe 3:20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

It seems the people that lived before the flood at least, and in my opinion before the law, were reserved in some location and had the opportunity of hearing Christ and make a decision about Him for themselves. I'm sure many people have tried to figure out exactly what is being said here. I guess I just look at the simple and straightforward reading and assume that for sure all men that lived before the law, and in my opinion probably all men who lived prior to Christ's sacrifice for sin eventually have the opportunity to accept or reject Christ. I am not sure my view on this affects anything in particular since I live under the New Covenant and will find out how God did handle the Old Covenant people soon enough.

Quote:  
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If God "winked at" sin previously committed. Or God "passed by" former sin, does that bring into question His justice? I know that God is not subject to our view of His justice, but it seems like it's out of His character to just pass by sin.

And if the Law made sin exceedingly sinful, wouldn't that mean that God's view of sin changed? Because if He's that same yesterday, today and forever, isn't that a contradiction?  
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Romans says that sin is not imputed where there is no law. Look at it this way if it helps. Let's say your city has no law a

against speeding. For years everyone has traveled at whatever speed they wished. Your city government says, OK, we must do something about this speeding problem. So that people will know how bad speeding is, we must enact a law against it. So they do. Now speeding is punishable by a fine of \$5 for every MPH infraction. Does that mean that your city leader's sense of justice or character is off, or that of the policemen has changed or is invalid?

It is not that the character or nature of God changed one bit. It means that the way he dealt with man changed.

Here is something else to look at when we ask, "why the law?". We have said that the law was added because of transgressions until Christ should come (remember when the fullness of time was come Christ came born of Mary). The law had a restraining effect on sin. I heard it put this way once, and it may not be too far off. Someone said that if God had not instituted the law there may not have been a virgin left for Jesus to be born to. It was a bit tongue in cheek when it was said, but it does highlight one purpose for the law.

The main purpose, however, was to establish a standard of God's righteousness and show us that without a savior we could never make it. It was the schoolmaster that brought us to Christ. The law was meant to conclude us all under sin and show us that we needed a savior.

Seeing this, we can see the merciful character of God. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The law, as harsh as it was, helped point us to God's mercy. Remember when Jesus said he came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. Recall also how Hebrews tells us the law has been ended for the sake of obtaining righteousness and that the old covenant has been abolished for the sake of the new. These are not in conflict at all. Jesus fulfilled the law by fulfilling its purpose. He was the one the law pointed us to by concluding us all under sin. He was the propitiation for sin that the law showed us we needed. When Jesus came, the whole purpose of the law had arrived. The dispensation of law then passed away as the law has now seen its purpose fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

I would say that the law was only a shadow of God's true holiness and righteousness. Remember Matthew 5 and the sermon on the mount. The law is compared to God's true standards and it is shown that if we wanted ever thought that we could be perfect by keeping laws that we have to be perfect like God on our own rights. Something that compels us the say, "If this is the case I am hopeless outside of Christ."

I am not sure if that answered the question but I hope it helped.

**Re: , on: 2009/11/1 23:00**

Quote:

-----Not at all and no loopholes are necessary to explain it.  
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Then why were some killed and others not? The law was not explained to those Jews back in the day to show that Christ would fulfill it. Think about the audience to which this law was given. The law says that if a man commits adultery the man and the woman is stoned. And if a man kills a man his life is to be given up. Life for life. Yet God spared David and he both committed adultery and killed the man all this so that it would be legal for him to take Bathsheba. Now, God gave the law to Moses and God took the reproach instead of David being destroyed. Think about what God did for this man. And this was unheard of. How was this going to look when one is condemned to die if he kills a man. People would say, "King David killed a man and he wasn't condemned, so why should I be condemned". God is bearing the reproach. Truly the words ring clear here, "What is man that thou desire him?".

**Re: - posted by Laviver, on: 2009/11/2 0:13**

DeepThinker I like your posts. And I honestly wrestle with the same things. I think our difference comes in that I was looking at the broadstrokes while you were looking at the particulars. All I am basing my posts off of are Paul's take on the matter. I don't know why God does or doesn't do things situationally.

I do question how many people actually were stoned because of adultery. We see instances where the immediate justice of the law was carried out (like Achan), but so often in the Old Testament the whole nation of Israel is backslidden, idolatrous, and overflowing with the very sins (like adultery) they were supposed to punish.



Re: Between Adam and Moses, on: 2009/11/2 2:39

Being even more particular about David, isn't part of the meaning of all of his story, that he was extremely aware of his shortcomings - Psa 119:176 - and willing to have them pointed out to him, and, then willing to take responsibility for them before God, personally? 2 Sam 12:13

These attitudes have to be contrasted with the normal person's natural ability to overlook sin in general, and their own in particular. We saw that (kind of thing) in Aaron's explanation to Moses for the golden calf, and in many other characters who chose to go with their own wisdom (ie unbelief) rather than the word of God.

Perhaps God allowed David to stand out in contrast with much of biblical history, to highlight His willingness to have mercy in the face of genuine repentance?

There is another thing in scripture which I've noticed, namely, that God promised His punishments would be visited on the children of the sinner, down to the fourth generation, and sometimes He mentions the tenth generation. (Please check that out, as I can't remember the exact context.) Then, God changes that parameter in Eze 3 and 18, which (I believe), ought to change how we read scripture from then on; as God is honing down on the detail, for our edification.

Food for thought.

Since Christ, God's *grace* is offered to *every* man, and every man will bear his own punishment for rejecting this grace. John 16:9

Re: , on: 2009/11/2 3:52

## ROMANS 5:12

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin . . .”

Adam brought sin into the world by his own free will, and spiritual death comes by sin. Adam became dead in sin (morally depraved and separated from God) just as God said he would, the very day that he ate from the tree. Though Adam physically died many years later, on account of being removed from the garden that had the tree of life, Adam morally and spiritually died the same day he sinned against God.

“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen. 2:17). Since God cannot fellowship with or dwell with sin, Adam spiritually died, that is, he became spiritually separated from God the day he sinned. “And all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred and thirty years: and he died” (Gen. 5:5); that is, Adam eventually physically died since he was removed from the tree of life (Gen. 3:22-24).

“ . . . and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

It is clear that the type of death spoken of here comes upon men for their own personal sin, “for all have sinned”. And their sin is distinct and different from the sin of Adam (vs. 14). Some infant children physically die during pregnancy though they are “innocent” (2 Kgs. 21:16; 24:4; Matt. 18:3) and haven’t ever sinned (Rom. 9:11). Physical death is because of Adam’s sin, not individual personal sin. So the type of death which comes upon all men for their own personal sin is not physical death but spiritual death, which type of death this verse is addressing.

Spiritual death comes by sin, so all who choose to sin become spiritually dead. A moral fall causes spiritual death. Because God cannot have fellowship with those who are in sin, those who are in sin must be separated from God, and thus they are spiritually dead in their sins. A state of spiritual deadness is a state of relational separation from God because of personal moral disobedience. It is to be “alienated from the life of God” (Eph. 4:18), that is, alienated from a relationship with God (Jn. 17:3).

“For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died” Rom. 7:9

“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you” Isa. 59:2

“For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me” Rom. 7:11

“But sin... working death in me...” Rom. 7:13

“For to be carnally minded is death...” Rom. 8:6

“Christ...died for all, then all were dead.” 2 Cor. 5:14

“And you who were dead in trespasses and sins.” Eph. 2:1, Eph. 2:5

“... alienated and enemies ... by wicked works” Col. 1:21

“And you, being dead in your sins . . .” Col. 2:13

“But she that lives in pleasure is dead while she lives.” 1 Tim. 5:6

“...and sin, when it is finished, brings forth death . Jas. 1:14-15

“...thou hast a name that thou liveth, and art dead.” Rev. 3:1

## ROMANS 5:14

**“Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses . . .”**

Sin is disobedience to light. Sin is rebellion against known law (Jas. 4:17, 1 Jn. 3:4). In between Adam and Moses was the time when the law was not yet written on stone tablets. Only the law of nature existed. Nevertheless, men were spiritually and morally dead in their sins because they violated the law of their own conscience; they did what they knew to be wrong.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has shown it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; . . . they glorified him not as God.” Rom. 1:18-21

“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law. For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” Rom. 2:12-15

So, before the Law of Moses was given, spiritual death still reigned, since the law of nature, the law of their conscience, was being violated.

**“ . . . even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.”**

Spiritual death reigned from Adam to Moses unto all men who chose to sin, even if their sin was not in the likeness of Adam’s transgression. For Adam transgressed a commandment; but those in between Adam and Moses acted contrary to the law of nature.

God must be separated from all sin (Heb. 7:26; 1 Jn. 1:5; 3:5). Therefore, all sin must lead to spiritual death. “Greater sin” (Jn. 19:11), committed by those who have greater knowledge, or lesser sin, committed by those with lesser knowledge, must still separate a man from God. So those with “greater sin” or lesser sin are still dead in their sins. (The relation of knowledge to the measure of guilt is discussed further on.)

Those who transgress a commandment, like Adam did (“Adam’s transgression”), become dead in sin. And those w



ho violate the law of nature, like the Gentiles did, become dead in sin. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, upon those who did not have the Ten Commandments, because they violated the law of nature.

“And God looked upon the earth and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” Gen. 6:12