

# *Romans 5*

## A Passage Full Of Universal Affirmatives

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*A* lot of Christians don't believe Romans 5:18-21. Of course, they won't come right out and say that, but it is true. Ask almost any Christian these two questions and their answers will contradict that passage:

1. How many people were affected by the fall and wound up under the bondage of sin?
2. How many people will be made righteous, receiving justification through God's free gift?

Christians will almost always answer "all" for the first question; but for the second question, almost every Christian will answer, "Only those who believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ." What this means is that almost every Christian rejects the idea that grace will abound more than sin did, that all men will come unto justification of life and that the same "many" who were made sinners through Adam will be made righteous through Christ.

I will address this passage in depth, starting with the logical conclusion of just Romans 5:19 when taken completely out of context, and finishing up with the conclusion of the entire passage.

First, let me share with you a little bit of logic terminology. A syllogism is a type of logical argument that infers a conclusion by two premises. There are certain terms for the different kinds of statements that are found in syllogisms. I will share the forms of statements and their names.

All A's are B's:

A Universal Affirmative Statement

No A's are B's:

A Universal Negative Statement

Some A's are B's:

A Particular Affirmative Statement

Some A's are not B's:

A Particular Negative Statement

The word “many” is a form of “some” in that it speaks of a large amount, but does not negate the possibility of all. We should note that particular affirmatives only work to prove their own validity and the invalidity of universal negatives, and do not address the truth or falsity of any of the other forms of statements.

More clearly; the affirmative types of statements never disprove the other affirmative. (The statement “all A's are B's” does not disprove that “some A's are B's” and the other way around.)

The negative types never disprove each other either. (The statement “no A's are B's” does not disprove that “some A's are not B's” and the other way around.)

The two universal statements work to disprove each other, however the two particular statements do not. (If all A's are B's, then the statement “No A's are B's” is untrue, however if some A's are B's; the statement “some A's are not B's” may still be true.)

The universal statements work to disprove the opposite particular and the other way around. (If all A's are B's, then it is untrue that some A's are not B's and the other way around.)

Now on to the content.

**Consider the following statement:**

“Just as many X's are Y's, so many X's are Z's.”

Obviously this isn't a Bible verse, just a simple statement that I made to display a point. It is not important that any part of this statement be accepted or rejected by you as actual truth; but for the sake of the example, briefly assume that the statement is as true as it would be had it been found in the Bible.

In the first phrase we read the statement “many X's are Y's.” Stating that some X's are Y's does not negate the possibility that all X's are Y's; however we must keep in mind that this statement does *NOT* say nor imply “some X's are not Y's.” We must learn to take statements for exactly what they say and not for what we think they imply. The statement “Many X's are Y's” does not contradict the statement “All X's are Y's,” nor does it contradict the statement “some X's are not Y's”; it simply does not address the validity or invalidity of either one.

In the second phrase we read “many X's are Z's.” Again, this statement does not deal with

the validity of the statements “all X’s are Z’s” or “some X’s are not Z’s.” Therefore, being a particular affirmative, the second phrase neither proves nor disproves universal affirmative statements or particular negative statements about the same subject.

Now, drawing as much truth as we have learned out of these statements we can confidently say the following:

No X’s are Y’s is untrue.

No X’s are Z’s is untrue.

Some X’s are Y’s is true.

Some X’s are Z’s is true.

Some X’s are not Z’s cannot be proved nor disproved.

All X’s are Z’s cannot be proved nor disproved.

All X’s are Y’s cannot be proved or disproved.

Some X’s are not Y’s cannot be proved or disproved.

What you have read thus far I have taught in order to make the understanding of Romans 5:19 easier. This verse is set up in the same form that we have just studied.

### **Romans 5:19**

*“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”*

I have set up my example to be completely compatible with this verse. You may replace the letter “X” in my example with the word “people” as it is to be the understood subject of both phrases; you may replace the letter “Y” in my example with the word “sinners” and you may replace the letter “Z” in my example with the word “righteous.”

As you can tell by replacing the appropriate letters with the appropriate words in the conclusion of my example, taking this verse alone out of the Bible and teaching it as a message is a huge risk because of how much context you are ignoring and because of how much it fails to prove. Besides what we have already been told directly from the verse, we can only logically deduce by this one verse that it is untrue that nobody is a sinner, and it is untrue that nobody is made righteous. That’s it! That alone should show the importance of not taking a verse out of context.

Fortunately though, we do have the context. We can read the verses around Romans 5:19

and easily come up with the universal affirmative that all men are made righteous. Yet when partialists are called to this passage; it is verse 19 that they proclaim as the proof that the context is a lie. Let's look at this verse in light of the context.

The first question that anyone might ask is "Why would Paul say 'all' one second and then say 'many' the very next?"

1. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners,
2. so
3. by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

### **Part 1:**

Thanks to Romans 3:23, we know how many were made sinners. *ALL* have sinned and come short of the glory of God. As we know, a particular affirmative never negates the possibility for a universal affirmative to be true. In this case, Paul was talking about a large group of people. For some reason, some people believe that "all" people is not a large group and could absolutely not be referred to as "many" by any means.

On the contrary, if I made ten sandwiches for a picnic and took all ten with me, some people might say "Aaron took many sandwiches with him to the picnic." Clearly we know that I took all the sandwiches that I had made with me, but when taken out of context, the statement that I took "many" sandwiches could confuse some people who are uninformed about the number of sandwiches I made and took. The word "many" is purposed to address the enormity of the specific group. In this case, I took a huge number of sandwiches on the picnic, and that huge number was "all."

So in part one of this sentence, since we are blessed with the context, we must admit that the "many" people refers to "all" the people.

### **Part 2:**

"So" is a word here that works to compare the two phrases. "So" means "in the same manner" and weighs the first against the second resulting in an even scale. (Note: The scale of sin to grace is shown in verses 20 and 21 to be eventually tipped in favor of grace by the amount of time that grace reigns as opposed to the short time that sin reigns, but verse 19 only deals with the measurement of the size of the group receiving sin to the size of the group receiving righteousness.)

### **Part 3:**

Once again, we see the word "many" used when it has been said other times that "all" will be saved, not just those who believe. The "many" in this second phrase of the sentence is

weighed against the “many” in the first phrase and is concluded to be the same group. In fact, the verse that you just read before this one insists that the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life because of Christ. So in one sentence we see Christ’s death justify all men, but by the very next sentence we are debating whether or not that’s true.

The passage is perfectly clear even without this “many” sentence that grace did much more abound than sin did. Sin abounded unto all until death, and grace abounds unto all forever. God’s optimism is tough for some people to handle, but I accept it over man’s pessimism. I Timothy 4:10 is also painful for some pessimists to read because it affirms the truth of Romans 5.

We see this same debate between Romans 5:12 and 5:15. Verse 12 says that death and sin passed upon all men, but then verse 15 refers to that same group of all as “many.” It again notes that grace abounds *MUCH MORE* to that same group of many. Accepting this passage as truth is just a matter of believing that Christ’s gracious act was stronger than Adam’s sinful act. Was Christ’s act weaker than Adam’s? Was it a last ditch effort or was it an infinitely wise plan that was made by an infinitely wise God before the beginning of the world?

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