

In epidemiology, patient zero is a term used to refer to the primary case or initial patient in the population of an epidemiological investigation. In a disease outbreak, it's important to find the first person to become infected with the pathogen, because knowing that person's history can help researchers determine how and when the outbreak started. This knowledge can be of great importance in understanding the disease and how to combat it.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the sin sickness, there is no way to prevent its spread. While finding patient zero cannot offer us a cure, it can help us understand the seriousness of the disease.

The good news is that the Bible tells us who patient zero is and how his history has effected all of human history. The bad news is that the effects of his actions have lead to dire consequences.

The great news is that the Bible tells us not only of patient zero but also of prescription zero. It details the history of a person who came to be the cure for the sin sickness. And the effects of his actions, if we choose to accept and receive them on our behalf, have unending benefits.

Scripture: Romans 5:12-21

## I. Patient Zero

### A. Paul's Rhetoric

#### 1. Comparison

##### a) From lesser to greater

##### (1) Stresses the differences

##### (a) "Just as . . . so also"; "Not as . . . so is"

#### 2. Crux

##### a) Corporate view rather than individual

##### b) All people stand in relationship to one of two men, whose actions determine the eternal destiny of all who belong to them

### B. The Parties

#### 1. To this point we have seen two parties:

##### a) Jews and Gentiles

#### 2. Paul introduces a new means of classification

##### a) Those "in Adam" and "those in Christ"

### C. Patient Zero

#### 1. Adam

##### a) Sin

##### (1) Adam's sin tainted all mankind

##### (a) Transgression

##### (b) Sin nature

##### (c) Sufficient to condemn all humanity

##### (2) All mankind has sinned

##### (a) Gentiles (1:18-32) and Jews (2-3:8)

- b) Death
  - (1) Adam's sin ushered in the reign of death
    - (a) Physical
    - (b) Spiritual
- D. **Prescription Zero**
  - 1. Jesus
    - a) God's gracious gift of Jesus
      - (1) Effects many not "all" by the choice of the individual
    - b) Faith in the righteous obedience of Christ
      - (1) Out performs the disease
      - (2) Results in:
        - (a) Justification
        - (b) Eternal life
- E. **The Practical**
  - 1. Employ Paul's rhetorical style
    - a) Hope (Rom. 1:16-17; 5:18-21)
    - b) Diagnosis (Rom. 1:18-3:18; 5: 12-13)
    - c) Prognosis (Rom. 3:19-20; 5:14)
    - d) Prescription (Rom. 3:21-26; 5:15-17)

Last Sunday, the reality of the ultimate consequence of sin came crashing into our family. Shortly after the Super Bowl ended, we learned that a friend of ours had suffered a heart attack and died during his Super Bowl party. He was a man full of life, until he wasn't.

As I sat, stunned by the news, I reflected on my interactions with him. We had talked softball, sports, and family. But I failed to ever offer him a diagnosis, prognosis, and prescription. I realized that we all make the same mistake. WE FAIL TO APPRECIATE THE SERIOUSNESS OF SIN AND ITS INEVITABLE AND ULTIMATE CONSEQUENCE. We assume we will have more time. The lost person thinks they will have another day to place their faith in Jesus and surrender their lives. Christians think we will have more time to proclaim and practice the Gospel. The reality is, neither of us are guaranteed another minute.

So we must seize the opportunities we have. Our invitation is your opportunity to commit. If you are suffering from the sin sickness, it is your chance to commit your life to Christ and be healed. If you have been healed, it is your opportunity to commit to sharing and spreading the cure.