

TEACHING GOAL

To study the element of imputation in the doctrine of Justification.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

Q. What is Justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace wherein He pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in His sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us and received by faith alone.

S.C. 33, L.C. 70-73, W.C. of F. XI, Savoy 11, Young 50

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Romans 5:12-21

Support Passages: Romans 4:1-9, Psalm 32:1-2, Philippians 3:8-12, I Corinthians 1:30-31, II Corinthians 5:21

BIBLE STORY

Philemon: Paul asks that Onesimus be treated by Philemon as if he were Paul and that his debt be reckoned to Paul's account. This is a clear example of imputation.

.MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

Psalm 32:1-2

1 Blessed *is he* whose transgression *is* forgiven, *Whose* sin *is* covered. 2 Blessed *is* the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit *there is* no deceit.

APPLICATION

Indeed, we should bless God for His grace in placing the righteousness of His dear Son to our account, where we have none of our own.

SUMMARY

Imputation is a big word which means (as it is often translated nowadays) to reckon or to place something into the account of someone else, or to credit by transferal. To the scapegoat (Leviticus 16) was transferred the sin of Israel by imputation, symbolized by the priest laying his hands on the head of the animal and sending it out of the camp. In the story of Onesimus (Philemon) the runaway slave, Paul sent him back to his master Philemon, also a Christian, asking that he be received as Philemon would receive Paul himself. "If he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge (impute) that to my account."

Justification involves both the pardon for sin (last week's lesson) and the imputation of the obedience (righteousness) of Christ to ones account. We are accepted as righteous, not because we have performed the act of believing in Christ or any other act of obedience to God but only because Christ's righteousness is placed to our account. In other words, justification does not make us holy by changing our lives into holy lives but by making us appear to God as holy when we are not, in fact, holy.

The study text, Romans 5:12-21, claims that Adam is a type of Christ with regard to his sin in the garden of Eden (verse 14). On the one hand sin is imputed to all people (all referring to those who die physically) and on the other hand, righteousness is imputed to all who receive justification of life (all in this case referring only to those who live spiritually). Adam's sin is visited upon his progeny (that's us!) simply because he was our federal representative in Eden. Similarly, the righteousness of Christ is visited upon His people simply because He was our federal representative on the cross.

We must understand, from this passage, that it is another's righteousness that we receive and not our own. The following is a chart of this comparison between Adam and Christ:

ADAM	CHRIST
To all people including the many	To the elect only the many
Sin, transgression	Free gift of righteousness
Physical death	Reign in life
Condemnation	Justification

The Philippians passage (3:9) is most clear to this point, saying "not having a righteousness of my own ... but the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith."

It will be helpful to review lesson 18 of this series, wherein we examined Romans 5:12-21 relative to the transmittal of the sinful nature of Adam, from the parent to his children. While Adam's sin is imputed to us, the sinful nature we receive by birth is subject to a process of degradation and hardening in sin.

Similarly, while the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the elect, the new nature we receive at the second birth is subject to a process of sanctification and enlightenment. This is the subject of a lesson to be undertaken shortly.