

# *Our Righteousness by Imputation*

By Tom Stephens

**Imputation to destruction, or imputation unto righteousness? Which will you choose?** Everyone must make that choice before they leave this world. If you do not choose Jesus, you are choosing the evil one (Satan). Speaking of the peace we can have in Christ Jesus, here's what Apostle Paul said in Romans 4: 7-8:

*“...Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”* (Romans 4:7, 8)

Here, Paul proclaims blessings on those 1) whose sins are forgiven; and 2) those whom the Lord will not impute sin. These two verses are direct quotes from Psalm 32, bringing both Paul and David into full agreement concerning this passage. In Psalm 32, David speaks of the remission of sins, which is the prime branch of Justification in God's constitution of peace and blessings on His own people. God pronounced His blessings on the person who is not without sin—but deserving of death—*when that person fell on his face in deep repentance before God's throne.*

Here's the godly pattern for receiving His Justification after having sinned: **1)** Without delay, we must find a place of true repentance before God because of our sins; and **2)** spend time in the study of His Word, and fellowship with Him, our Master and King.

His plea of 'guilt' is accepted. To the heart that is sorrowful and penitent, the grace of God comes freely in forgiveness. God's forgiveness does not simply cover man's sin; rather forgiveness is the act of “*God casting it into the sea of forgetfulness*”, never to be remembered again. Then, by God's action in *not imputing sin*—in verse 8, the Savior makes it a complete and gracious act—man being repentant from the heart! God desires for us to “*walk in His Spirit*”, and “*not in the flesh*”, for the flesh brings forth death, but the Spirit who dwells in us brings into our lives peace and joy. (Romans 8:1-17).

Paul described *imputation* (Rom 4:6-24) the exact same way King David (psalm 32) and Jesus (Matthew 5-8) described it, which is the only way *impute* is used in the Bible. Paul said,

*"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."* In other words, Paul "charged", or "tagged" the person as a "**blessed**" person. By studying Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Beatitudes), we know all **blessed** people are those who have been pardoned by Christ. They become righteous because of Christ's mercy in granting forgiveness to His people. Both David and Paul are in agreement concerning *Imputation—judgment* is imputed for sin; and *righteousness* is imputed by His Spirit.

Jesus can either charge (**impute**) you with unconfessed sin, or He can (**impute**) **ble**ss you with forgiveness of confessed sins.

We know, then, it is not possible for a Christian to have righteousness *imputed* to him unless he is in a position to be spiritually blessed (pardoned) by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ as stated in Psalm 32:1-11, Matthew 5-8, and Romans 4:7,8.

***Psalm of Penitence:*** When David sinned with Bathsheba, and had Uriah killed on the front lines of war, he attempted to hide his sin, so God's Spirit dealt a hard blow to David (see verse 3 below); and David finally fell on his face and in deep repentance. Here David gives us the picture of His evil doings and finally his repentance. This 32<sup>nd</sup> Psalm states that *those who are truly repentant* of their sin, *are the same* as those who are **blessed** by the Redeemer.

<sup>1</sup>**Blessed** is he whose *transgression is forgiven*, whose sin is covered.

<sup>2</sup>**Blessed** is the man unto whom the LORD **imputeth** not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.

<sup>3</sup>When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

<sup>4</sup>"... day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. (*David is hurting with conviction over his sin to the point of continued, extreme confusion/stress. David was miserable and wept bitterly; his tears watered the summer desert-floor.*)

<sup>5</sup>**I acknowledged my sin** unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. (*Having acknowledged his sins before the Father, in repentance, David was filled with peace.*)

<sup>6</sup>For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou may be found: surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.

<sup>7</sup>Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah. (*David prays men not wait too long to repent; He praises/worships the Lord for His deliverances.*)

<sup>8</sup>I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

<sup>9</sup>Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.

<sup>10</sup>Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusts in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about.

<sup>11</sup>Be glad in the LORD, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart. (Ps. 32:1-11) KJV...Following is David's overture of his Salvation through his own remorse because of his sin: (Vs. 8-11 - *God promises perfect leadership and guidance; He encourages humility and not stubbornness; judgment to the wicked; mercy to all who trusts in the Lord; be joyful and glad in the Lord, shouting for joy from all who have a tender and honorable heart.*)

In Psalm 1: 1-3 David said:

**"Blessed** IS the man that *walketh not* in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psalm 1)

## ***"Holy and Righteous People are Blessed People"***

Now, read Christ's *Sermon on the Mount*, in Matthew, chapter 5:1-12:

- *"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*
- *"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.*
- *"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.*
- *"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*
- *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

- *"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*
- *"Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- *"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, for my sake.*

***Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven:  
for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."***

Therefore, according to Jesus' teachings, those who fall under the description given in *The Beatitudes* are the same ones who are *blessed*. The intent is to show the character of those who are **blessed**; but when it is said, **Blessed** are those whose iniquities are forgiven, the intent is to show what blessedness is, and the ground, or foundation of the statements which is:

***"Pardoned People are the Only Blessed People."***

The sentiments of the world are: Happy people are those who have a clear estate, and are out of debt to other men; but the sentence of the Word is, happy people are those that have their *debts to God* discharged.

1. **Abraham:** "For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3).

2. **David:** "... David also describeth the **blessedness** of the man, unto whom God **imputeth** righteousness without works, saying, **blessed** are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. **Blessed** is the man to whom the Lord will not **impute** sin" (Rom. 4:6-8).

3. **Adam:** "Therefore as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made right righteous" (Rom. 5: 18, 19).

Abraham believed God. He did not simply believe there IS a God; he believed god **IS** God. Abraham obeyed God—he believed God, he exercised his faith in God, and God counted his faith for righteousness.

Through the offense of Adam, judgment came upon all men—in Adam all die; but by the righteousness of One (the Lord Jesus Christ) "the free gift" came upon all men unto justification of life. Through the disobedience of Adam, we became sinners; by the obedience of Jesus, man can become righteous. His obedience to the will of God made justification possible, and apart from him there **IS NO** Justification.

Through justification, God changes the position of a sinner—guilty, helpless, hopeless, and hell-bound—from condemnation to acceptance before God, and, through the finished work of Jesus Christ, counts the sinner to be righteous.

The Apostle Paul clearly sets forth man's utter need because of sin—sin that is dark and terrible. Then, he immediately declares the remedy for sin and turns on the light of the glorious Gospel of the grace of God: *"BUT GOD" who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, bath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved; and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved*

*through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them"* (Eph. 2:4-10).

Because of man's evil, God's mercy manifested His great love for all mankind; *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man ... Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the seed of Abraham"* (Hebrews 2:9, 14-16).

Jesus took our sins and nailed them to His cross (1 Peter 2:24). In 2 Colossians 5:21 Paul clearly states, *"For He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."*

We love Him because He first loved us. God saved us for the sake of the love of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ: *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you"* (Ephesians 4:32).

*"I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake"* (1 John 2:12).

God imputes to us, His righteousness—*"BUT NOW"*, *the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* *Being justified by freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time, His Righteousness: that He (God) might be just, and the Justifier of him (even a hell-deserving sinner) which believeth in Jesus"* (Romans 3:21-26).

There is no greater doctrinal truth from Genesis to Revelation than that contained in these six verses. These words are like so many sparkling gems set against black velvet! They verify the fact the Word of God is verbally inspired, dictated by the Holy Ghost and penned down by holy men. The treasure contained in these verses could never be described in the words of man. It is beyond man's ability to fully comprehend the tremendous truth set forth here, but as we study and examine these verses we are made to rejoice that even though man had completely failed God, God provided a way of escape, even when we were yet without strength and wholly unlovely.

Throughout Paul's epistles we read such phrases as "BUT God" — "BUT NOW" —In this portion of the Word, the expression "but now" points back to the foregoing argument concerning condemnation of the whole world (flesh), in contrast to (righteousness without the Law)—Jew, Gentile, "whosoever." ALL are under sin. *Every mouth is stopped and the whole world stands guilty before God.* There is nothing man can say. God Almighty, Creator of man and of the universe, declares ALL are under HIS JUDGMENT, because of man's sin.

### **Imputation and Justification—Definitions:**

According to Wikipedia Encyclopedia on line, "Imputed righteousness" is the Christian doctrine that a sinner being declared righteous by God is declared such purely by God's grace, without any merit or

personal worthiness. **However, that is definitely NOT** according to the King James Version of the Bible!

**The true definition is:** God might “**impute**” a man with *Unrighteousness* by Judgment; or He might **impute** (grant) a man to be righteous, according to said man’s repentance. Therefore, God can charge a man guilty at his throne; or He can bless a man with **imputed** righteousness. He alone is the Judge of these declarations.

To be justified before God is to stand in His presence as though you had never committed a sin. It is to be **just as just** as *Jesus is just*. We are in that position when we are justified in Christ.

Let us be always quick to repent immediately following any wrong-doing. We should always be aware of His soon coming—and be prepared by “watching and praying daily.

***“Pardoned People are the Only Blessed People”***

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