***The Doctrine of Imputation  
RO55-02***

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We are studying Romans 5:12-21 about the universality of death.

**Doctrinal Principles**

The Bible is a book that does not contradict itself. The method of writing the Bible makes this a most amazing fact. When you stop and think about the fact that there were something like 40 different men who wrote the Bible over a period of something like 1,500 years, over a vast expanse of geographic territory; some of them who obviously never saw one another or spoke to one another; and, some of them did not even see each other's writings, and yet when you bring it all together, you have 66 books that have a consistent message, and no contradiction, and no error anywhere along the line. That is obviously beyond human capacity. That is obviously something that took supernatural doing. And of course, the doctrine of inspiration explains why the Bible is consistent with itself.

This fact of consistency is a great help in interpreting individual Scriptures. Once a basic doctrinal principle has been established, then all the rest of Scripture has to agree with that doctrinal principle. The first thing we seek in the Word of God is: what does the Bible teach about this particular doctrine? OK, we have established the doctrine. Now, no matter what you read in the Bible any place else, it all has to be compatible to that basic doctrinal principle. So, if suddenly you were to read a verse that seems to contradict that basic doctrinal principle, then you must say, "I'm interpreting this verse in the wrong way." I'm missing the point of what it's saying, because it is contradicting an already established doctrinal principle.

**Apparent Contradictions in the Bible**

For example, 1 John 1:8 indicates that Christians have a sin nature: "If we say that we have no sin (that is, no sin nature), we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. Now if Christians have a sin nature, it also indicates that they will perform personal acts of sin. That is why you and I sin – because we have a sin nature. If, as Christians, we retain a sin nature, then we are going to sin.

Now, if you run your eye down a couple more verses, in 1 John 1:10, you'll see that's exactly what this book indicates: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and the Word is not in us."

Then 1 John 2:1 says two, "My little children. I write these things unto you so that you don't sin. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father – Jesus Christ, the righteous." So, the biblical principle is clear, first of all, that Christians do have a sin nature, and consequently, Christians sin.

However, move over to 1 John 3:9, and notice what that verse says: "Whosoever is borne of God does not commit sin, for His seed remains in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Now certainly, that verse sounds like it is saying that Christians do not sin. It seems to say that one of the signs that you are a Christian is that you don't sin. It seems to say that one of the signs that you are going to heaven, and not to hell, is that you don't sin: "Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin." That's what it says.

Now you see, we've got something wrong here. And we know that if we have established the fact that the Christian carries the sin nature into the Christian life with him (which the Bible clearly declares), then this verse cannot be telling us that Christians do not sin. Whatever it says, it cannot be saying that. Whatever it seems to say, it cannot be saying that. We have to look in the context; we have to look in the language; and, we have to get into the interpretation to see how it does fit with the basic principle.

Now because some people are foolish enough to read a verse like that, and go off half-cocked on that, they have come up with the idea that a Christian gets rid of his sin nature, and that he becomes sinlessly perfect, and then he never sins anymore. And no matter what their experience is, they just grit their teeth and say, "I don't have a sin nature anymore, and I don't sin anymore either" – all contrary to experience. The Bible is clear that you don't lose the old sin nature until you come into the presence of Jesus Christ.

1 John 3:2 says that: "Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be. But we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." So, when Christians come into the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are going to be exactly as he is. Once the biblical teaching on how to go to heaven (following this same analogy now) is established, then all Scripture has to agree with what the Bible has taught about how to be saved. If salvation is by grace as a gift from God, then that means that you cannot earn salvation in some way.

The Bible is very clear that salvation is by grace as a gift from God. Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast." So, as you read the Scripture, you establish the doctrine of salvation on the basis of grace, apart from human works.

However, then you come over to James 2:14, and it says, "What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he has faith and have not works? Can faith save him?" And then verse 20 of that says, "But will you know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" And here, seemingly, on the surface, James contradicts a basic biblical principle that salvation is apart from human works. James seems to be saying that you are saved by your human doing in some way. So, if salvation is by grace alone, then something is wrong in what we are seemingly reading in James. We've already established the principle of justification by faith apart from works. Therefore, we have to go back and say, "Now what does this verse in James really mean? What is it saying?" It's not saying what it appears to be saying. And if you go ahead and take it on that basis, in spite of the fact that it contradicts other Scripture, then you're going to get off into Roman Catholicism that places human good works as part of the salvation process.

**Religious Rituals**

If salvation is apart from human doing, then that includes a religious ritual. In John 6:53-54, you have Jesus Christ saying something that seems to make a religious ritual part of salvation: "When Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily I say unto you. Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you have no life in you. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.'"

Now, somehow Jesus says there, apparently, that the only way a person is saved is if he eats His flesh and drinks His blood. Well, what could He mean by that? Notice Mark 14:22-24: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them, and said, 'Take. Eat. This is My body.' And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, 'This is My blood of the new covenant which is shed for many.'"

So, Mark seems to explain the fact that when Jesus says, "You have to eat My flesh and drink My blood to be saved," that Jesus was talking about the Lord's Supper. And the Roman Catholics conclude that unless you take the Lord's Supper (the bread and the wine in that communion service), you cannot be saved. That is the means of salvation. And there are many people who believe that the religious ritual of the Lord's Supper enables them to be saved. Yet there's got to be something wrong here. Whatever these verses mean, and whatever they seem to teach, we've already seen that the Bible says that salvation is apart from any human doing. And thus this human ritual could not be included.

You have this same problem when you come to water baptism in Acts 2:38 – the statement of Peter on the day of Pentecost: "Then Peter said unto them, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Christ, for the remission of sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" That verse certainly seems to be saying that if you are going to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit – which signifies being saved), you must do it via the vehicle of water baptism.

Then add to that Acts 22:16, where the apostle Paul describes his own salvation experience, and where it was said to him: "And now why do you tarry? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Certainly that verse seems to say that a person's sins are washed away through the ritual of water baptism.

Also, Mark 16:16 suggests the same thing: "He that believes and is baptized shall be saved, but he that does not believe shall be damned." Here you have these verses that seemingly are saying that water baptism is essential to salvation. Now, whatever those verses mean, once we have established the doctrine of salvation, and once we have established what the Bible teaches as to how a person goes to heaven, then we know that these verses cannot mean what they seem on the surface to say. They cannot be part of a way to salvation. That would contradict what has already been established from Scripture, over which there is no question as to its meaning concerning the way of salvation.

**Romans 1 – 5**

Well, nowhere in the Bible is the doctrine of salvation more clearly and logically explained than in this book of Romans that we're studying. This was the reason that the book was written. It was written to tell people how they could go to heaven forever. And Paul uses the first five chapters of the book of Romans to establish the biblical doctrine of salvation. So, whatever is the way that a person goes to heaven, it's going to be found in these first five chapters. Whatever is not in these first five chapters does not apply to salvation, and it is not involved with how to go to heaven. How to have eternal life is all right here in these first five chapters. When he gets to chapter six, he no longer talks about how to go to heaven. Beginning with chapter six, he takes up the subject of how to live the Christian life. The first five chapters tell you how to secure the Christian life. Then he proceeds to tell you how to have the power to function in the Christian life in a way that is maximum blessing for you, and pleasing to God.

Therefore, anything in the rest of the Bible that seems to contradict, or to add anything to the doctrine of salvation, as it's laid out in this logical book in the first five chapters (which are exclusively devoted to tell people how to be saved) has to be misunderstood. We have to be misinterpreting those passages – anything that seems to add or contradict what's in these first five chapters. That's one reason we know that those verses we read that seem to say that the Lord's Supper is part of being saved cannot be what they're teaching, because the Lord's Supper is not included in these first five chapters. That's one reason we know that water baptism cannot be part of the salvation process. That's not included in the first five chapters. If it is not in these first five chapters, it's not part of the doctrine of salvation.

In order to clarify the issue of some religious ritual being acceptable as a human work that God esteems for salvation, the apostle Paul selected the act of circumcision itself as an example of what some Jews were saying was required for salvation. His whole point was that circumcision is indeed prescribed by God. Usually, the people who think you need water baptism for salvation will defend it on the basis that God prescribed it, and that, in that case, it's not a human work. But God prescribed circumcision. It was a human work, and He prescribed it to *illustrate* the act of the flesh being removed (which is the word for the old sin nature), which is what happens when a person is born again – the domination of the flesh being removed so that a person is born again.

**The Doctrine of Inspiration**

Circumcision was the Old Testament illustration of the flesh being removed; that is, of a person being saved. But certainly the illustration does not achieve the reality. The Lord's Supper or water baptism are *illustrations* of salvation, but those rituals were never intended to suggest that they would achieve the reality of salvation. That is fully confirmed once you establish the biblical doctrine of salvation, and you remember the biblical principle that the Bible never contradicts itself. That is the doctrine of inspiration.

So, Paul has shown, in these first five chapters, that everybody needs salvation, and that God, from His justice, offers it to sinners as a gift apart from human doing of any kind, including the human doing of religious rituals. It is the justice of God. It is the doctrine of propitiation. That justice has been satisfied. And out of that, it has been possible for God to offer you a salvation apart from human doing.

**Eternal Security**

Paul, in Romans 5, closes this presentation of the doctrine of salvation with one final point, and that's what he's hammering away at in Romans 5:12-21, and that is that once a person is saved, he can never again be lost. We were reconciled to God when we were His enemies. "Much more," he says, "we shall be preserved now that we are His children."

**Adam and Jesus Christ**

God's love provided salvation through His justice when we were sinners. Much more He will provide eternal security now that we are saved. The fact of salvation in perpetuity is self-evident from Paul's whole explanation as to how God saves the sinner. And that explanation is what he has been unraveling in these first five chapters. And if you followed it carefully, you would see that there is no possibility of this being reversed. The final explanation of why it is irreversible centers on the comparison of two men: Adam; and, Jesus Christ. And he's reducing it to its basic elemental terms.

Romans 5:12, therefore, informs us that sin entered the experience of the human race through Adam. Sin was present previously through Satan. It entered the human world through Adam. The result of Adam's sin was the penalty of death – both spiritual and physical. Death became the universal lot of mankind, because Romans 5:12 says that all, in some way, sinned in Adam, Physical death is passed on to us directly from Adam. The Bible says that his sin is your sin, and therefore, you die physically. Spiritual death is passed on to us, not immediately from Adam, but mediately via our parents, because our parents give us an old sin nature, and that causes us to be born spiritually dead. So, directly from Adam, we get physical death. By steps through our parents (from Adam), we get spiritual death.

The basis of the fact that all sin is best explained by the biblical principle of the federal headship and the seminal relationship of Adam to the whole human race. This is not a reference to personal sins. This is not a reference to the sin nature. When it says, "All sinned," it's not personal sins, and it's not the sin nature. When it says, "All sinned," it refers to the fact that we have Adam representing us before God, and we were born from Adam. We were seminally in his body. And all of us have, therefore, in the judgment of God, participated in his sin in Eden.

**Imputation**

It is very important that you understand that. Then you will never foolishly say that if a person could just be born into the human race and never do a single thing wrong, he'd go to heaven. That is wrong. If you could never perform a single in, you'd still go to hell, because you were guilty of the sin that Adam committed. That is, on the basis of imputation. The sin of Adam has been imputed by God directly to everyone who is born into the human race. There is only one exception, and that is Jesus Christ, because He was virgin-born – without a human father, which is the agent of transmission of the sin nature. Jesus Christ was born perfectly sinless without the sin nature. He was back to the condition of Adam.

Therefore, Paul is saying that all mankind is dealt with by God as per their position – either in Adam or in Christ. Paul sets up this parallel comparison. So all who are born into the race are born in Adam, so they're doomed to hell. Those who are born again are placed in Christ by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. So, they are destined for heaven. You did nothing personally to place yourself in Adam, and in parallel fashion, you did nothing personally to place yourself in Christ. For this reason, salvation is eternally secure to the believer because he's not involved in providing it. The believer is only involved in receiving it. The believer's previous position, under divine wrath parallels (Paul is indicating) his new position of divine blessing in Christ.

So, Paul finishes really this whole explanation of the doctrine of salvation (which is in these first five chapters) with one great, big, magnificent exaltation of the grace of God. And if you understand at least the last part of this chapter, it'll be a matter of joy, and a matter of fantastic peace in your soul to understand what the grace of God has done for you.

**The Doctrine of Imputation**

This brings us, at this point, to pause for the doctrine of imputation. We need to review exactly what we mean by imputation. What is going to follow now is all structured on the fact that God operates on the basis of imputation. The principle of imputation is often mentioned in the Old Testament. We won't pause to read these verses, but you have this illustrated in Leviticus 7:18, Leviticus 17:4, 2 Samuel 19:19, and Psalm 32:2. These passages deal with the principle of imputation, and it usually uses this Hebrew word "chashab." "Chashab" means "to reckon;" "to impute;" or, "to account to." And the principle of imputation is certainly illustrated in all the Old Testament sacrifices. Read Leviticus 16 for a very clear illustration of Old Testament imputation, where the priest puts his hands on this goat, and he lays upon that goat, by amputation, the sins of the offerer, or the sins of the people. Then that animal is sacrificed with the sins symbolically imputed to the animal. Imputation is crediting to another person that which is your own.

You have this same principle of imputation in the New Testament. In the New Testament, it's the word look "logizomai." 41 times the word "imputation" in the Greek is "logizomai." The idea of imputation is described by the word "logizomai," as you have it in a Romans 4:6-25, 2 Corinthians 5:19, and James 2:23 – 41 times altogether.

Then you have the concept of imputation presented with one other word, and, interestingly enough, only used twice. It's "ellogeo." You have this in Romans 5:13, which is the verse that we're going to be looking at next: "For until the law sin, was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (not credited, or not recorded to a person's account).

Also, this use of this word (the idea of imputation) is particularly demonstrated in Philemon 18, which says, "If he has wronged you, or owes you anything, put that on my account." and it uses the word "ellogeo:" "Put it on my account." Both of these Greek words simply mean "to place to another's account;" "to place to his credit;" or, "to hold him responsible for."

**Real Imputation**

Now there are two kinds of imputation in the Bible. One is real imputation. Real imputation is crediting to a person what is actually his own; that is, for example, putting to your account your sins. That is real imputation. It really is your sin. It really is your account. It really is your responsibility.

**Judicial Imputation**

However, there is another imputation that you must understand, and this is judicial imputation. Judicial imputation means that God simply makes a judgment. And this is crediting to a person what is not actually his own. For example, the sins of the world are imputed to Jesus Christ. He didn't actually become a sinner. These were not actually His sins. God, in His judgment, said, "I'm placing them on you."

Also, there is the imputation of the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ to you. It's not actually your absolute righteousness. It's a judicial imputation. It's not a real imputation. It's not really yours. It's a judicial imputation. It's an act of God that judges you to have that.

That will answer some very important questions as to how God can call a person just and fit for heaven who is actually a sinner, because the imputation there is not real, but judicial.

**The Concept of Imputation in Scripture**

There are, therefore, three ways in which this concept of imputation is used in Scripture.

1. **The Imputation of Adam's Sin to Humanity**

The first way is in the case of Adam's sin to humanity – the imputation of Adam's sin to mankind. Romans 5:12-21, of course, is talking about that. Also, 1 Corinthians 15:21ff talk about that. As you've already seen, we've indicated that Adam acted in Eden as the federal and seminal head of every person. Adam's sin was then credited to every human being born into the race. It was imputed to each of us. The consequence of this imputation is physical and spiritual death for all.

So, by divine reckoning, all sinned in Adam. Personal sins are not in view. The old sin nature is not meant. It is Adam's sin imputed to us. This is a real imputation. It is actually something we did.

1. **The Imputation of Mankind's Sin to Jesus Christ**

Secondly, you have the idea of imputation used in the Bible of the sin to Jesus Christ of mankind. The sin of mankind was credited to Jesus Christ on the cross. 2 Corinthians 5:21 certainly very beautifully describes that: "He who knew no sin became sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 2:24 talks about His bearing our sins in His own body on the tree.

Galatians 3:13 conveys that same idea of Christ having our sins imputed to Him.

So, the sins of the world were actually credited to the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Hebrews 9:28 conveys this in terms of the Old Testament practice of imputing it to animals. So, sins, as they were once imputed to animals symbolically, were actually imputed to Jesus Christ.

This, of course, is a judicial amputation. He wasn't actually a sinner. Our sins were simply placed to His account. And the basis of Jesus Christ paying for the sins of the world, therefore, is to satisfy the justice of God, because the sins of the world were now upon Him, and He could do that. Isaiah 53:4-6 put it this way: "Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we did esteem Him, stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement for our peace was upon Him. And with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him (imputation) the iniquity of us all."

This was a judicial act of God. We are the ones who did it, but He is the one who bears it. And the punishment then was entirely then upon Him. There was none upon us.

1. **The Imputation of Absolute Righteousness to the Believer**

The third use of imputation in the Scriptures is the imputation of absolute righteousness to the believer – the imputation of the absolute righteousness of God to the believer. Romans 4:1-25 has told us about that. 1 Corinthians 1:30 also describes that. Imputation is the basis of the believer's justification. That is at the heart of the doctrine of salvation. You are saved (you are justified because of this third kind of imputation). Absolute righteousness has been given to us as a free gift apart from any human works. It has simply been imputed.

Romans 5:1 and Genesis 15:6 tell us that about Abraham – that righteousness was reckoned to Abraham by God's judgment because of Abraham's faith. Again, this is a judicial amputation. You are not, in fact, absolute righteousness. You are absolute righteousness at the same time that you're sinning. The only way you can understand it is by understanding this principle of imputation. This is how God works.

Once you understand that, then you're not all uptight over the fact that you are going to heaven, and yet you sin. That bugs people terribly. If people don't understand this, they're horrified. They think they're lost again. They have the idea that indeed, once they are believers, they're never going to do anything wrong again. It's not an experience. Of course, this is achieved by the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which places a believer in Christ so that the believer shares the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ. The sole basis of a sinner's acceptance into heaven is this third imputation – absolute righteousness to the sinner's account. And it is irreversible. It is irreversible. This is an act of God done entirely on the basis of what God has provided and done apart from anything that you have done. Therefore, you're not involved.

So, there are three imputations: Adam's sin to us; our sins to Jesus Christ; and, Christ's righteousness to us.

**Man cannot Merit Salvation**

Another point to observe is that the doctrine of imputation certainly indicates that man is unable to do anything to merit salvation. He is under the condemnation of Adam's sin. He is justified when he has no merit of his own to offer to God. Imputation explains how you can be justified at the same time that you have absolutely no merit to offer to God.

**Salvation is Irrevocable**

Another point is that the principle of imputation makes salvation irrevocable for a believer. It's a matter of divine reckoning only. It's based upon the fact that propitiation has satisfied the justice of God.

**Absolute Righteousness while Still Sinning**

Another point is that imputation enables God to reckon a sinner to be absolute righteousness while the person is still sinning. He has a legal standing.

**God does not Impute Sin to the Sinner**

Also, because of reconciliation, God does not impute sin to the sinner. He has placed it on Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19).

**Imputation is the Basis of Justification**

Finally, amputation is the basis of justification (Romans 4:22, Romans 5:1, Romans 4:23-25).

Having established that, the apostle Paul began Romans 5:12 with the intention of making a comparison. So, he says, "Wherefore, as by one man." The minute he used the word "as," you knew that someplace down the line he was going to have to say, "Even so." Lo and behold, you get through verve 12, and there is no "even so:" "Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for all sinned." Then you're waiting for him to say, "Even so," but there isn't any.

That is because, as the apostle Paul wrote this, God the Holy Spirit brought something to his mind. He brought the thought to his mind: "I wonder if those Christians in Rome will understand what I mean when I say, 'All sinned.'" So, he stops to interrupt himself, to explain it. We're going to look at the interruption now. The interruption begins at verse 13: "For until the Law, sin was in the world." The word "for" is "gar." It is introducing proof that what he has said in verse 12, "All sinned," is a true statement, and that the consequences of death upon all of us is because all sinned at some point in time. He has indicated that that point in time was Adam. Somehow, all sinned in Adam. Now he's going to demonstrate how that is true.

**Before the Law**

He does this by saying, "For (here's the explanation) until." And this is the preposition "achri." This refers to time. It means "for as far as," and it means during the period before the Mosaic Law came into being: "As far as" or "during the period before" the Law. And the word for law is "nomos." This refers to the Mosaic Law. It is the Law of Moses with its moral code. It does not say "*the* law." It is simply saying the quality, therefore, of the Mosaic Law. And what was the quality of the Mosaic Law? It was telling you what you should do and what you shouldn't do. The Mosaic Law was a book of rules that expressed God's standard of absolute righteousness – 613 of them. Because he does not say "the law," He's not talking about the Mosaic Law as an institution (as an entity). He's talking about the character of the Law, which is a rule book to tell you what to do.

**Sin**

"For until (for up to the time of) the Mosaic Law;" that is, from the time of Adam's fall to the time of the writing (the issuing) of the Mosaic Law on Sinai, something was true. What was that? Well, it was that sin was in the world. The word sin is "hamartia." "Hamartia" refers to sin in terms of missing the standard of absolute righteousness. Here it is missing the standard of absolute righteousness as it was expressed in the Mosaic Law. Even before the Mosaic Law came to identify God's standard of righteousness, people were missing it. Again, there is no definite article. It is not "*the sin*. It is simply that this was a quality of missing a standard. The principle here is that people were sinning. It is not stressing a personal sin (a specific sin) – just the quality that people were breaking the laws of God (the standards of God).

"Sin was," and this is the verb "eimi", which means "to be." This time it's imperfect. Imperfect means it repeatedly happened in the past. That's the Greek way of telling us that it kept happening and kept happening and kept happening. He's talking about the past era from Adam's fall to the coming of the Law of Moses. During that period, people repeatedly and repeatedly broke (missed) God's standard. It is active. Sin was expressing itself. It's indicative – a statement of fact. Sin was "en" (in – location). Where was it?

**Sin was in the World**

"Sin was in the world." And the word "world" looks like this in Greek: "kosmos." Here it is referring to mankind. Again, it does not say "*the* world," suggesting the earth, as such, or the specific features of society. It's just looking at society as a whole. It refers to the world as organized humanity.

So, this statement tells us that from Adam to the giving of the Mosaic Law, people committed acts of personal sin. What did the Mosaic Law do? The Mosaic Law came along, and it defined what people were doing as sin The Mosaic Law was a mirror which reflected the sinfulness of every person. The Mosaic Law had no part in saving a person. It only showed the person that he needed salvation. The Mosaic Law came along and it made it very clear as to why you needed salvation. It established the fact that in the world of humanity, people were sinning and spinning and spinning and spinning. And the Mosaic Law clarified the basis upon which the justice of God would be exercised. It clarified why God was just in sending everyone to hell.

Here's the condition. There are no specific rules, but sin is there, and people are violating the standards of God: "For until the Mosaic Law, sin, as a practice, was in the world of humanity." Then comes the word "but." This is the Greek word "de." This is a conjunction with adversative meaning. The idea here is, "However." In spite of the fact that people were personally sinning, (and again, it's that same word, "hamartia" with no definite article – stressing the principle of people personally sinning rather than specifically what they were doing). It refers here to the guilt of sin. However (nevertheless – in spite of this), the condition (sin) "is not," and the word "not" is negative "ou" – the strong one. It is absolutely not "imputed." And here we have one of the two times this particular word for "impute" is used, that we looked at earlier in this session.

Here the word is "ellogeo." "Ellogeo" means "to credit to a person's account." The idea here is that while sin has been committed by an individual during the period from Adam to Moses, it was not written on his record. That's what he's saying. It was not written on a person's record. It was not credited to his record. No record was kept of it. Under certain conditions, personal sins from Adam to Moses were not put on a person's account. Present tense says that this was continually the case. Passive means that this is how God dealt with sin. This is how He viewed it. It is indicative – a statement of fact. When was that?

It says, "When there is," and again, it's that verb "eimi." It is expressing a status. It is present – continually the case. It is active – an active condition. It is participle, indicating the time here: "when there was no (again, a negative) law." Again, this is "nomos." This time, it is not the Mosaic Law primarily, but the law in terms of a general idea of rules. This is law as rules. This is spelling out the decrees of God – stating rights and wrongs which are to be observed by man.

So, first of all, he says, "Until the time that the Mosaic Law came into being from Adam to Moses, people were sinning. But their sinning was not placed on their account. It wasn't put on their record, because there was no specific detail of rights and wrongs. And that was the issue.

If you should decide to drive 100 miles an hour through the city streets of Irving, that would be wrong, especially on a busy day, about the time the kids are getting out of school. If you're driving 100 miles an hour down the city streets of Irving, that would be wrong. But if there is no law against driving 100 miles an hour down the city streets of Irving, no violation can be placed on your driving record. Right? It's wrong to do it, but if there's no law against it, then it can't be placed on your record as a violation.

That is what was happening between Adam and Moses. These things were wrong by God's absolute standard, but it was not being placed on the accounts of people. It was not being recorded against them. This is a general divine principle which Paul has established and has stressed before.

For example, in Romans 4:15, Paul said, "Because the law works wrath; for where no law is, there is no transgression." Where no stated law is, you can't say that a law has been broken, and you cannot, therefore, accuse a person of having broken a law.

Since sin is a transgression of a divine law, there can be no guilt if there is no law. And thus, here is the point: there could have been no physical death. Do you remember what we said earlier? Death is here. If we have death here, we know that over here there has to be something: sin. Now he says that you cannot put sin to a person's account until first there is a law that says, "Thou shall not." Then you can put that sin to a person's credit (to his account), and then you can exercise the penalty of death. You have to have the rule; then you have to have the act of violation; and, then you have to have the penalty. It's a chain. And Paul is saying, "Man, we have the penalty. Oh, boy, do we have the penalty?" But when we look back just in this period from Adam to Moses, the penalty is here in abundance. However, there are no rules. And, therefore, there is no sin being put to anybody's account. Therefore, nobody should be dying. How come we have the penalty of death being imposed upon people who have not been rightfully accused of having broken the rules?

Well, under certain conditions, something took place out, where personal sins were not being put to the account of people. It was not being done because the law was not specifically stated.

What was the significance of this? Well, the significance he takes up in verse 14, which we'll have to get into in more detail next time. But just to tie it up, Paul, in verse 14, says, "Nevertheless, in spite of this relationship being the case, death was present in all this period. People were dying. And people were dying who did not sin the way Adam sinned. How did Adam sin? Like this: there was the rule that: "you will not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." Here was negative volition – sin. The result was death. That's how Adam sinned. Yet these people (all the rest of them) are dying. And they did not sin in this pattern of the specific violation of a rule the way Adam did. What's the explanation?

Well, there's only one explanation, and that is what he has said at the end of verse 12: "All sinned in Adam." What is there against you that's causing you to die both spiritually and physically? It is what you did in Adam. Adam is a type of Christ to come. Adam is a figure of Christ to come. There is a parallel between Adam and Christ. As you had nothing to do with getting into the position of death in Adam, so you have nothing to do with getting into the position of life in Jesus Christ. All you have is a volition to exercise (yea or nay) – positive or negative; acceptance or rejection. And God handles it from there. As God handled your guilt by placing you under the responsibility of what Adam did, so God handled your absolute righteousness by placing you in Christ, and giving you (to your credit) that righteousness. That's why Paul says, "You see: salvation is irrevocable. Salvation is so constructed by the fantastic wisdom of God that it cannot be lost again."

Dr. John E. Danish, 1977

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