
The Summation of All Things in Christ

Studies in Ephesians with a Local Church Emphasis

LESSON XXI : EXCURSUS - WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE 'IN CHRIST'?

What Does It Mean to be 'In Christ'?

The blessings Paul is speaking about in our Ephesians text are provided to His people through and in connection with Jesus Christ. When a person has Jesus Christ, all the blessings of heaven are his (cp. Eph 1:3-14). But when a person does *not* have Jesus Christ then there are no heavenly blessings accorded that person (with the exception of what is termed the general or common grace of God — and even that general goodness has its foundation in the cross!). Note how often in these few verses the blessings of God are tied to the work of Christ on our behalf:

⁵ made us alive together *with Christ*

⁶ raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places *in Christ Jesus*,

⁷ He might show the exceeding riches of His grace ... *in Christ Jesus*.

¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created *in Christ Jesus* for good works

The entirety of the New Testament supports this truth: ***every blessing a believer has comes because of his connection with Jesus Christ!*** That being so, the question must be asked: *what does it mean to be 'in Christ'?* That question is perhaps best answered by seeing what the scripture says about those who are *not* in Christ and then comparing the blessings and benefits of being *in Christ* with those *not in Christ*.

'In Adam'

The Bible teaches that all mankind is said to be 'in Adam' prior to our coming to Christ. There are two major passages that specifically contrasts our being 'in Adam' and being 'in Christ' – Romans 5:12-19 and 1 Corinthians 15:22,45-49. Let us look at each of these passages.

Paul begins to make a comparison between Adam and Christ but breaks off his original thought into a digression

¹² *Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned —*

Paul digresses to give evidence of the guilt of sin being inherited from Adam

¹³ *(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.*

Paul continues differences between Adam as a type and Christ as the answer of the type

¹⁵ *But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. ¹⁶ And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. ¹⁷ For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)*

continuance of initial comparison between Adam and Christ

¹⁸ *Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. ¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous. (Rom 5:12-19 NKJV)*

Paul's teaching in Rom 5:12-19 is devoted solely to the distinction of being either 'in Adam' or 'in Christ,' while his discussion in 1 Corinthians 15 is devoted to the resurrection. Therefore we will look at only the few verses in Paul's resurrection discussion that relates to this morning's topic:

²⁰ *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. ²² For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. (1 Cor 15:20-22 NKJV)*

⁴⁵ *And so it is written, 'The first man Adam became a living being.' The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust;*

and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly.⁴⁹ And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. (1 Cor 15:45-49 NKJV)

Lessons Gleaned from Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15

PAUL'S REASON FOR ROM 5:12-19: HOW GOD ACCOMPLISHES HIS PROMISE OF RECONCILIATION — “We would ... paraphrase the transition at v. 12 as follows: ‘in order to accomplish this [namely, that God has promised to save all those who are justified and reconciled through Christ], there exists a life-giving union between Christ and his own that is similar to, but more powerful than, the death-producing union between Adam and all his own.’” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 318]

MANKIND SINNED ‘IN ADAM’ (A SINGULAR EVENT) — That the Bible teaches all mankind sinned ‘in Adam’ is clearly taught in these verses:

- (v. 12) ‘through one man sin entered [completed past single event] *the world*’
- (v. 12) ‘death spread [completed past single event] *to all men, because all sinned*’ [completed past single event]
- (v. 15) ‘by the one man’s offense many died’ [completed past single event]
- (v. 16) ‘that which came through the one who sinned’ [completed past single event]
- (v. 16) ‘the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation’
- (v. 17) ‘by the one man’s offense death reigned [completed past single event] *through the one*’
- (v. 18) ‘through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation’
- (v. 19) ‘by one man’s disobedience many were made [completed past single event] *sinner*’

Besides for the obvious inferences made clear in these statements, grammarians and Bible expositors also point out the importance of the tenses in the Greek text, the aorist verbs being pointed out above. “The aorist indicative verb *hēmarton* [sin] in the historical narrative indicates a completed past action. **Here Paul is saying that something happened and was completed in the past, namely, that ‘all men sinned.’** But it was not true that all men had actually committed sinful actions at the time that Paul was writing, because some had not even been born yet, and many others had died in infancy before committing any conscious acts of sin. **So Paul must be meaning that when Adam sinned, God considered it true that all men sinned in Adam....** [The same lesson is derived by Paul’s statement ‘*thus death spread to all men...*’.] The context shows that Paul is not talking about actual sins that people commit every day of their lives, for the entire paragraph (Rom 5:12-21) is taken up with the comparison between Adam and Christ. **And when Paul says, ‘so [Gk. *houtōs*, ‘thus, in this way’; that is, through Adam’s sin] death spread to all men because all men sinned,’ he is saying that through the sin of Adam ‘all men sinned.’** ... Here [in v. 19] Paul says explicitly that through the trespass of one man ‘many were made [Gk. *katestathēsan*, also an aorist indicative indicating completed past action] sinners.’ **When Adam sinned, God thought of all who would descend from Adam as sinners.**” [Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*; 494]

DEATH IS A PENAL CONSEQUENCE FROM SIN — ‘and death through sin’ — “Sin was the cause of death; not the mere occasional cause, not the efficient cause, but the ground or reason of its infliction. **This passage, therefore, teaches that death is a penal evil, and not a consequence of the original constitution of man.**” [Hodge, *Romans*, 147f]

‘in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.’ (Gen 2:17)

‘the soul who sins shall die.’ (Ezek 18:4)

‘who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.’ (Rom 1:32)

‘For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.... For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ (Rom 6:20,21,23)

‘For if you live according to the flesh you will die’ (Rom 8:13)

‘For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death.’ (Rom 7:5)

‘Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.’ (James 1:15)

One day there will be no more death:

‘Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.’ (Rev 20:14)

‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.’ (Rev 21:4)

While this does not have a direct bearing on the fact mankind sinned in Adam, it is an important concept to see as we continue to the next point.

CONDEMNATION APART FROM THE LAW PROVES OUR CONNECTION TO ADAM — Verses 13-17 is a digression from Paul's original thought began in v. 12, a thought he picks up again in v. 17. Paul makes the assertion of universal sin and death in v. 12. *But to the Jewish mind, there can be no sin (and therefore no death) apart from the law. Paul therefore makes it clear that even without the law both sin (v. 13) and death (v. 14) were present and powerful. "The principle here advanced, and on which the apostle's argument rests is, that the infliction of penal evil implies the violation of law. If men were sinners, and were treated as such before the law of Moses, it is certain that there is some other law, for the violation of which sin was imputed to them. ... These verses are connected by for with ver. 12, as introducing the proof of the declaration that death had passed on all men, on account of one man. The proof is this: the infliction of penal evils implies the violation of law; the violation of the law of Moses will not account for the universality of death, because men died before that law was given. Neither is the violation of the law of nature sufficient to explain the fact that all men are subject to death, because even those die who have never broken that law. As, therefore, death supposes transgression, and neither the law of Moses nor the law of nature embraces all the victims of death, it follows that men are subject to penal evils on account of the sin of Adam. It is for the offense of one that many die."* [Hodge, Romans, 155ff]

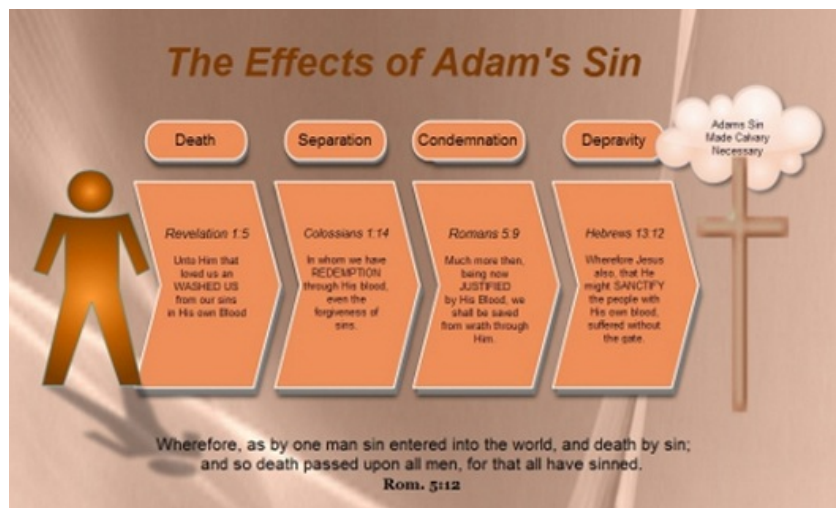
DEATH, SALVATION AND INFANTS — Paul's point in his digression also refers to some who die, namely infants, who did not sin after the 'likeness of the transgression of Adam.' They therefore must have sinned in some other manner because they are part of the 'all who sinned,' as well as experiencing death which is the wages of sin. The only conceivable manner of sinning is that of participation in the first sin itself. *"If death came through sin, then all who die are sinners. This proves ... that infants are sinners in Adam. Death is the wages of sin. It is the dark badge of man's alienation from God, the standing evidence that he is by nature separated from the Fountain of Life, and allied to corruption. If infants did not participate in the guilt of Adam's sin, they would not experience death, disease, or misery, until they become themselves actual transgressors. 'Who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?' Job 4:7."* [Haldane, Romans, 207f] *At this point we must confess little in scripture is given concerning this topic. We cannot be exhaustive at this point but allow this much to be said: the commentators have a point when they state infants bear the guilt of Adam because death is a judicial penalty, and infants are subject to death as much as adults. But it is also the near-universal belief of Christianity that all infants who die are accepted by God through the merits of Christ.* The Early Church rejoiced when infants died, believing they entered heaven directly without enduring the pain and sin of earth. (NOTE there are those counted among evangelicals who do not believe infants go to heaven but they are in the vast minority; the only other exception of which I am aware is the Roman Catholic teaching that unbaptized babies go to limbo, not eternal punishment yet not heaven. Catholics believe infant 'baptism' removes the guilt of original sin)

(v. 19) MANY MADE SINNERS OR RIGHTEOUS ARE FORENSIC TERMS — The word 'forensic' in this context connects the discussion to a court of law situation; i.e., the words are being used in a legal fashion. The importance of this detail is that people are not just sinner due to their own sin but they are sinners legally and judicially through the sin of Adam (as well as being made righteous legally and judicially through the cross of Christ). *"Debate surrounds the exact meaning of the verb Paul uses here. Some argue that it means nothing more than 'make.' But this translation misses the forensic flavor of the word. It often means 'appoint,' and probably refers here to the fact that people are 'inaugurated into' the state of sin / righteousness.... In both parts of the verse, then, we are dealing with a real, though 'forensic,' situation: people actually become sinners in solidarity with Adam — by God's decision; people actually become 'righteous' in solidarity with Christ"* [Moo, Romans, 345f]

PAUL'S ARGUMENT IN ROM 5 CLARIFIES OTHER SCRIPTURES — *"All people, therefore, stand condemned 'in Adam,' guilty by reason of the sin all committed 'in him.' This interpretation is defended by a great number of exegetes and theologians. It maintains the close connection between Adam's sin and the condemnation of all that is required by vv. 15-19, a connection suggested also by 1 Cor 15:22 — 'in Adam all die.' And a sin committed before individual consciousness also explains how Paul could consider all people as 'by nature children of wrath' (Eph 2:3)."* [Moo, Romans, 326f]

THE HEADSHIP OF ADAM — Therefore as we consider further what it means to be 'in Adam,' the question must be asked in what ways was Adam considered the head of mankind? This relationship is usually considered by theologians under two 'headships': Adam as our Natural Head and Adam as our Federal Head.

I must note that as I prepared for this lesson I read material from several prominent Bible students, both from generations past as well as contemporary authors. What struck me is how many of these writers would argue for either Adam being our Natural Head or our Federal Head. I do not see why both of these cannot be in the mind of God at the same time; in my opinion they do not need to be mutually exclusive.



The NATURAL HEADSHIP of Adam

The first manner in which all mankind is related to Adam is because Adam is the origin of the entire race. This basic relationship is obvious and denied by none who accept the scriptures:

'So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.' (Gen 1:27,28)

'And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.' (Gen 3:20)

'And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings' (Acts 17:26)

There are however three differing theories as to what that relationship involves (while I will list three, there are in actuality only two prominent theories since the first has been rejected almost universally since the early days of Christianity). The differences between these theories center upon how man receives his spiritual nature; all three theories agree upon our physical connection to Adam.

PRE-EXISTENCE — teaches all human souls were created before the world and were united with a human body by ordinary generation. This theory found some support in Plato's speculations, was held by some Jewish Rabbinical schools, and the church father Origen who tried to get the early church to accept this view but failed. Some German scholars have tried to revive some form of this theory. Negatively, this theory was deeply influenced by ancient Greek philosophy and held by the Gnostics as well as modern-day Mormonism in some form.

TRADUCIANISM — teaches our species involve both body and soul. "Upon the sixth day, God created two human individuals, one male and one female, and in them also created the specific psychico-physical nature from which all the subsequent individuals of the human family are pro-created both psychically and physically." [W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*; vol 2, p7] Proponents of this theory include Tertullian, Ambrose, Augustine, A. H. Strong, W. G. T. Shedd, Lewis Sperry Chafer, Norman Geisler, Robert Culver, and many of the early Protestants.

psychically — adverb, of or pertaining to the human soul or mind; mental (opposed to physical)

CREATIONISM (OF THE SOUL, NOT THE UNIVERSE) — confines the idea of species to the body, which agrees with those holding to the 'pre-existence' theory but differs only to the time when the soul was created. Creationism teaches the body is generated naturally through procreation but each soul is created ex nihilo and infused into the propagated body. Jerome was an advocate of this although he admitted most Western believers were traducianists. Proponents of this theory include Thomas Aquinas, Calvin, A. A. Hodge, and John Murray (as argued in his book 'The Imputation of Adam's Sin'). It is popular among Reformed Theologians.

BOTH THEORIES HAVE THEIR DIFFICULTIES — Almost universally within Orthodox Christianity the choice is between Traducianism and Creationism, with the Pre-Existence theory being rejected by almost all. But choosing between these other two theories has never been easy. In Shedd's *Dogmatic Theology* on this topic, Shedd quotes various historic scholars but admits most either wavered back-and-forth between beliefs or was never overly-dogmatic on their conviction of how the human soul was propagated. Douglas Moo gives the same warning in his comments on Romans 5: **"Perhaps, indeed, Paul has not provided us with enough data to make a definite decision; and we should probably be content with the conclusion that Paul affirms the reality of a solidarity of all humanity with Adam in his sin without being able to explain the exact nature of that union."** [Moo, *Romans*, pg 238] But while Shedd admits there are difficulties with both theories, he believes there to be fewer difficulties with traducianism than with creationism. **"The doctrine of the unity of Adam and his posterity, in the commission of the first sin and the fall from God, is of the utmost importance in anthropology. Without it, it is impossible to maintain the justice of God in the punishment of inherited sin."** [W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*; vol 2, p17] What follows are some of Shedd's scriptural support for traducianism:

- "The Bible teaches that man is a species, and the idea of a species implies the propagation of the *entire* individual out of it. Individuals, generally, are not propagated in parts, but as wholes." [Shedd, vol 2 p19] – meaning that in procreation the body and soul both are derived from the parents. Thus in scripture there are instances of individuals being considered as a single unit rather than individuals; e.g., in the creation of man: *'Then God said, Let Us make man [singular, man as a race, man as a species] in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them [plural] have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. So God created man [singular] in His own image; in the image of God He created him [singular] ; male and female He created them.'* (Gen 1:26,27 NKJV; see also Gen 5:2 for the same language)
- *'And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings'* (Acts 17:26 NKJV). "The natural interpretation of this text is, that men of all nationalities are made of one common human nature as to their whole constitution, mental and physical." [Shedd, vol 2 p24]
- *'Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father*

when Melchizedek met him.’ (Heb 7:9,10 NKJV) “Levi and his descendants are said to have had an existence that was real, not fictitious, in Abraham.” [Shedd, vol 2 p25]

- In speaking directly against the teaching of creationism, Shedd notes: “Gen 2:1-3 teaches that the work of creation was complete on the sixth day. ‘God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God had created and made.’ If the human soul has been a creation ex nihilo, daily and hourly, ever since Adam and Eve were created on the sixth day, it could not be said that ‘on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made.’ Compare Ex. 20:11, ‘In six days God made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day;’ and Heb 4:4, God ‘rested from all his works.’” [Shedd, vol 2 p25]
- ‘For as in Adam all die’ (1 Cor 15:22a NKJV) According to Shedd, to ‘die in Adam’ implies existence in Adam; the non-existent cannot die. [Shedd, vol 2 p26] *I could see however how some would debate Shedd’s conclusion since being ‘in Adam’ could also be viewed in a legal fashion rather than a realistic fashion.*
- Shedd also brings forth our verse we just studied a few weeks back in our lessons, Eph 2:3, ‘and were by nature children of wrath.’ Shedd argues the term speaks of that which is derived from our ancestors, of which we also taught in our lessons.
- Drawing support from outside of Scripture, Shedd quotes the Westminster Shorter Catechism, 16, as follows: ‘All mankind, descending from Adam by ordinary generation, sinned in him and fell with him in his first transgression.’

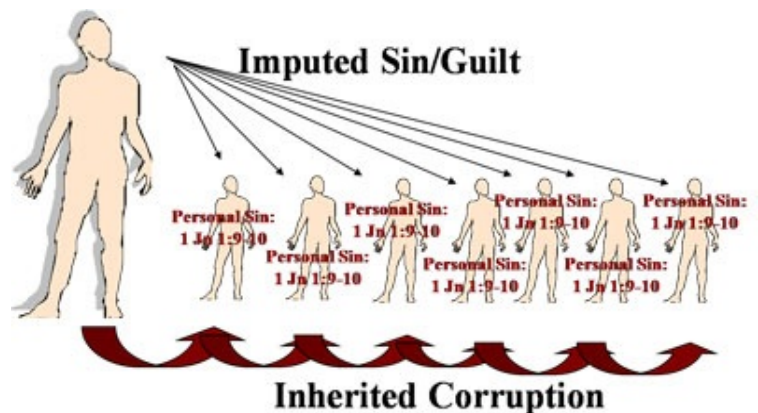
Shedd sums up his reasoning with these words: “The doctrine of the specific unity of Adam and his posterity removes the great difficulties connected with the imputation of Adam’s sin to his posterity, that arise from the injustice of punishing a person for a sin in which he had no kind of participation.... **According to the traducianist, the facts are as follows: Adam and his posterity were made a unity by the creative act of God. The human species was created in and with Adam and Eve, both psychically and physically. This is natural or substantial union. With this unity, namely, Adam and the human species in him, God then made the covenant of works; according to which, this unity was freely to stand or fall together....** Having reference to this covenant, Adam and his posterity were ‘federally one:’ that is, one *in*, not *by* a foedus, league, or covenant. They were not constituted a unity by the covenant; for they were already and previously a unity by creation. And because they were so, God established the covenant with them. **When therefore a ‘federal union’ is spoken of, it must be remembered that it is a secondary union resting upon a primary union: namely, upon natural union, according to the traducianist; or upon representative union, according to the creationist.**” [Shedd, vol 2 p30, 40f] Note Shedd recognizes the realities of both the natural and federal headships, of which I agree.

foedus — a treaty or compact contracted by ancient Rome with one or more allied states

GUILT IS INDIVISIBLE — “The *total* guilt of the first sin, thus committed by the entire race in Adam, is imputed to each individual of the race, because of the *indivisibility* of guilt. If two individual men together commit a murder, each is chargeable with the whole guilt of the act. One-half of the guilt of the murder cannot be imputed to one, and one-half to the other. Supposing that the one human nature which committed the ‘one offense’ (Rom 5:17,18) became a family of exactly a million individuals by propagation, it would not follow that each individual would be responsible for only a millionth part of the offence. The whole undivided guilt of the first sin of apostasy from God would be chargeable upon each and every one of the million individuals of the species alike. For though the one common nature that committed the ‘one offense’ is divisible by propagation, the offence itself is not divisible, nor is the guilt of it. Consequently, one man is as guilty as another of the whole first sin; of the original act of falling from God. **The individual Adam and Eve were no more guilty of this first act, and of the whole of it, than their descendants are; and their descendants are as guilty as they.**” [W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*; vol 2, p185f]

The FEDERAL HEADSHIP of Adam

Adam also represented the human race in another manner which is not readily recognized in our modern culture, even though we do have traces of this practice. “Is not the principle of representation a fundamental one in human society? The father is the legal head of his children during their minority: what he does, binds the family. A business house is held responsible for the transactions of its agents. The heads of a state are vested with such authority that the treaties they make are binding upon the whole nation. This principle is so basic it cannot be set aside. Every popular election illustrates the fact that a constituency will act through a representative and be bound by his acts. Human affairs could not continue, nor society exist without it. Why, then, be staggered at finding it inaugurated in Eden?” [A. W. Pink, *The Divine Covenants*]



FEDERAL HEADSHIP DEFINED — “The federal headship view considers Adam, the first man, as the representative of the human race that generated from him. As the representative of all humans, Adam’s act of sin was considered by God to be

the act of all people and his penalty of death was judicially made the penalty of everybody.” [Walvoord, John F., and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*] **“The federal headship of Adam presupposes and rests upon his natural headship.** He was our natural head before he was our federal head. He was doubtless made our federal representative because he was our natural progenitor, and was so conditioned that his agency must affect our destinies, and because our very nature was on trial (typically if not essentially) in him. Whatever, therefore, of virtue in this explanation the natural headship of Adam may be supposed to contain the federal theory retains.” [Hodge, A. A., *Outlines of Theology*]

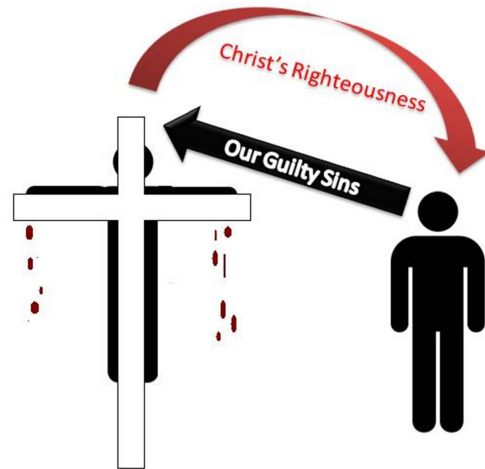
The Importance of the Doctrine of Imputation

IMPUTATION – Romans 4

The most important part of having either Adam or Jesus as our Federal Head involves the doctrine of imputation. These teachings are so inter-related that to understand the one, we must understand the other.

IMPUTE — λογίζομαι [logizomai] its primary meaning *to count to, to impute, to reason, then to reckon, to number.* It is used (a) of numerical calculation, e.g. Lk 22:37; (b) metaphorically, by a reckoning of characteristics or reasons, to take into account. *‘Now Abraham believed God, and it was put to his account, resulting in righteousness.’* (Rom 4:3; Wuest’s Expanded Translation) **This ‘reckoning’ or ‘crediting’ means “to account to him a righteousness that does not inherently belong to him.”**

AN ACCOUNTING WORD — “The word ‘counted’ in Romans 4:3 is a Greek word that means ‘to put to one’s account.’ **It is a banking term.** This same word is used eleven times in this chapter, translated ‘reckoned’ (Rom 4:4, 9-10) and ‘imputed’ (Rom 4:6,8,11,21-24), as well as ‘counted.’ **When a man works, he earns a salary and this money is put to his account. But Abraham did not work for his salvation; he simply trusted God’s Word. It was Jesus Christ who did the work on the cross, and His righteousness was put on Abraham’s account.**”



[Wiersbe, *Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol 1 pg 524] **“Was reckoned’ is from *logizomai*, which carried the economic and legal meaning of crediting something to another’s account.”** [MacArthur, Romans 1-8, pg 237] *“logizomai, old and common verb to set down accounts (literally or metaphorically). It was set down on the credit side of the ledger ‘for’ righteousness.”* [Robertson, *Word Pictures*]

“ADAM ACTING IN OUR STEAD IS NOT FAIR!” — There are those who upon hearing of the doctrine of Federal Headship immediately cry ‘foul.’ To that I respond:

- that is one of the reasons I prefer the traducianist interpretation of the creation of the soul; it connects all of mankind directly with the sin of Adam.
- those saying the imputation of the sin of Adam upon his posterity is not fair have no problem accepting the ‘fairness’ of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ and the imputation of our sins to our Lord; to accept the reality of one is to accept the reality of the other.
- regardless of human reasoning, ultimately our response to all of God’s ways must be as Paul taught in the book of Romans: *‘But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, Why have you made me like this? Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?’* (Rom 9:20,21)

The FEDERAL HEADSHIP of Jesus

“Adam’s sin is the act of Adam and his posterity *together*. Hence, the imputation to the posterity is just and merited. Christ’s obedience is the work of Christ *alone*. Hence, the imputation of it to the elect is gracious and unmerited.” [Shedd, Romans, 135] **“In the case of Adam, he was the federal head of mankind in that he represented mankind in the fall. We were ‘in him’, in his seed. When he fell, we fell ‘in him.’ Likewise, Jesus is our federal head in salvation. He represented his people on the cross.** 1 Cor. 15:22 says, *‘For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.’* ... Christians have no problem with Jesus representing us on the cross. But they often reject the idea of Adam representing us in the garden. But to reject one is to reject the other. Is it fair for Jesus, who committed no sin, to become sin for us and represent us on the cross? Think about it. That is exactly what happened, yet those who deny that Adam represented us in the Garden readily accept that Jesus represented us on the cross. They are inconsistent. It is clearly the case that Jesus took our place on the cross.

‘Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed’ (Isaiah 53:4-5).

Jesus took our place. He bore the death that is due us because of our sin.” [from CARM.org/adam-our-federal-head (and) CARM.org/federal-headship; note Ligonier.org/devotionals/our-first-federal-head essentially says the same thing (R C Sproul)]

SUMMARY

HOW THIS RELATES TO OUR EPHESIANS PASSAGES — “We are said to be ‘quickened together with Christ.’ This does not mean merely that we are quickened as he was, that there is an analogy between his resurrection from the grave, and our spiritual resurrection; but the truth here taught is that which is presented in Rom. 6, 6. 8. Gal. 2, 19. 20. 2 Cor. 5, 14. 1 Cor. 15, 22, 23, and in many other passages, viz. that *in virtue of the union, covenant and vital, between Christ and his people, his death was their death, his life is their life, and his exaltation is theirs. Hence all the verbs used in this connection, [made alive together, risen together, sat down together], are in the past [aorist] tense. They express what has already taken place, not what is future; not what is merely in prospect. The resurrection, the quickening and raising up of Christ’ people were in an important sense accomplished, when he rose from the dead and sat down at the right hand of God.*” [Hodge, Ephesians, 113] “*Believers are seen as included in Christ, so what God accomplished for Christ he accomplished for him as the representative, the head of a new humanity.... Through his resurrection Christ now lives to God, and since they are ‘in Christ Jesus’ and identified with Christ in both his death and his resurrection life, believers are also to consider themselves alive to God. Unless the apostle thought of believers as already having been identified with Christ in his resurrection, this would simply be make-believe.*” [Lincoln, 105f]

NOT A SUBJECTIVE EXPERIENCE BUT A CHANGE OF STATE — “*It still needs to be asked what is meant when it is said of believers who are still in their mortal bodies and still on earth that God has raised them up with Christ and seated them with Christ in the heavenly realms. When Paul used the language of dying and rising with Christ in Rom 6 and Col 2 and 3, he had in view not primarily some subjective religious experience on the part of believers but rather thought of believers as having been Christ’s partners in the events of past redemptive history. For him, Christ’s death was a death to the old order, to the powers of this age, including sin, and his resurrection was a coming alive to a new order, in which he functioned as Lord with the power of God. Christ’s death and resurrection changed the power structures in history. For believers to have died and been raised with Christ was the equivalent of having been transferred from the old dominion to the new, because in God’s sight they had been included in what had happened to Christ.* The fact of temporal distance created no major problem for Paul because he did not think of individuals as isolated from the power sphere in which they existed, but rather viewed present existence as continuing to be determined by the events on which it was founded. He saw the new dominion as a whole as participating in those events of Christ’s death and resurrection through its representative head. Similarly, *when [Paul] says God has raised believers up with Christ, he too means they have been assigned to the new reality introduced by Christ’s resurrection.* He extends the range of events in the history of salvation in which believers are to see themselves included, by the reference to having been seated with Christ in the heavenly realms. As 1:20-22 make clear, Christ’s exaltation involved his triumph and rule over hostile cosmic powers. A new situation in regard to these powers was inaugurated in history by Christ’s victory. *That God has seated believers with Christ means therefore that they are part of the new dominion’s superiority over the old, participating in its liberation from the powers and its restoration of harmony to the cosmos.*” [Lincoln, 108f]

THE ‘NOW – NOT YET’ TENSION — “*And certainly, although, as respects ourselves, our salvation is still the object of hope, yet in Christ we already possess a blessed immortality and glory; and therefore, he adds, ‘in Christ Jesus.’ Hitherto it does not appear in the members, but only in the head; yet, in consequence of the secret union, it belongs truly to the members.... We are thus furnished with the richest consolation. Of everything which we now want, we have a sure pledge and foretaste in the person of Christ.*” [Calvin] “*It is in virtue of their union with Christ that believers are partakers of his life and exaltation. They are to reign with him. The blessings then of which the apostle here speaks, are represented as already conferred for two reasons: first, because they are in a measure already enjoyed; and secondly, because the continuance and consummation of these blessings are rendered certain by the nature of the union between Christ and his people. In him they are already raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of God.*” [Hodge, Ephesians] “*Our resurrection and being seated with him in the heavenlies is a present reality, even though it must not be seen as a fully realized eschatology.... [T]here is a future aspect of our salvation. It is similar to Rom 8:15 where we have received the spirit of adoption and 8:23 where we eagerly await for adoption, the redemption of our bodies.*” [Hoehner, 336]

‘In Adam’

Adam disobeyed
Adam’s actions brought condemnation and judgment
sin imputed
a death-producing union
we were the enemies of God
we were under the rule of the satan
bondage, slavery
cut off from God
helpless, hopeless

‘In Christ’

Christ obeyed
Christ’s greater action brought righteousness and reconciliation
righteousness imputed
a life-giving union
we are the children of God, joint-heirs with Jesus Christ
we are in the kingdom of God
freedom, liberty
access to the power and authority of Christ
power which raised Christ from the dead is the power at work in believers



THE ANTITHESIS BETWEEN ADAM / CHRIST AND THE REST OF MANKIND — Important in Romans 5:12-19 is the use by Paul of the term, “the many.” Most of the commentators that I consulted on this text stressed the importance of a more literal rendering of the verse, keeping the articles as given by Paul. Speaking of Rom 5:15: “The articles before ἑνός, πολλοί, ἑνός ἀνθρώπου, πολλοῦς [henos, ‘one’; polloi, ‘many’; henos anthrōpou, ‘one man’; pollous, ‘many’] are not otiose, and should be retained in translation: the AV’s omission of them is seriously misleading. ***The contrast is not just between one man and many, but between Adam and Christ, respectively, and ‘the many’, that is, the rest of mankind.***” [Cranfield, Romans, vol 1 p284f]

o·ti·ose – adj: ineffective, futile, superfluous or useless

Shedd agrees and notes Paul uses ‘the many’ as an antithesis of ‘the one’, meaning Adam and the rest of mankind. [W. G. T. Shedd, Romans, 135] “‘The many’ has an inclusive sense in Hebrew and Aramaic – ‘the many who cannot be counted, the great multitude, all’ (TDNT). So here it is clearly synonymous with the ‘all’ of vv 12 and 18; cf. 2 Cor 5:14.” [James Dunn, Romans vol 1 p279] Dunn gives a more literal rendering of this verse as follows: ***‘for if by the trespass of the one, the many died, how much more the grace of God and the gift in grace, which is of the one man Jesus Christ, has overflowed to the many.’*** Thus the first use of ‘the many’ would correspond back to v12 ‘death spread to all men’, while the second use of ‘the many’ would relate to those made righteous through the finished work of Jesus Christ (v19).