

Title: The Blessing of Faith
Text: Rom 3: 31-4:8
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Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

In context, Paul has declared there is none righteous, no not one--neither Jew nor Gentile. He showed no man can establish the law. The law was given to declare us guilty and shut our mouths. Paul declared plainly that Christ alone is the Righteousness of God--Christ alone established the law for God's elect.

Romans 3: 21: But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22: 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: 23: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Paul declared all boasting is excluded by the law of faith. He said,

Romans 3: 28: Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

The Pharisee's accused Paul of making void the law by this gospel of Christ. Knowing that, the Spirit moved Paul to declare

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

We do not make void the law through faith. It is only through faith in Christ that we establish the law. Yet, when many preachers get to verse 31, they say, "See, believers are still under the law."

Proposition: It is evident that the Spirit of God means that we establish the law only through faith in Christ because he gives Abraham as the example.

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law. 4: 1: What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? 2: For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. 3: For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. 4: Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. 5: But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. 6: Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, 7: *Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. 8: Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.*

Abraham lived 430 years before God gave the 10 commandments at Sinai. So how did Abraham establish the law? How was Abraham justified, made righteous before God? Abraham established the law through faith in Christ the same way every sinner saved by grace establishes the law.

NOT BY WORKS

Romans 4: 2: For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

If Abraham established the law by his works--if he justified himself by his obedience to the law--then he would have room to glory. So would we. "*But not before God.*" God will not share his glory with another.

Isaiah 42:8: I *am* the LORD: that *is* my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

Isaiah 43:7: *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.

Galatians 6:14: But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

THROUGH FAITH

Romans 4: 3: For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Christ established the law for God's elect. Therefore, God our Savior gave Abraham faith and imputed the righteousness of Christ to Abraham.

"*What saith the scripture?*" It says Abraham was given faith in Christ the same way all God's chosen, redeemed people are given faith Christ preached the gospel to Abraham.

Galatians 3:8: And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

The Spirit of God quickened Abraham to life and gave Abraham faith to believe Christ, the same as he does for all who Christ redeemed.

Ephesians 2: 1: And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. 4: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)... 8: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: 9: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

Through faith in Christ, God imputed the righteousness of Christ to Abraham, "*Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.*"

IMPUTATION ACCORDING TO SCRIPTURE

The word "counted" means God imputed the righteousness of Christ to Abraham. According to scripture, God only imputes what a man has been made by a prior act.

Consider Adam. Adam sinned. Therefore God imputed sin to Adam. Adam was our Head. So when he sinned he made us guilty sinners. Therefore, God imputed sin to us because Adam made us sin.

Romans 5: 12: Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so...

For that reason, because Adam made us sin, God imputed sin to all Adam's race.

Romans 5: 12...and so death passed upon all men, for that [for in Adam] all have sinned:

Then the Holy Spirit gives an illustration to show that God imputed sin to us because Adam made us sin.

Romans 5: 13: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

From Adam to Moses God gave no other law but the one law in the garden. But God will not impute sin to a man unless he has been made sin by a prior act. That is what it means when it says "*sin is not imputed when there is no law.*" It means a man has to have been made sin by a prior act before God will impute sin to him.

Romans 5: 14: Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression,...

Nevertheless, God imputed sin to those who lived between Adam and the giving of the law at Sinai and they died. They had not sinned after the similitude of Adam--they had not broken a known law as Adam did. They did not have a law as Adam did. So how was God just to impute sin? It is because in Adam all have sinned. That is the point of verses 13-14. It shows us that God only imputes what a man has really been made by a prior act. The prior act was Adam's disobedience. Therefore, God was just to impute sin to us.

But what good news! Adam is a type of Christ in Headship.

Romans 5: 16...who is the figure of him that was to come...

The parenthesis gives some differences between Adam's sin and Christ's obedience and the results. But down in verse 18 we are given the point of the passage.

Romans 5: 18: Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation;

By Adam's offence, God imputed sin to all who Adam represented because we sinned in Adam. The same way God only imputed sin to us because Adam made his people sin,

Romans 5: 18...even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life.

God imputes the righteousness of Christ upon all who Christ represented unto justification of life because Christ made us righteous by his obedience. The prior act was Christ's obedience. He made all who he represented righteous. Therefore, God is just to impute righteousness those Christ made righteous.

Romans 5: 19: For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

If we are consistent with how the scriptures declare that God imputes then seeing God only imputes what a man has been made by a prior act, how was God just to number Christ with the transgressors? Christ is holy. He never sinned and never would sin!

2 Corinthians 5: 21: He hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Isaiah 53:6: All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...[for that reason God] 12:...numbered [him] with the transgressors; [God imputed sin to Christ because]...he bare the sin of many,

THE PURPOSE OF THE CROSS

The purpose of the cross is to declare God's glory. It is to declare God's righteousness.

Romans 2: 26 To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

The cross manifests that God is just! God will not impute sin to a man unless the man has truly been made sin by a prior act. Nor will God impute righteousness to a man unless he has been made righteous by a prior act. It is because God is the just Judge. God is the righteous Judge.

Proverbs 17:15: He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both *are* abomination to the LORD.

Since Christ was made sin by God and bore the sin of his people, God was just to impute sin to our Substitute. Then God made him a curse for us. Christ bore the penalty of God's wrath that his people deserved. Thereby, Christ redeemed his people from the curse of the law. That is the best news a sinner will ever hear! Due to Christ's obedience, due to Christ establishing the law and justifying his people, God is just to impute righteousness to those he gives faith in Christ.

NOT "AS IF"

Preachers in the past have said God treats the believer "as if" he is righteous. No. When God imputes righteousness to you, believer, God is not treating you "as if" you are righteous. God was not treating you "as if" you were a guilty sinner when he imputed sin to you. Adam made you sin.

Even so, God imputes righteousness to his people because we were made righteous by a prior act. CHRIST MADE HIS PEOPLE RIGHTEOUS BY HIS OBEDIENCE. CHRIST ESTABLISHED THE LAW AND ALL HIS PEOPLE ESTABLISHED THE LAW IN HIM.

Imputation is not God treating a man "as if" he is anything. Imputation is God imputing to a person what the person has been made by a prior act. Here are a few example from scripture of imputation.

Leviticus 17: 3: What man soever *there be* of the house of Israel, that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth *it* out of the camp, 4: And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to offer an offering unto the LORD before the tabernacle of the LORD; blood shall be imputed unto that man;

Why shall blood be imputed unto that man?

Leviticus 17: 4... HE HATH SHED BLOOD;

Sin is imputed to the man because he has sinned. Then the man will justly be made a curse.

Leviticus 17:...and that man shall be cut off from among his people:

Here is another example. "Account" means impute.

1 Corinthians 4:1: Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Why does Paul say impute us as ministers of Christ? Because that is what God made his ministers by a prior act of God's grace.

2 Peter 3:15: And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation;

Why account that God's longsuffering shall end in the salvation of each sinner Christ made righteous? It is because that is what God's longsuffering is by God's acts.

In none of these example is a man made anything by imputation. The prior act made them what they are. Imputation is God imputing to a man what he has been made by a prior act.

Child of God, if you believe on Christ, the Spirit of God moved Paul to use strongest language possible to declare what you are. The word "reckon" means impute.

Romans 6: 11: Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sinner if you believe on Christ you shall be saved. That is God's word! He says

Romans 10:9: If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

So back to the original question and answer.

Romans 3: 31: Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, [through faith in Christ] we establish the law.

Amen!