

Intro:

We have been discussing *Inherited Sin*. Now we turn to a new subject, involving a new word, one that is familiar to us from our study of Romans:

The Imputation of Sin

Some of this material may be familiar to us because of our recent studies.

I. The meaning of imputation

A. Definition: “To impute means to attribute or reckon or ascribe something to someone. It is not mere influence but involvement that is at the heart of the concept.”¹

B. OT examples

1. Guilt imputed to men who breach the sacrificial obligations (Lev 7.18, 17.4)
2. Pleas made that guilt not be imputed on certain individuals
 - a. Ahimelech pleads with Saul for his innocent act of helping David (1 Sam 22.15)
 - b. Shimei pleads with the returning David not to impute his guilt to him for his words against David (2 Sam 19.18-19)
3. David’s song of the blessing of sin not being imputed to the guilty (Ps 32.2)

C. NT examples

1. Sin not charged (guilt) when no law exists (Rm 5.13)
2. Righteousness charged on faith to Abraham (Rm 4.3 and throughout, Jas 2.23)
3. Christ’s death enables God not to impute man’s sins against him (2 Cor 5.19)
4. Paul asks Philemon to credit any loss (impute) he has suffered by Onesimus to Paul’s account (Phile 18)

¹ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology : A Popular Systemic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth*, 256 (Chicago, Ill.: Moody Press, 1999).

II. Three basic imputations

A. The imputation of Adam's sin to the race (Rm 5.12-21)

“This is the one that concerns us in this section on sin, and we shall return to a full discussion of it.”²

B. The imputation of Man's sin to Christ (2 Cor 5.19, 1 Pt 2.24)

C. The imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers (2 Cor 5.21)

III. The imputation of Adam's sin

A. The central passage (Rm 5.12)

1. Key point: meaning of 'all sinned' at end of v. 12

a. Babies die even though they have not sinned personally.

b. The verse is not saying 'all are sinners' or 'all are sinful'

c. Note connection between the one sin of Adam and the condemnation and death of all men

1) Rm 5.15 'the offence of one' → 'many be dead'

2) Rm 5.16 'the judgment *was* by one' → 'to condemnation'

3) Rm 5.17 'by one man's offence' → 'death reigned by one'

4) Rm 5.18 'by the offence of one' → '*judgment came* upon all men to condemnation'

5) Rm 5.19 'by one man's disobedience' → 'many were made sinners'

d. Note the verb in 5.12: 'all sinned' = Active voice

2. Conclusion: all sinned when Adam sinned

B. The relation between Adam and the race (two historical views)

1. Federal or representative view

a. Adam is the representative of the whole race

b. Only Adam actually sinned

c. But as representative, God viewed all as involved and thus condemned

² Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 256.

- d. “Federal” means covenant — Adam chosen to represent the race in the so-called ‘Covenant of Works’
 - e. Hosea 6.7 cited as proof
2. Seminal or realistic or Augustinian view
- a. Adam implicitly contains the seed of all his posterity within himself
 - b. When Adam sinned, all actually sinned
 - c. Mankind not simply represented but organically joined to Adam
 - d. Scriptural examples
 - 1) Achan (Josh 7.16-26)
 - a) Achan is the cause of Israel’s defeat
 - b) Achan blamed no one else
 - c) Achan’s whole family blotted out for Achan’s sin
 - 2) Levi and Abraham (Heb 7.9-10)
 - a) Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec
 - b) Levi not born until almost two hundred years later
 - c) Levi in Abraham nevertheless paid tithes to Melchisedec

“Adam’s sin was imputed to each member of the human race because each member of the human race actually sinned in Adam when Adam sinned.”³

“I came across an illustration of imputation in a sad experience a former student had. This man, Bill, shared the expenses of a ride home at Christmastime in Joe’s car. On the way another car went through a stop sign and hit Joe’s car broadside. At the time of the accident, Joe was driving and Bill was asleep in the car. Because Bill was seriously and permanently injured, he sued to collect damages from the owner of the other car. But that owner (or his insurance company) tried to prove negligence on Joe’s part. Bill’s attorney wrote to him in part as follows: ‘... and if the jury finds that he [Joe] was negligent, it will undoubtedly be imputed to you, and you cannot recover. I don’t think that there is anything that we can do to change that situation now.’”

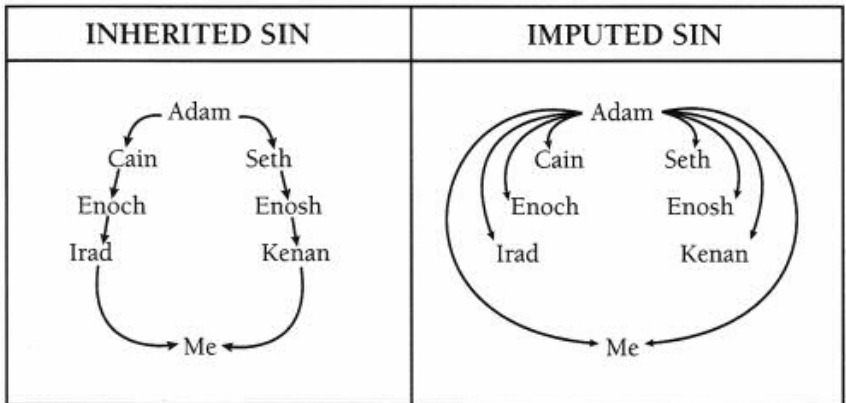
³ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 258.

“What linked Bill to Joe and to Joe’s possible negligence? It was the fact that Bill had shared expenses. Money joined Bill to Joe and to Joe’s actions. Humanity joined all of us to Adam and to Adam’s sin. We all share in Adam’s sin and Adam’s guilt. We are all equally guilty and in need of a remedy for our sin.”⁴

IV. The transmission of imputed sin

- A. Imputed sin transmitted to me directly from Adam
- B. Inherited sin transmitted to me indirectly through my ancestors from Adam

A Comparison Of How Inherited And Imputed Sin Are Transmitted⁵



V. The penalty of imputed sin

- A. Physical death is the penalty connected with imputed sin (Rm 5.13-14)
- B. Spiritual death is the penalty connected with inherited sin
 - 1. Adam died when he sinned
 - 2. Adam passed on spiritual death to his descendants
 - 3. Being spiritually dead, we sin like Adam because we inherited a sin nature (a dead spiritual nature)

⁴ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 258.

⁵ Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, p. 259.

VI. The remedy for imputed sin

- A. The remedy for imputed sin is the imputed righteousness of Christ
 - 1. Not that you will never die physically
 - 2. But that you will live eternally
- B. Of course, the remedy for inherited sin is the life of Christ
 - 1. You have now the spiritual life of Christ
 - 2. You have the spiritual power to have victory over sin