

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

DECLARATIONS (PART 3)

Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us. Luke 1:1

We continue to set forth our declaration of what we believe the scriptures to teach. We wrote about sin and redemption in our last issue which sets the stage for our topic in this one. Paul said, *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."* (Rom.15:4) Certainly an understanding of the doctrines of imputation and justification, when rightly understood, will give the children of GOD such hope.

What is imputation?

Literally the term "impute" involves a numeric transaction. The Greek word used in the New Testament is often translated "count" or "reckon". We could give the definition of imputation as: a recording in one's account. When a bookkeeper writes a balance in a ledger or records a credit in a person's bank account, they are committing an act of imputation. Now it does not matter if the money originally belonged to the person or not, once it is recorded in that account it legally becomes theirs. The scriptures tell us *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."* (Rom.5:19) Man has been judged guilty not simply because he has broken GOD's law but because he was "made" or accounted to be guilty because of his heritage from Adam. (see Gen.3:16-19; I Cor 15:21) So we can say that the sin of Adam is imputed to us, *"For all have sinned and come short of the glory of GOD"* (Rom.3:23)

Isaiah, of old, prophesied that the MESSIAH would come and would take upon HIMSELF the sins of HIS people when he said *"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him."* (Isa. 53:5) The good news of the gospel begins by telling the sons of GOD that their sin has been laid to the account of JESUS CHRIST. *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* (2 Cor 5:21) The LORD JESUS willingly had our sin imputed to HIS own self. HE had no sin of HIS own nor was HIS person ever tainted by ours but HE took upon himself the curse of our sin and became in the eyes of the law and HIS FATHER a sinner worthy of death. Because our sin was imputed to HIM, HE died an awful death separated from everything that HE held dear. *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit."* (1 Pet.3:18) *"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree."* (1 Pet.2:24)

At the same time HE was imputing our sin to himself, HE also was imputing HIS righteousness to us, so that on our account appears HIS record of perfect righteousness. It is as though we have never sinned. *"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that*

glorify, let him glory in the Lord." (1 Cor 1:30-31) We who were law breakers now have HIS obedience laid to our account and we are without reproach in HIM.

What is justification?

Justification is primarily a legal term. To justify means: to pronounce or declare that someone or some action is acceptable. Whereas a man may have another's righteousness imputed to their account simply by decree, justification demands a legal satisfaction of a broken law in order for it to be applicable. Men often seek to justify themselves in the sight of GOD but are doomed to fail since they are condemned in sin and have no basis in themselves to be considered acceptable before HIM. (see Rom.3:20; Gal.2:16) Justification is the glorious result of the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness to us. Justification is the act of GOD in declaring that HIS elect sons are perfectly righteous and accepted in HIS sight on the basis of CHRIST having borne their sin and its judgement and having imputed HIS righteousness to them. The result of justification is *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."* (Rom.8:1) The scriptures indicate that the recipients of justification were predestinated unto this privilege having been called by GOD and ultimately glorified as a result of it. (see Rom.8:29,30)

There are basically two perspectives of justification taught in the scripture. One is that legal decree which takes place in the court of heaven wherein the sons of GOD are judged and considered as the heirs of heaven having fulfilled all of the laws demands because of what CHRIST has done in their behalf without their consent or knowledge. *"being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."* (Rom.5:9) The other takes place in the mind and understanding of men as GOD causes men to hear the gospel and believe it. *"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled"* (Col 1:21) We are now convinced of our justification having believed.

GOD is not angry or disposed to wrath towards any of HIS elect, since CHRIST JESUS has fully paid their debt and interposed HIS righteousness in their behalf. HE decreed HIS intention to save them in eternity past and HE has accomplished their redemption in time on Calvary's hill. HE has now sent forth preachers into the earth with the glorious message of reconciliation that they might believe in HIM and receive the glorious deliverance for which they were earmarked from the foundation of the world. *" For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!-- So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Rom.10:13-17)*

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