

## Lesson 2: The Imputation of Righteousness

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How does God give us this righteousness? This is a very important question because there is some confusion out there in the Christian world about how this process works. Our next segment will be to biblically illustrate **how** God grants us the righteousness of another man.

How does God make a sinner righteous? Read **Romans 4:1-11**.

**Verse 3:** For what does the scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was \_\_\_\_\_ to Him for righteousness.”

**Verse 5:** But to him who does not work but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is \_\_\_\_\_ for righteousness,

**Verse 6:** Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God \_\_\_\_\_ righteousness apart from works.

**Verse 9:** Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was \_\_\_\_\_ to Abraham for righteousness.

**Verse 11:** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be \_\_\_\_\_ to them also.

What does the word impute mean? It is from the Greek word λογίζομαι = Logizomai.

In the King James Version, it is the old English word “Impute.”

The Blue Letter Bible states that the KJV translates Strong's G3049 in the following manner: think (9x), impute (8x), reckon (6x), count (5x), account (4x), suppose (2x), reason (1x), number (1x), miscellaneous (5x).

The word impute means that God accredits to us the righteousness of Jesus as our own when in fact we are not, and he does this based upon or faith in the fact that he has proclaimed it.



## Lesson 2: Appendix

The infused righteousness of the Catholic church vs. Imputed righteousness of the Gospels and the reformers

### Catholic Church and Reformers

This is a quote from a historical theological work on what the Catholic church and the reformers thought of what constitutes our justification.

*Catholic church on Justification: "In contrast with Roman Catholic theology, which viewed justification as a process of divine grace being infused into people to make them actually righteous, Protestant theology insisted that justification is a legal act of God who, as a judge, declares sinners not guilty but righteous instead. He does so by crediting the righteousness of Christ to their account, so while they are not actually righteous, God views them as being so because of Christ's righteousness" pg. 498 historical theology Gregg R. Allison*

*Thomas Aquinas Medieval Catholic scholar: "Aquinas believed in a synergy, or cooperative effort, between God and people in Justification... Man by his will, does works meriting eternal life, ... but for this it is necessary that the person will should be prepared with grace by God" 505 Ibid*

(1) *"Specifically, God infuses the gift of justifying grace that at the same time he moves free choice to accept the free gift." 505 Ibid*

(2) *"According to Aquinas, justifying grace is infused, or poured into the person who by faith accepts that gift of grace. So, Justification goes beyond a mere work of imputation-declaring that a person is not guilty but righteous before God instead. It includes an infusion of grace that actually makes a person's nature righteous." Ibid 506*

(3) **"Thus, the one which is justified is both declared righteous and made righteous."**  
Ibid 506

*Martin Luther: "Christian freedom is established by justification by grace through faith alone and not of works... if works are sought after as a means to righteousness.... And are done under the false impression that through them one is justified, they are made necessary and freedom and faith are destroyed." Ibid 510*

(1) *“For inasmuch as the saints are always aware of their sin and implore God for the merciful gift of his righteousness, they for this very reason are always reckoned righteous by God. Therefore, they are before themselves and in truth unrighteous, but before God they are righteous because he reckons them so on account of this confession of their sin: they are sinners in fact, but by virtue of the reckoning of the merciful God they are righteous.” Ibid 511*

*Calvin: “like Luther before him, Calvin criticized the Roman Catholic church’s insistence that justification is the result of faith joined together with good works. Indeed, the protestant view of justification by faith alone automatically excludes justification by faith plus works.”*

(1) *“anticipating a Catholic response-that works upon which the Roman Catholic Church insists are not done by a person himself, but are “the gifts of Christ and the fruit of regeneration”-Calvin still rejected any role for such works in Justification.” Ibid 512*

(2) *“With this point, he underscored a major problem with the Catholic theology of Justification: It mixed together the declarative work of God-Justification by which a person is credited with righteousness-and the transforming works of God-regeneration and sanctification, by which a person actually becomes righteous. For Calvin, these works of God are inseparable, they are distinguishable indeed, they must be differentiated: to be justified means something different from being made new creatures,” and confounding the two results in a false notion of justification. By confusing justification and sanctification, the Roman Catholic church emphasized the Infusion of righteousness rather than the imputation of righteousness, and it viewed justification as a reward that could be merited.” Ibid page 512*

(3) *“Calvin concluded that, by receiving both justification and sanctification, believers will engage in good works, though they are not saved by them.” Ibid pg. 513*

*Heinrich Bullinger: “The grace of God that justifies Us for the sake of Christ through faith alone, without good works, while faith meanwhile abounds in good works.” All of the historic Protestant confessions presented the doctrine this way. Ibid pg. 513*

*Jaroslav Pelikan: The council of Trent 1546 “The seventh chapter of the final form of the decree (which was identical with the eighth chapter of the fourth draft) stipulated that justification was “not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner man through the voluntary acceptance of the grace of gifts” of God... The first version of the decree on justification condemned the teaching that “justification is only imputation” of the righteousness of Christ, together with the teaching that “the righteousness that is granted in justification is only the righteousness of Christ” merited on the cross rather than a “righteousness that is in {the believer} himself,” although it was of course through Christ from God. Luther distinguished sharply between “two kinds of righteousness, mine and Christ’s” Reformation of church and dogma (1300-1700) Pelikan pg.283-284*

*Catechism of the Catholic church: **article two grace and justification 1989, 1427** “Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man.”*

*“Baptism, the sacrament of faith. It conforms us to the righteousness of God, who makes us **inwardly just** by the power of his mercy”*

*What Christians believe Alan F. Johnson and Robert E. Webber: “In spite of Protestant caricatures about the Catholic theology of Aquinas, it must be stated at the outset that he does not teach a justification by human merit. Rather, he stands in line with Augustine and teaches that **the righteousness** that comes from God is **infused** within through the habit of grace... consequently Aquinas described salvation as a movement from one condition to another, a transfer from the state of sin to the state of righteousness. Justification is a term used by Aquinas to describe the process of receiving an infusion of God’s grace. Sanctification refers more specifically to the deepening of the soul’s participation in the divine life through the infusion of grace. Therefore, in Aquinas justification and sanctification are two terms that describe the process one goes through from being a sinner to becoming righteous. Pg. 307*

*Caspar Olevian: “Both Olevian’s commentaries on Romans and Galatians give abundant evidence of his commitment to the forensic conception of justification that justification is a matter of God’s binding, legal declaration of the sinner’s justification, as opposed to*

*justification by infused grace (gratia infusa) or justification through sanctification. 'justification' is the pronouncement that we are absolved of our sins in the body of Christ'.*  
**Caspar Olevian and the substance of the covenant Pg. 151.**

*"The forensic idea makes Christ's iustitia (justification) alien or external rather than internal, as the ground of our righteousness but it is credited to us as if it were internal."*  
*Ibid Pg. 153.*

- For the Catholic according to Aquinas who was a Greek mystic philosophy there is a mystical ontological union between you and God through the sacraments, and you are infused with righteousness, so that the reality your righteousness is subjective within you, versus the protestant view where the reality of righteousness is external, objective, alien to us, and must be imputed.

*"For Olevian, the protestant doctrine of faith as the instrument by which one apprehends Christ's alien righteousness (iustitia aliena) is irreconcilable with the idea of co-operating toward justification. Such synergism, even under the exciting, inspiring work of the spirit was justification by works. Because of our natural state in Adam, one could never begin to co-operate with grace much less expect to satisfy the divine justice through obedience".*  
*Ibid Pg. 155-156*

- This was the Catholic claim that it is ok to make sanctification part of what Justifies you because it is of the Holy Spirit. But this was the exact same conclusion that Luther and Calvin came up with. NO, it is still human effort.
- Ellen white: sanctification is divine moral power cooperating with human effort. That is why it can never be part of what justifies us.

*Canisius: Catholic scholar debating Caspar Olevian:*

*"He juxtaposed quiet sharply the infused grace of baptism with the Protestant notion of imputation. For Canisius, the benefictum is not duplex as with Olevian, but one might say, complex. That is, sanctification, through infused grace, is justification." Ibid Pg. 158*

- **What he is saying is clear:** that is Caspar taught that the covenant, or salvation had a double benefit, that was once you are justified then the Holy spirit gives you a second blessing called sanctification. But sanctification is never what justifies you,

it is the fruit of your justification. But for Canisius Justification also was sanctification and called complex.

- **Augsburg Germany Oct 31, 1999 Catholics and Lutherans came together on this statement of faith:** *“Together we confess by Grace alone, in faith in Christ saving work and not because of any merit on our part we are accepted by God and received the Holy Spirit who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good and his works”*
- **A good exercise is to see what is wrong with the above statement:** A hint, they are agreeing on how the believer receives grace, however, they are leaving out their heretical view of infused righteousness once you receive that grace.

*Allister E. McGrath: “where Augustine taught that the sinner is made righteous in justification, Melancthon taught that he is counted as righteous or pronounced to be righteous. For Augustine, “justifying righteousness” is imparted; for Melancthon it is imputed. Melancthon drew a sharp distinction between the event of being declared righteous and the process of being made righteous, designating the former “justification” and the later “sanctification” or “regeneration”. For Augustine, both were simply different aspects of the same thing. According to Melancthon, God pronounces the divine judgment-that the sinner is righteous-in the heavenly court. This legal approach to justification gives rise to the term “forensic justification”. Page 158 Historical Theology second edition.*

*“The importance of this development lies in the fact that it marks a complete break with the teaching of the church up to that point. From the time of Augustine onward, Justification had always been understood to refer to both the event of being declared righteous and the process of being made righteous.”*

*“Melancthon’s concept of forensic justification diverged radically from this. As it was taken up by virtually all the major reformers subsequently, it came to represent a standard difference between Protestant and catholic from that point onward.”*

*“In addition to their differences on how the sinner was justified, there was now an additional disagreement on the word Justification designated in the first place. As we shall*

see, **the council of Trent, the Roman Catholic Church's definitive response to the protestant challenge**, reaffirmed the views of Augustine on the nature of justification, and censured Melancthon." Ibid 159

*Calvin Quote:*

*"To be justified in God's sight is to be reckoned as righteous in God's judgment, and to be accepted on account of that righteousness... The person who is justified by faith is someone who, apart from the righteousness of works, has taken hold of the righteousness of Christ, through faith, and having been clothed with it, appears in the sight of God not as a sinner but as a righteous person. Therefore, justification is to be understood simply as the acceptance by which God receives us into his favor as a righteous people. We say that it consists of the remission of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ...There is no doubt that we obtain justification in the sight of God only by the intercession of the righteousness of Christ. This is equivalent to saying that believers are not righteous in themselves, but on account of the communication of the righteousness of Christ through imputation, something to be noted carefully... **Our righteousness is not in us, but in Christ. We possess it only because we participate in Christ**: in fact, with him, we possess all his riches." Ibid 159*

*The Council of Trent 1545-51:*

*"The justification of the sinner may be briefly defined as a translation from the state in which a human being is born a child of the first Adam, to the state of grace and the adoption of the sons of God through the second Adam, Jesus Christ our savior. According to the gospel this translation cannot come about except through the cleansing of regeneration, or a desire for this, as it is written, "unless someone is born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he or she cannot enter into the kingdom of God" Ibid 161*

*Interpretation of Trent by McGrath:*

*"Justification thus includes the idea of regeneration. This brief statement is amplified in the seventh chapter, which stresses that justification "is not only remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the inner person through the voluntary reception of the grace as gifts by which an unrighteous person becomes a righteous person." This point was given further emphasis through canon 11, which condemned anyone who taught that justification takes place "either by sole imputation of the righteousness of Christ or by the*



*sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of grace and charity...or that grace by which we are justified is only the goodwill of God.” Ibid 161*

*“Briefly, then, Trent maintains the Medieval tradition, stretching back to Augustine, which saw justification as comprising both an event and a process—the event of being declared to be righteous through the work of Christ, and the process of being made righteous through the internal work of the Holy Spirit. Reformers such as Melancthon and Calvin distinguished these two matters, treating the word “justification” as referring only to the process of being declared to be righteous; the accompanying process of internal renewal, which they termed “sanctification” or “regeneration”, they regarded as theologically distinct.” Ibid 161*

*Augustine’s infused internal righteousness:*

*“Early critics of the reformation argued, following Augustine of Hippo, that sinners were justified on the basis of an **internal righteousness**, graciously **infused** or implanted within their person by God. This righteousness was itself given as an act of grace; it was not something merited. But, they argued, there had to be something within individuals which could allow God to justify them.” Ibid 162*

*Trent statement on internal infused righteousness:*

*“The single formal cause (of Justification) is the righteousness of God—not the righteousness by which he himself is righteous, but the righteousness by which he makes us righteous, so that, when we are endowed with it. We are “renewed in the spirit of our mind” (Ephesians 4:23), and are not only counted as righteous, but are called, and are in reality, righteous.... Nobody can be righteous except God communicates the merits of the passion of our Lord Jesus Christ to him or her, and this takes in the justification of the sinner.”*

*McGrath’s explanation:*

*“The only direct cause of justification was the interior gift of righteousness”*

*Dojcin Zivadinovic:*

In a sense catholic sacraments are passive infusions of sanctifying grace, grace which saves you from hell but not from purgatory - they can be taken without true heart

repentance - and also penance etc... Check this catholic voyage towards conversion which starts at Baptism, and goes through sacraments, confessions, penance etc...

[Catechism of the Catholic Church - The sacrament of penance and reconciliation \(vatican.va\)](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm) [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc\\_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm)

The grace mediated by the church slowly “sanctifies you” until you are converted and finally justified - by that point you have been doing many good works through penance and then you are justified as James says “a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.”

Ellen White 1Sm 397.4 “Imputation of the righteousness of Christ comes through justifying faith, and is the justification for which Paul so earnestly contends. He says: “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 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: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.... Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:20-31).

Grace is unmerited favor, and the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God. He is justified through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, who stands in the courts of heaven as the sinner's substitute and surety. But while he is justified because of the merit of Christ, he is not free to work unrighteousness. Faith works by love and purifies the soul.”