

## HAMARTIOLOGY (18)

This is one of the most important doctrines in the entire Bible, for it clearly establishes that man, in and of himself, cannot ever be right with God because of God's judicial decree. No human would ever have a chance of spending eternity with the Holy God, because God has decreed that every human is a sinner in Adam. Although the depths of this subject will be examined under the heading of Soteriology - The Doctrine of Salvation - it is important to come to terms with an important theological concept called imputation.

The word "impute" literally refers to a judicial, mental, calculation. It is the idea of making a judicial and mental calculation in regard to a person. This is a legal term - that of a judge judicially declaring a judgment concerning someone.

An excellent illustration of imputation is found in **Philemon 1:18**. Here the imputation is seen in that Paul asks Philemon to judicially calculate the wrong previously done by Onesimus and to put that wrong to his account. This could only be done by judicial, mental calculation.

In the Bible there are three major imputations:

**(Imputation #1) - Adam's sin is imputed to all men. **Romans 5:12****

According to the judicial calculation of God, we have all sinned in Adam.

**(Imputation #2) - Our sin is imputed to Jesus Christ. **Isaiah 53:5-6; II Corinthians 5:21 Galatians 3:13; I Peter 2:24****

When Jesus Christ died on the cross, God the Father judicially decreed that He died for the sins of the world. It is this judicial calculation that makes people in the world savable.

**(Imputation #3) - Christ's righteousness is imputed to the believer. **Romans 3:25-26; 4:5 / 5:16-19; II Corinthians 5:21****

At the moment a person believes on Jesus Christ, God judicially calculates that this one is His child and considers the righteousness of His own Son to be the righteousness of the one who believes. Once this imputation or judicial decree is made by the mind of God, it cannot ever be undone.

This doctrine of imputed sin is very important to the subjects of guilt, death, and justification. In other words, imputed sin establishes universal guilt. Imputed sin explains individual death. Imputed sin makes possible personal justification.

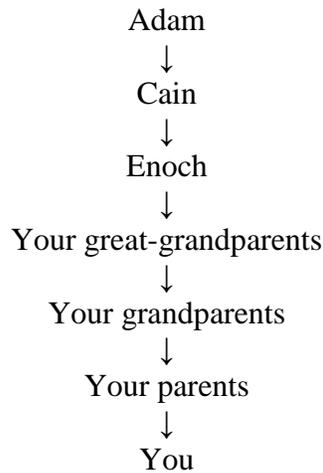
Although people are sinners by nature and by practice, the one that has the most profound theological significance to salvation is the truth that all people are sinners by imputation.

What this very personally and practically means is that all people have been judicially declared and decreed by God to be sinners, and they have been charged by the judicial calculation of God with the sin and guilt of Adam. It makes no difference how good a person may think he is; he has been declared a sinner in Adam, and it is this critical imputation that makes it potentially possible to be declared righteous in Jesus Christ.

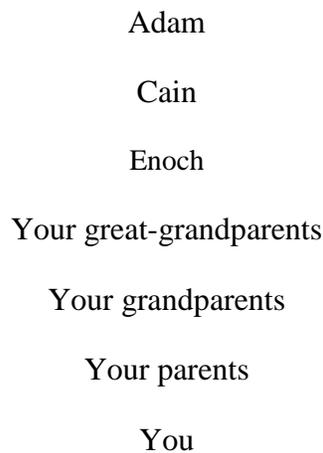
## HAMARTIOLOGY (19)

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer has developed a way to illustrate the difference between inherited sin and imputed sin, and we offer this chart based on his discussion (Vol. 2, p. 298):

### Inherited Sin



### Imputed Sin



The central passage that deals with the doctrine of imputation is **Romans 5:12**.

Our previous studies in Anthropology have clearly demonstrated that, according to Scripture, there are three types of Biblical death:

- 1) Spiritual - separate from God due to sin;
- 2) Physical - separation of the immaterial part of the person from the material part of a person;
- 3) Eternal - separation from God forever.

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The doctrine of imputation becomes especially closely connected to the issue of physical death. Dr. Chafer writes: “The Bible’s answer to the question why each person is subject to physical death is that each one had his share in the sin that injured Adam himself and caused him to die physically, and they share the penalty, also. Physical death is not an inheritance, much less an infection which parents pass on to their children. It is a penalty for that form of impersonal, unconscious joint action with Adam in his disobedience” (Vol. 2, p. 298).

God’s Word is the only book that can give an accurate explanation for sin and death and what occurs after death. This passage in Romans is one of the most significant in all of the Bible when it comes to these subjects.

### **Romans 5:12**

It is very evident from this verse that the world inherited sin from Adam (**5:12a**). The implication of “sin entered into the world” is that it had already manifested itself at some other place, but this is how it got into the world, namely through Adam. Our study in Angelology has already revealed that sin was first found in Satan while near the throne of God. The statement of **Romans 5:12** is that here is how sin got into the world. It is also stated here that the world also inherited death (**5:12b**), and all men received the death penalty through the sin of one man (**5:12c**).

To clearly state the theological point, we inherited our sin, we inherited death, and we inherited the death penalty from Adam. When Adam sinned, these judicial decisions were pronounced on all men. It is very true that we all have personally sinned, but we are not going to die because we have personally sinned; we are going to die because God declared us to be sinful and guilty in Adam, and we received the death penalty through him.

The verb “all sinned” is aorist. This particular tense indicates Paul was looking back to a point in time when all people were considered by God to be sinful and received the death penalty. That precise moment was in the sin of Adam. Every person is going to physically die because he is related to Adam according to judicial calculations which have been made by God. There are four proofs of this fact here:

1. The tense of the verb “all sinned” is aorist.
2. The context is a contrast between what one receives in Adam as opposed to what one receives in Jesus Christ.
3. The text specifically states this very point - **5:16, 17, 18, 19**.
4. The following time illustration from Adam to Moses proves it - **5:13-14**.

To summarize - **verse 12** is not a reference to personal sin. It is a reference to imputed sin. All people are sinful, guilty, and sentenced to die because of Adam’s sin. This automatically means all people are in need of salvation regardless of what they have or have not done. Every person will physically die because of the penalty God has given to all because of Adam’s sin. The very fact that one will physically die is proof that one needs to be spiritually saved.

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### **Romans 5:13-14**

The conjunction “for” which begins **verse 13** is a further explanation of what is stated in **verse 12**. In these two verses, there are four extremely important points made which clearly leave us with the doctrine of imputation:

1) Sin was in the world before the law was given. **5:13a**

Scripture teaches us that the law of God was given to show people how sinful they are (**5:20; 3:19-20**). What this verse means is that people were sinning before the law of God was given to specifically show them their sin.

2) God did not judicially calculate personal sin until the law of God was given. **5:13b**

What this means is that God did not keep a specific judicial account of one’s personal sin until His law came into existence to clearly establish the boundaries of sin. Prior to the law being given, if something reached a terrible level, God just stepped in and dealt with it.

3) All people died from the time of Adam to the time of Moses. **5:14a**

Paul has already established that death is a penalty for sin (**Romans 5:12**). He has also just established that God did not keep a record of personal sin until the law was given. Adam was given a specific command of God - not to eat of a specific tree. Since God’s law hadn’t been given yet, people living from the time of Adam to the time of Moses could not specifically sin “in the likeness of the offense of Adam” in that they did not have the specific commandments which point out what they should and should not do. The people who lived from Adam to Moses did not have specific commands of God to violate and God was not keeping record of personal sins. The obvious, logical question is, “Why did they die?” If death is a penalty for sin and if these people don’t have specific information as to what God deems as sinful and if God is not keeping track of personal sin, why did these people die? The answer is because by judicial decree of God, all people sinned in Adam and received the death penalty through him. Charles Haddon Spurgeon has well-stated, “When Adam sinned, the world was turned into one vast cemetery.”

Unless Christ returns first, every human being will physically die. The reason for this is because God has sentenced us to die in the sin of Adam. We will not die because we have personally sinned, even though we all have personally sinned. We will die because of God’s judicial judgment of death which was given to us through Adam.

A person might think to himself, this doesn’t seem quite fair or equitable. However, a few important observations can help give us a proper perspective of all of this:

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- A. We are in no position to question or criticize the sovereign plan of God. **Romans 9:20**
- B. We would have done exactly what Adam did had we been in Eden.
- C. If we were given the same choice in our environment today, we wouldn't last as long as Adam.
- D. When it comes to salvation, it is never a question of what is fair or just; it is a question of what is merciful and gracious.

What we will eventually discover is that this decree of our sin and guilt in Adam was made by an infinitely wise God so that just as He declared all guilty in one person's act, so He also could declare on righteous in one person's act.

- 4) What has happened to us in Adam is a type of what happens to us in Jesus Christ. **5:14b**

Adam's sin and rebellion brought death upon all men. God decreed a very negative judgment on all humanity because of the sin of Adam. But what we learn from this last part of **verse 14** is that Adam was an example of type, in a negative sense, of another divine decree in a positive sense. In other words, what happened to Adam with all of its negatives would be a type of what would happen in Jesus Christ with all of its positives. Adam is an antithetic-type of Jesus Christ. All things that Adam did, Christ cancels. Christ is far greater than Adam in every possible respect.

- A. Adam is the head of all sinful people  
Christ is the head of all righteous people.
- B. Adam was a man born to live and yet brought death.  
Christ was a God/man born to die and yet He brought life.
- C. Adam was tested in Eden and failed.  
Christ was tested in the wilderness and triumphed.
- D. Adam died as a result of his sin.  
Christ died as a result of our sin.
- E. Adam brings judgment upon us.  
Christ takes judgment from us.
- F. Adam ruined our fellowship with God.  
Christ restores our fellowship with God.
- G. Adam gets humanity ousted from Eden.  
Christ gets humanity entrance into heaven.

The doctrine of imputation gives many negatives in Adam, but it gives greater positives in Christ.