

# **Divine Imputation of Sin unto Christ**

**by John Allen**

## **{Christian's Grand Treasure}**

When God, by a Sovereign Act of Preterition passed by the iniquities of his people, when by a glorious act of oblivion, that promise was substantiated; "and their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." Divine Justice accumulated all the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of God's people, as an infinite heap, as an immense sum, in all their complicated nature, vileness, and demerit, not so much to make them known as to inflict punishment upon the Son of God for them; as it was in the riches of stupendous grace, the pleasure of the Lord Jesus, to stand as the sinner's Surety and Saviour, to pay all their debts for them; so it was the pleasure of Law and Justice to charge all the bills that were filed in the Court of Heaven against them, upon the Son of God; and indeed upon the footing of his Suretyship engagement for them, they had a right to present all their bills as one vast sum before him; they looked upon the Saviour as responsible, therefore Law and Justice drew upon him for debts of many thousands standing, and for thousand years to come. As Christ had not only engaged to make an atonement for sin past, but likewise for sins present, and sins to come, therefore he had the whole charge presented to him at once, the whole file {if I may so express it} thrown into his lap, he being the bank of Heaven, and having all the essential riches and treasures of the Deity in his nature, he was able to make full compensation to every demand, which brought upon him the sum total of all the transgression of his people. And here we are to consider, that it was not only the many debts or transgressions of a single soul that Christ engaged to bear, but the innumerable transgressions of thousands and thousands of a number that no man can number. {Rev.7:9} All their transgressions in all their sins were transferred unto him, and charged upon him, when He was "made sin for us, who knew no sin."

Thus Aaron's confessing the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the children of Israel, over the live goat, might be typical of the innumerable crimes that Christ bore for his people. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." {I Pet.2:24} And; whereas it is said, that Aaron shall put the iniquities, transgressions, and sins upon the head of the goat; the which, I apprehend, is a radiant prefiguration of the transferring of our sins to Christ, of their being imputed to him and charged upon him; for Christ did not only take our nature, but he likewise, took our sins upon him, that he might suffer in our room, place, and stead, and thereby make an atonement for them with his own blood; dying the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Sin therefore was imputed to Christ that he might suffer for it, for had not sin been transferred to Christ, it would not have been just to have punished him, as he did no sin, neither could it ever have been removed from us, had not Christ engaged to bear it in his own body upon the tree; therefore it follows that sin was the meritorious cause of Christ's sufferings, or that he suffered in consequence of sin being imputed to him, that when sacrifices, offerings, and burnt offerings, the blood of bulls, and the blood of goats, would not take away sin; "then said I, Lo, I come {in the volume of the book it is written of me,} to do thy will, O God." {Heb.10:7} Besides, I would observe, that if Christ did not bear sin, all the sacrifices under the Law would cease being typical of him, especially this great and comprehensive type of the scape goat, upon which it is said, "and Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness;" {Lev.16:21;} which did, in the most lively manner, shadow forth the

imputation or transferring of iniquities, transgressions, and sins to the Son of God; and, by Aaron putting the iniquities, transgressions, and sins upon the goat, they were thereby typically and figuratively removed from them; so our sins being {by an act of rich grace} removed from us to Christ, they are hereby eternally taken away by his death, which could never have been if he had not first taken them upon him; "but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." {Heb.9:26}

This important truth is clearly revealed in the Scriptures, typically all the sacrifices pointed it out, though it is acknowledged that none of them are said to bear sin but the live goat; which was not sacrificed, yet they are called a sin offering; "it is a sin offering for the congregation," {Lev.4:21;} likewise a guilt, or a trespass offering; "and he shall bring his trespass offering unto the LORD for his sin which he hath sinned;" {Lev.5:6;} which Character our Lord's sacrifice bears; "when thou shalt make his soul an offering," {Is.53:10;} for trespasses, or as the Greek translates it; "an offering for sin." Also the offerings under the Law are called the offerings of atonement, of sweet savor to the Lord, which evidently proves that they did typically bear sin. The slain sacrifices under the Law did typically bear sin, and thereby spiritually pointed out to the offerer, the removal of his iniquity by the great Messiah. The scripture proofs of this are plain, positive, and unequivocal, "for he shall bear their iniquities." {Is.53:11} Here the prophet points out the work and office of Christ, as a Savior and a Sacrifice for his people, that he should "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied," and by his knowledge he shall justify many, and gives this as the reason or argument to prove it, for "he shall bear their iniquities," which in the original signifies, to bear it as a man bears a burden; he stood under the heavy load of our guilt, until it was wholly atoned for, the weight of which would have been too ponderous either for men or angels to have bore. He bore, which denotes that it was a massive weight, a ponderous load, a heavy mountain, inasmuch as he bore that which the blood of bulls, and of goats, nor all the legal sacrifices could take away; he likewise bore that which we are conscious of; namely, sin; inasmuch as that brings such distress and inexpressible sorrow upon the mind, and is no ways removed {as pertaining to the conscience} but by faith in his sacrifice, which proves that he bore it, and that our guilt was imputed to him, or else his sacrifice could not remove it from our minds; but, saith the Apostle, "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." {Rom.3:25} Again, the Prophet observes, "that he bore the sins of many;" {Is.53:12;} and what can be more full and satisfactory, the argument is strong and evident, God is satisfied with it, and on account of which he hath said, "I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he bore the sins of many." This hath the Apostle confirmed, "so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many;" {Heb.9:28;} and how glaring is the evidence given by the prophet Isaiah; "and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." {Is.53:6} The foundation of Christ's bearing our sins was his Suretyship engagements for us, therefore he is called the Surety of a better covenant. Now a surety is one that has engaged for the safety and security of another; thus Judah became a surety to his father, for his brother Benjamin; "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him; if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame forever." {Gen.43:9} Christ in his Suretyship engagements for us, saith in our behalf, "if they have wronged thee, or owe thee ought, put that to my account, I will repay it." A surety is one that engageth by bond or promise in behalf of an insolvent to pay his creditor, upon which engagement the creditor has a right in law to charge the whole debt upon the surety, in order to receive full satisfaction for the same. And we being by nature insolvent debtors, owing more than ten thousand talents, and having nothing to pay, our treasure {the covenant of works} being broke, Christ therefore undertook to become the Surety of a better covenant, to pay all our debts to law, and thereby to free us from condemnation, which engagement laid a proper foundation for his having all our debts imputed to him, and charged upon him, as saith the prophet, "all we like sheep are gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity

of us all." {Is.53:6}

The intrinsic motive and impulsive cause of Christ's bearing our sins, and enduring such dolorous sufferings for them, was his own distinguishing love; it is true sin was the meritorious cause of his sufferings, but the foundation cause of his bearing our sins and suffering for them was his love. Sin being laid upon Christ, of necessity the guilt and punishment was, as there is such a close connection between guilt and punishment. Yes, sin with all its guilt and horrid contamination, with all its vileness and dreadful apostasy from God, with all its aggravated guilt and breach of Jehovah's Law, with all that depth of evil which is contained in the heart of man, was imputed to and charged upon the Son of God; that fountain of iniquity which dwells in our hearts, and resides in the carnal mind, that infinite sea of transgressions which is contained between the banks of our corruptions, together with all the abominable filthiness of our corrupt nature from the womb till our final departure, were all by act of the Father transferred to Christ. "For he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might made the righteousness of God in him." {II Cor.5:21} Though Christ as man was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, as he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, yet by his own Suretyship engagements, and the Father's Imputation of sin unto him, he became, {says Dr. Crisp,} the greatest sinner in the world! How? Not that he had any moral taint of sin, but because he had all the sins of the elect, in all their aggravation, filth, and vileness, imputed to him and charged upon him at one time; for, saith the prophet, "the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquities of us all;" and saith Daniel, "Messiah shall be cut off, but not for himself;" and Peter saith, "who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." This description of Christ bearing sin is directly applicable to the type alluded to; for Aaron was to confess over the head of the live goat, all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins. Mark, in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat; which was a lively adumbration of the imputation of all our sins, in all their number and aggravating nature, as one round sum, upon the Son of God.

The original spring of all these sufferings was his love, and the procuring cause of them was sin; but what laid him under a necessity of suffering, was his voluntary engagements to suffer, and his Father's imputation of sin and guilt unto him, for He said unto his Father, "Sacrifices and offerings, thou wouldst not; and in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come;" "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straightened until it is accomplished;" "to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world." Christ's sufferings therefore were not violently imposed upon him, though he was led as a lamb to the slaughter, yet his heart was in every step that he trod; it was what he engaged from everlasting to do, therefore styled, "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." But the cause of the real sensation of his sufferings was his Father's imputation of sin and guilt unto him. "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him." {Is.53:10} He impressed his mind with a piercing charge of our guilt, and excited a most painful sensation in his soul of the dreadful evil, contamination, and vileness of sin; and as he stood as the Surety of his people, he made known to him the demerit of sin.

**NATURE OF IMPUTATION:** Though Christ suffered for our sins, yet it was impossible that his holy nature should be polluted, for Imputation is not transfusion, as transfusion is the communication of the same nature from one to another, and makes an internal change in the object, whilst Imputation is an accounting or reckoning another's act, as though it was our own; in this light the Apostle explains it, "for by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." {Rom.5:19} Christ is said to bear our sins, and not his own; such a transaction is common in all acts of suretyship; the surety is not looked upon by the law or any other, as the contractor of the debt, but one that becomes debtor for, and instead of the principal, he taking the debt upon him, and set down paymaster, is called a surety; and such is Christ a Mediator by way of Suretyship. "By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better

Testament." {Heb.7:22} He also obeyed and suffered as a public person, a Prince of peace, a second Adam, in our room and stead, and there became a lawful change of persons and condition between him and us upon this very account. "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." {Mt.20:28} "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." {Eph.5:2} "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God; and for this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance." {Heb.9:13-15}

Christ was made sin in the same manner as we are made the righteousness of God in him; that is, imputatively, blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works. Imputation is reckoning, accounting, or placing to account, and esteeming thereupon. The act of imputation therefore, whether of sin or of righteousness makes no internal change in the object of the act, for it is not a transient act, but it is an inward act of the mind, which cannot produce a physical change in the object upon whom it passes, and consequently the imputation of sin to Christ, was not, nor could be productive of any internal change in him; notwithstanding the placing to his account in the Divine mind, our guilt, our criminal actions, he remained innocent, pure, and spotless in himself. This one thing being duly attended to will enable us to answer various trifling objections which are raised against the doctrine of the Imputation of our sins to Christ beyond any solid reply. Some have objected that if sin itself be imputed to Christ, he must be defiled by it, but that must be a great mistake; for sin as imputed defiles not, if it did, the imputation would be impossible with God, not only with respect to Christ, but also sinners themselves, because Infinite Purity cannot put forth any act that would render the object of that act morally impure. If the imputation of sin to the guilty creature doth not pollute him, which is a certain truth, how should the imputation of it to the holy Jesus defile him? Imputation is not transfusion; in the latter the person becomes the subject of that which is imputed by the act of imputation; and therefore, though the transfusion of sin, if that could be, which it cannot, would necessarily defile, the imputation of sin doth not pollute the object of that act, and consequently the imputation of sin to the blessed Jesus, did not, nor could pollute his holy nature. This doctrine contains no false or mistaken idea in it; on the part of the Father, who imputed sin to Christ; nor on the part of Christ to whom it was imputed; nor on the part of the Father, for he did not consider our criminal actions, which he placed to the account of Christ, as his acts, as perpetrated by him, but as our acts committed by us. Nor does this doctrine, on the part of Christ, include any mistaken conception in it, for it doth not suppose that he had a consciousness of the perpetration of those criminal actions which were imputed to him; or, that under the charge of them to him, he esteemed them acts that he himself had committed; therefore this doctrine is attended with no dangerous consequences relating to Christ, nor is anything contrary to Truth supposed therein respecting sin, which he was made for us. Besides, if guilt was not charged on Christ, his sufferings could not have been of a penal nature, for penal suffering under a charge of offence, and without a just imputation of guilt cannot in equity be inflicted upon any subject; it is a most unrighteous thing to punish any considered as innocent, and therefore if it was not possible with God to impute sin to the innocent Jesus, neither could he inflict punishment upon him, and if Christ did not endure proper punishment, his sufferings were not, neither could they be satisfactory to the Law and Justice of God for our sins; of such necessity and importance is the doctrine of the Imputation of Sin to Christ that we cannot be saved without it.