

Why Mention David?

Romans 4:6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

Romans 4:7 “Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered.

Romans 4:8 “Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account.”

A couple of weeks ago I said that Romans chapter 4 was all about Abraham. Well, almost. Paul threw in a couple of verses about David. But why David? Isn't the exposition of Genesis 15:6 enough? Why mention David?

It was while reading the commentary of Thomas Constable on Romans that I had a glimpse of how intricate was Paul's crafting of his argument for faith alone in Christ alone.

As I say repeatedly, we as Westerners are at a disadvantage when reading the Bible. We are illiterate when it comes to the Old Testament. The language. The culture. The history. So what did Thomas Constable say that got my attention?

“Paul cited another eminent man in Jewish history whose words harmonized with the apostle's. Whereas Abraham lived before the Mosaic Law, David lived under it. Abraham's story is in the Law section

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of the Hebrew Bible and David's is in the Prophets section. Here is the second witness that Paul referred to in Romans 3:21. Abraham represents the patriarchal period of Israel's history, and David represents the monarchy period. As Israel's greatest king one would assume that David would have been a strong advocate of the Mosaic Law. He was, but he did not believe that observing it was the key to justification.¹”

Romans 3:21 But now apart from *the* Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

In Jewish law there is a requirement in a court case for two witnesses to testify if the punishment for a crime is death.

Deuteronomy 17:6 On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.

Paul has applied that requirement in his argument. There is not just a single witness in his argument, but two and standing in the shadows are another two which Paul does not specifically mention. Let us look at these witnesses and include Moses as a third as the writer of the Torah. The easiest way to summarize the information is through a table.

1 <https://soniclight.com/tcon/notes/pdf/romans.pdf>, page 97

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	Abraham	Moses	David
Salvation	Justification Phase 1		Sanctification Phase 2
Time	Salvation prior to circumcision		Sanctification after circumcision
Text	Torah Gen 15:6		Prophet/Writings Ps 32:1-2
Office	Patriarch		King
Writer	Moses		David
Covenant	Abrahamic Covenant	Mosaic Covenant	Davidic Covenant

It is almost a logic table. Many different aspects of the human condition are addressed in the table. Remember, there is a perspective to the human race that satisfies the legal case against Satan. If humans demonstrate God’s love and his righteousness at the same time, it addresses Satan’s concerns that he is being condemned to the Lake of Fire by a loving God. There are grace provisions for ever human condition. The devil can say “What about this situation?” God says, “Look at this situation over here. In this case, one person believes and another rejects grace. I have provided but human volition can choose.”

Abraham believed, before circumcision, and it was imputed to him as righteousness. David sinned in time after his circumcision but his sin was not imputed to him. These two are witnesses. One a Patriarch whose faith is documented in the Torah, in Genesis penned by Moses. The other was considered the best king of united Israel. David was under the Law. David documented his observation of what happened after he sinned in Psalm 32, which is in the Writings/Prophets. Sometimes the Jews divided their Scripture into Torah, Prophets (Neviim) and the Writings (Kethuvim) (TNK or Tanakh). Sometimes it is referred to as just Torah/Law and Writings or in Paul’s case in Romans 3:21, Torah/Law

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and Prophets. So Paul draws documentation from two parts of the Hebrew Scriptures and two witnesses. Moses, although not mentioned is lurking in the background since he wrote the documentation for Abraham and documented the Torah. The elephant in the room is Isaiah, specifically Isaiah 53. Never mentioned here, but as evident as a watermark are the concept of a substitutionary sacrifice of the Messiah. This will lead us to see that chapter 4 is incomplete without chapter 5. But, I must take a detour here to highlight a word that is used ELEVEN times in this single chapter: imputation. Because Paul used it so many times it is obviously important.

Because it is so important, let me repeat some points I previously gave you from another lesson:

The following is a simple outline of imputation from a Biblical perspective done by Jim Myers as a guest speaker at West Houston Bible Church and found on Robby Dean's website.²

1. "Originally the term "imputation" was a technical commercial word used in bookkeeping.
2. "Imputation" means the act of charging or crediting to one's account.
3. It was used for making an entry in a ledger, either a debit or credit.
4. The entry is not necessarily the result of a personal transaction, although a person's own charges and deposits would be recorded or imputed.
5. One could voluntarily take someone else's debt and charge it to his own account; or one person might make a deposit in someone else's account.

² <https://deanbible.org/guest-speakers-menuitem/jim-myers/messages/series/2022-jim-myers>

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6. In the doctrine of imputation, there are three great imputations to be considered
- 1) The imputation of Adam's sin to every descendant of Adam (Rom 5:12).
 - 2) The imputation of mans' sins to the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross (Isaiah 53:6, 11; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Colossians 2:14).

Isaiah 53:6 All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him.

Isaiah does not say the word "imputation."

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Paul does not use the word "imputation."

1 Peter 2:24 and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

Isaiah does not say the word "imputation."

Colossians 2:14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He

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has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Paul does not use the word “imputation”

The question that needs to be asked is, “If theologians say that our sins were imputed to Christ on the cross, why do the writers of Scripture never say that?” If I have this question certainly some of you will have the same question. Not to worry. The answer may surprise you like it did me.

The answer is that what Christ suffered can be classed as “imputation.” But it is more than just an accounting. For Christ it was a spiritual reality and very much more intense than a mere accounting.

- 3) [The third imputation under point 6] The imputation of God’s righteousness to everyone who trusts in Christ for salvation (2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9; Romans 3:22).
7. Because of the imputation of Adam’s sin to each member of the human race, everyone born into the world is a sinner (Romans 5:12, 19).
8. Since God is a righteous God, He cannot have a personal relationship with anyone until his sin is dealt with.
9. Therefore, in grace, God found a way to do something about man’s sin and unrighteousness and still maintain His own righteousness (Romans 3:26).
10. This He did by imputing all sin to Christ on the cross.
11. When any person puts his faith in Jesus Christ, God credits the righteousness of Himself to that person. This is given as a gift (Romans 5:17; 3:21-24; Phl 3:9).

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12. With righteousness credited to his account, man can be declared free from the penalty of sin and can truly be declared righteous.
13. The illustration of imputation is found in Philemon 18-19: “charge it to my account.”

Philemon 18-19 But if he has wronged you or owes anything, put (impute) that on my account. I, Paul, am writing with my own hand. I will repay

There is a logical sequence that Paul has outlined, but done it backwards. In the above outline, we know that God imputed sin to Christ on the cross. A result of Christ's suffering the judgment of God leading to spiritual death, we are forgiven. God is then free to impute righteousness to the new believer.

Impute sin to Christ → Not impute sin to believer → impute +R to believer

But so far in Romans chapter 4, Paul has used Abraham to identify the blessing of righteousness to the believer and the non-imputation of eternal punishment for sin to anyone. What is missing is the imputation of sin to Christ.

And there is a problem for me. Where does it say that sin was imputed to Christ? I could not find a verse that says that.

The answer. What Paul says is much more intense than imputation: Christ died for us. We find that in chapter 5. Yet why is the word imputation not used for Christ? I find my answer in 2 Corinthians 5:21

2 Corinthians 5:21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

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God didn't impute sin to Jesus, he MADE HIM to be sin. This is much more dramatic, much more intense than a mere imputation. Remember what imputation is: it is an accounting term that adds to your account in a book. It can be legal and certainly is very powerful when God imputes righteousness to us. It does not make our every day actions righteous unless we are walking by faith.

But Jesus was made to be sin. It infused his very humanity with sin. It made Him to be sin. Yes you can call this an imputation. But it is more than just an accounting term for Jesus.

A hypothetical story: Suppose you are a child on your way home from church and Sunday school. You are dressed in your "Sunday best clothes." All of a sudden, a bully pushes you into a deep mud puddle. You are totally soaked and muddy from head to toe. This is not just imputation. You have been "made muddy." So for Jesus on the cross. We call it imputation. But he was "made to be sin."

Now, there is another question that needs to be addressed. Look at what Paul characterizes David's words as:

Romans 4:6 just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

Paul says David speaks about God crediting righteousness apart from works. But look at what David actually says:

Romans 4:7 "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered.

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Where is the word for righteousness? So how can Paul say that David is talking about righteousness in those verses?

Lawless deeds.

“Usage: The Hebrew word "pesha" primarily denotes a willful transgression or rebellion against God's law. It implies a deliberate act of disobedience or defiance, often in a covenantal context. In the Old Testament, "pesha" is used to describe not only individual acts of sin but also national rebellion against God's commandments.³”

“Usage: In the New Testament, "anomia" refers to a state of being without law, or more specifically, living in violation of God's law. It denotes a willful disregard for God's commandments and a lifestyle characterized by sin and rebellion against divine order. The term is often used to describe moral and spiritual corruption, highlighting the contrast between God's holiness and human sinfulness.⁴”

Forgiven. This deserves a whole hour by itself.

Covered. In a salvation passage, one might expect the Hebrew word for “atonement” which also means “cover.” But the word used here in Psalm 32 is different. It means “cover” or better “concealed.” David, and as a result Paul via the LXX, has used the same concept but not the same word as used in Leviticus. But by using this word he has divorced the context from the Law and the specific word for atonement. Apart from the Law. Yet, we have the same concept that the sins prior to the cross were “covered” or “concealed” from judgment in anticipation of Jesus work on the cross. So Paul can say, I am not saying anything new. David, says that “apart from the Law” sins are concealed. From David’s perspective the sins were “concealed” from God’s judgment waiting for that judgment to fall on the Messiah, Jesus.

3 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6588.htm>

4 <https://biblehub.com/greek/458.htm>

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“**Usage:** The Hebrew verb "kasah" primarily means to cover or conceal something. It is used in various contexts, including the physical act of covering an object, the metaphorical act of concealing sins or faults, and the protective act of clothing or sheltering. The term can imply both literal and figurative coverings, such as garments, protection, or forgiveness.⁵”

“**Cultural and Historical Background:** In ancient Hebrew culture, the concept of covering was significant both physically and spiritually. Physically, covering oneself with clothing was a basic necessity, while spiritually, covering sins was associated with atonement and forgiveness. The act of covering was often linked to God's mercy and protection, as seen in the sacrificial system where sins were covered through offerings. The idea of covering also extended to social and familial responsibilities, such as providing for and protecting one's family.⁶”

Not taken into account. This is our word for “imputation.” Here is a direct link with Paul’s argument. This is the final of three observations David made about God’s action against David after his sins.

Since we are often challenged by our lack of familiarity with the Old Testament, let us review the point at which David realized he had sinned.

2 Samuel 12:1 Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, “There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.

2 Samuel 12:2 “The rich man had a great many flocks and herds.

5 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3680.htm>

6 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3680.htm>

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2 Samuel 12:3 “But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him.

2 Samuel 12:4 “Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

2 Samuel 12:5 Then David’s anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die.

2 Samuel 12:6 He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.”

2 Samuel 12:7 Nathan then said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul.

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2 Samuel 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David, “The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.

But if God had imposed the penalties of the Law/Torah, David would have been put to death.

Leviticus 20:10 ‘If *there is* a man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, one who commits adultery with his friend’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

David was liable for the death penalty for adultery with Bathsheba.

Numbers 35:30 ‘If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.

Numbers 35:33 Moreover, you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death, but he shall surely be put to death.

David was liable for the death penalty for murder of Uriah.

Because David acknowledged his sin and returned to faith, God dealt with him in grace, apart from the Law and apart from Works.

Let us wrap up this lesson with some summary points on Paul’s argument.

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1. Paul is making the case that apart from the Law, independent of heritage (DNA & circumcision), apart from works, salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone.
2. Paul makes this argument starting at the end with the imputation of God's righteousness as a result of faith. (Romans 4:1-5/Genesis 15:6)
3. In Romans 4:6-8 Paul expands the process of salvation backwards to include David's comments from Psalm 32:1-3. God cannot pervert His righteousness, so He has to find some way, even in the Old Testament to deal with sin in confident expectation of Christ's work on the cross.
4. In Romans chapter 5, God's solution is that Jesus must die a spiritual death as a result of being made sin, our sin, and judged.

