

(Devotional #40) *What is The True Gospel? – The Second Imputation:
The Doctrine of Divine Satisfaction – Part 2*

¹⁰As many as depend on the works of the Law (to obtain righteousness) are under a curse, for it is written, ‘**CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW TO DO THEM.**’ ¹¹Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for ‘**THE RIGHTEOUS SHALL LIVE BY FAITH,**’ ¹²however, **the Law is not of faith.** On the contrary, ‘**HE WHO PRACTICES THEM (Laws) SHALL LIVE BY THEM.**’ ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us — for it is written, ‘**CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE**’ – *Galatians 3:10-13*

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

SINCE THERE IS A PERPETUAL AND IRRECONCILABLE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN RIGHTEOUSNESS AND UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, as long as we remain sinners, (God) cannot receive us completely. Therefore, to take away all cause for enmity, and to reconcile us utterly to himself, he wipes away all evil in us by the expiation¹ set forth in the death of Christ; that we, who were previously unclean and impure, may show ourselves righteous and holy in his sight²” – John Calvin

Today we turn to the Scriptures to arrive at a proper understanding of **the Doctrine of Divine Satisfaction**. In the Galatian passage, Paul discusses the *imputation* of sin to Jesus. He does not use that term, but the principle is in play, viz. that the sin of Adam was *imputed* to the human race, and as a result, death befell all men; however, here Paul puts forth **the remedy** for that first imputation: **the death of Jesus Christ on the cross**. Paul argues that under *the principle of imputation*, the same principle by which condemnation and death came upon all men because of Adam’s sin ... **by this same principle**, forgiveness and eternal life are possible because God charged Adam’s sin, along with all the personal sins of all of Adam’s descendants, to Jesus, who paid the penalty for them by dying on the cross. Besides, Paul makes the point that salvation is a ‘*faith-alone in Christ-alone*’ proposition. This is the central truth of the gospel, but it is *vanishing* from the pulpits of America. In its place we are hearing ‘*a JESUS-AND _____*’ *reinterpretation* of the gospel. ‘*Salvation by grace through faith*’ is being replaced by a ‘*salvation by works*’ *theology* that is outright *heresy*. Good works, be they attending church, working at a church, teaching a class, joining a church, serving on a committee, participating in a worship experience of whatever kind, or performing good deeds ... none of these things merits the gift of eternal life that comes only by faith in Christ-alone. The Augsburg Confession³ echoes Paul when it says: “**We are NOT made holy by our works, but rather through FAITH in Christ alone.**”

In his Galatian letter, Paul *clarified* how salvation is appropriated when he wrote, “*Nevertheless, a man is not justified by the works of the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ ... since by the works of the Law, **NO FLESH will be justified***”⁴. Then again, “*For we maintain that a man is justified by faith APART FROM the works of the Law*”⁵.

¹ Expiation means, ‘to cancel, to abrogate.’

² *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, by John Calvin, 2.16.3.

³ *The Augsburg Confession is the staple of Lutheran Theology, adopted in 1530 A.D.*

⁴ See Galatians 2:16

⁵ See Romans 3:28

Salvation by faith-alone in Christ-alone has been the core message of Christian Orthodoxy from the beginning, and it is derived from passages such as Galatians 3:10-13.

Galatians 3:10 – *“For as many as are of (i.e., ‘depending upon,’ or ‘relying upon’) the works of the Law are under a curse.”*

As we saw in our lessons on original sin, Adam was given **ONE COMMANDMENT**: He was given that commandment when he was in a state of innocence, *i.e.*, he did not have an Old Sin Nature at the time of his disobedience ... he was in a perfect environment ... he was tasked to obey one commandment – and he had every benefit of God’s perfect creation ... and look what happened!

Now Israel had ten commandments ... and every Jew was born under condemnation with an Old Sin Nature ... and they were surrounded by every imaginable temptation. So, if Adam, in a state of innocence, failed miserably by disobeying **ONE LAW**, and if Adam had no Old Sin Nature when he disobeyed, and if he did so while living in the perfect environment of the Garden of Eden, what chance do you think Israel had?

THE TEXT CONTINUES:

For it is written, *“CURSED is everyone who does not abide by ALL THINGS written in the Ten Commandments”?* **NO!** ... It says, *“ALL THINGS written in THE BOOK OF THE LAW”!* It’s **WORSE** than just being under the Ten Commandments. It’s Leviticus and Deuteronomy! **IT’S ALL OF IT!** Now for simplicity’s sake, the Rabbis condensed this into **613 LAWS**. The people didn’t even know all of them ... and yet they are **CURSED** if they do not abide by every single jot and tittle of every law in all of the Mosaic Law ... and not just *to know the laws* ... but *to perform them* ... **TO DO THEM!**

Maybe this will clarify things: The only thing the Mosaic Law can do is condemn you ... the Law cannot save you. The Mosaic Law never was a Plan of Salvation, it was a Plan of Condemnation. Paul said, *“The Law came in so that the transgression would increase”!*⁶

Now in the verses preceding these, Paul uses the example of Abraham to make the point that Abraham was not justified by works but by faith. If you are familiar with Genesis 15, Abraham walked outside, looked up at the sky, and said, *“I believe the Word of God”* ... and Absolute Righteousness was imputed to him. And now in this verse, and in the ones to follow, Paul continues to make his case by showing that every person who stood under the Law of Moses also stood under its curse. Now the Mosaic Law was given to Israel. The Gentiles never were under the weight of it ... but before you decide that frees the Gentiles from any responsibility, may I remind you of the reason the Mosaic Law was given in the first place: **The Law was given to demonstrate the true nature of the human heart ... for “BY THE LAW COMES THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN”!**⁷

Israel was a sort of *‘test case’* for the human race. I remember Bruce Waltke laughing at the idea put forth by some scholars, who claimed that Israel possessed some sort of *‘religious genius.’* and that is why God chose them. Are you kidding me? Israel? Religious genius? **NO!** Israel proved one thing: *how to fail miserably at saving yourself* through a *‘salvation-by-works’* system. On this same subject, I recall S. Lewis Johnson pointing out that in order to test the water quality of Lake Lewisville, you only need **ONE BUCKET OF WATER**. God took a portion of the human race ... Israel ... and He blessed that nation by making them *the custodians of divine revelation*;

⁶ See Romans 5:20

⁷ See Romans 3:20

and He made them *the conduit through which the Savior would be born*; so when Israel failed, it was a demonstration to the world that ***it is the human race in its entirety*** (*Jews and Gentiles alike*) ***that stands under sin***. Israel's failures are the same as our failures. We cannot improve ourselves sufficiently to warrant the merit of God ... and thank God He does not work on the merit system but on the grace system. So, by the Law no man is justified ... the Law only condemns ... that is Paul's point.

Now I'll just point out a few more things about this verse and then we'll move on:

FIRST, "*Cursed is everyone, who does not ABIDE by all these things.*"

- The word '*abide*' is the Greek term, ἐμμένω (*pronounced 'emmeno'*). It means '*to continue,*' and I believe that is how the NIV translates the term.
- The King James reads: "*Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.*" This means, if you are depending on the Mosaic Law ... or any system of moral behavior ... to earn your standing before God, ***your PAST, your PRE-SENT, and your FUTURE must be PERFECT***. Let me make this simple: In your entire life, have you ever had an evil thought? One evil thought? ***Checkmate!*** You're done ... if in fact you are counting on '*law-keeping*' to get you to heaven.

SECOND, He says, "***ALL THINGS***" ... not '*some things*.' All 613 Laws without a slip-up ... for your entire life ... (*Oh, and if this sounds difficult, don't read the Sermon on the Mount, because there Jesus said, "if you think it, you've done it."*)

Some years ago, a good friend of mine was meeting weekly with a Rabbi. I suggested he bring up this idea because, you see, this is not just a New Testament concept; it's in the Old Testament too. Deuteronomy 27:26 reads: "***Cursed is he who does not confirm all the words of this Law by his actions***." You see, Paul didn't just '*make up*' this stuff; he got it from Moses! So, I said, "***ask the Rabbi about Deuteronomy 27:26,***" and he did. Does anyone want to guess what the Rabbi said? He said, "***yeah, well I'm good for about 50% of them most of the time.***" That was his answer. ***Checkmate!***

ACCORDING TO BOTH THE OLD TESTAMENT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE RABBI IS UNDER THE CURSE OF THE LAW AND IS ON THE FAST TRACK TO HELL.

THIRD, Remember, what is in view is the entire Book of the Law. Keep in mind, **TORAH, THE LAW**, is a synonym for the Pentateuch: (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy*). So, the Ten Commandments are part of this, but the Book of the Law is far more extensive.

(And) **FOURTH**, if you are on the merit system, ***God will not 'grade you on the curve.'***

Remember, the text says: "*Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Book of the Law to do them.*" (Here Paul uses the Greek Aorist Tense, a characteristic of which is, '*verbs written in the Aorist Tense stress an action as an event.*' This means '*good intentions*' do not count.)

So, let's sum up the state of a man under the Mosaic Law:

- Forgetting the entire subject of original sin for a moment, a man is cursed unless his past, present and future have been lived perfectly, without so much as one evil thought.
- Every man is responsible to keep perfectly every jot and tittle of the Mosaic Law as recorded in the Pentateuch, and he must keep the entire Law flawlessly; good intentions do not count – he must keep the Law perfectly by doing it in its entirety.

If there is any doubt about a man's inability to keep the Law perfectly, may I submit that if we are honest, we must admit we cannot even live up to our own standards, much less God's.

Galatians 3:11^B – ***“The righteous man shall live by faith.”*** If you are under a merit system – any merit system – you must *‘live’* by *‘doing.’* Remember what your responsibility is under the Law: the Law is performance-based. ***But (in contrast) the justified man or woman shall live by faith... not by doing but by believing.*** We are saved by faith in Christ; God does not save us based on what we do!

Remember the rich young ruler? He began his conversation by asking Jesus, ***“What must I DO?”*** Have you ever thought about the language? ***What must I ... DO?*** Jesus answered him ***ON THAT BASIS*** by requiring him ***TO DO*** what he knew the young man ***COULD NOT DO***: ***‘Sell all your possessions and give everything you own to the poor, then come and follow me.’*** (Like the Rabbi) this young man was under the impression that by making a good effort at keeping the Ten Commandments, he had done enough.

To sum up, as descendants of Adam⁸, the burden of Adam's transgression has been imputed to us, and **IF** we cannot rid ourselves of it by good works or by keeping the Law, and **IF** in addition to that we have burdened our souls further with the weight of our own personal sins, **HOW** then can we find peace with God? Is there any hope for people like us? ... *(the miserable beings that we are)*.

YES, THERE IS:

Galatians 3:13 – Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us ... for it is written, ***“CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.”*** The Greek word for ***‘TREE’*** also means ***‘CROSS’*** and it is a synonym for the term used for ***‘the cross’*** in the Gospel accounts. The point is, the death Christ died, nailed to a cross, is defined in Scripture as ***‘a curse.’***

This is the Second Imputation. The first imputation was passing forward the sin of Adam to his posterity, resulting in the condemnation of the human race. The second imputation is that same transgression, plus the personal sins of the entire world, being charged to Jesus Christ, who bore ***the penalty and the judgment*** for those sins on the cross. Though innocent, He took the guilt of Adam's sin ... and ours ... on himself. And though having done nothing to warrant God's judgment, he bore ***our judgment*** at Calvary. This is the judgment that Adam and Abraham and David and you and I deserved ...

AS ISAIAH SAID:

“THE LORD WAS PLEASED TO CRUSH HIM” (Isaiah 53:10), and “MY SERVANT WILL JUSTIFY THE MANY, AS HE WILL BEAR THEIR INIQUITIES” (Isaiah 53:11), and “HE WAS NUMBERED AMONG THE TRANSGRESSORS; YET HE HIMSELF BORE THE SIN OF MANY AND INTERCEDED FOR THE LAWLESS” (Isaiah 53:12).

Paul tells us what Jesus became on that dark Friday afternoon: ***“He became a curse for us”*** – ***Galatians 3:13.***

Divine Satisfaction involves both (1) appeasing the righteous wrath of God, and (2) reconciling the offenders (*us*) to Himself. Jesus accomplished both of these things by his death.

Listen to Paul's words: Romans 3:21-25.

⁸ Both Jews and Gentiles are descendants of Adam, so this applies to both groups.

*But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe, for there is no distinction. For all sinned and are falling short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption, which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as **a propitiation**⁹ in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed – **Romans 3:21-25***

It is the Death of Christ on the Cross that achieved Divine Satisfaction ... for it was there the sins of the world were imputed to the Son of God.

- Jesus died in Adam's place ... and He died in our place. He died there for **THE BEST OF US** (*if there is such a thing*), and He died there for **THE WORST OF US** (*of which there are many*).
- By His death He defeated Satan and resolved the Angelic Conflict ... but it was more than that.
- By his death He satisfied the law that was transgressed by Adam, by Israel, and by every man, who has tried to live under a law code ... but it was more than that.
- By his death he satisfied the affront to God's Honor that all sin certainly is ... but it was more than that.
- By his death he satisfied God with regard to the irreconcilable disagreement between righteousness and unrighteousness ... but it was *even* more than that.
- (*For you see*) **AT** (*not from law or from honor or from anything external*) **ONEMENT IS A NECESSITY** because it arises ... **BUT FROM WITHIN GOD HIMSELF**.
 - Honor, Justice, the Moral Order ... these things are only important because they are expressions of God's own character.
 - Atonement is necessary ... and satisfaction is achieved ... because **GOD ACTED** ... (*And He Acted*) in harmony with His own immutable character ... or as the Psalmist expressed it, "**for the sake of His Name**¹⁰."

There is no better summation of the Doctrine of Divine Satisfaction than the summation Paul himself gave us –

*For he made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him – **2 Corinthians 5:21***

God is satisfied with Jesus – and despite the infinite unworthiness of each of us, in Christ, He is satisfied with you!

⁹ 'Propitiation' means 'satisfaction.' God looked at the sin of Adam, and all of our personal sins, then He looked at Jesus on the cross ... and God was Satisfied.

¹⁰ Psalm 106:8