

- B. The second segment of this section comprises the whole of Romans 4, in which Abraham is presented as an example of Justification by Faith.**

In this chapter the concept of imputation is introduced. In fact, the word from which we get the concept is used 11 times in this chapter! In some versions it is translated “count” or “reckon” in other versions “impute” and in still other versions “credit.”

What Does Imputation Mean?

Negatively, it does not mean to change someone’s character or conduct. To impute selfishness to a man is not to make him selfish. To impute greed to a person is not to make that person greedy. To impute unrighteousness to a person is not to make that person unrighteous. And to impute righteousness is not to make one’s character or conduct righteous.

Positively, it means to charge or to credit something to someone. This idea is expressed in Romans 4:5 where Paul says that it is “God who justifies the wicked,” and in verse 6, where we read “God credits righteousness apart from works.”

However, here we strike a difficult problem. Four times in this chapter Paul seems to say that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness (verses 3,5,9 and 22.)

Romans 4:3 “What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

Romans 4: 5 “However, to the man who does not work, but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.”

Romans 4: 9 “Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness.”

Romans 4:22 “This is why ‘it was credited to him as righteousness.’”