

### **The Wednesday Word, June 23, 2010: Sin on Him or in Him?**

In this day and age when the gospel is under attack from all sides we must be aware of certain gospel foundations. For example, we must be clear about what Christ being 'made sin' means. Was He made sin by imputation or by impartation? In other words, was Christ counted a sinner at the cross or was He physically made into one? The only answer which does justice to the Biblical evidence is that Christ was made sin by imputation and not by impartation. Here's the problem, if Christ became wretchedly sinful in Himself then it follows that, because of the cross, we become perfectly righteousness in ourselves. Notice the following parallel, "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor 5:21)." He was made sin we are made righteous. In other words, at the cross, Christ was legally treated as if He was actually sinful in Himself although, in Himself, He remained righteous, pure and untainted. Conversely, because of His finished work we are now legally treated as though we are perfectly righteous in ourselves---though, in actuality, we are not.

Christ was reckoned as sin that we might be reckoned as righteous. If, however, it was our sin 'in Him' that caused His damnation then it follows logically that His righteousness 'in us' is the cause of our acceptance -- a favored doctrine of the Roman Church. But sin was not in Him; it was reckoned (imputed) to Him, laid upon Him, not infused into Him. His righteousness was in Him (Jeremiah 33:16) and we are treated as if we are righteous because the righteousness of Christ is reckoned to us (Isa 54:17).

This truth that sin was on Christ, but not in Him is pictured in Abel's offering, the burnt offerings, the scapegoat and the transfer of sins to the innocent animals etc. Just as sins were imputed or reckoned to these animals, but not infused into them, so our sins were laid on Jesus, but not infused into Him (Isa 53:6). This is not to say that Christ did not suffer and feel the effects of our sin. He took our curse and damnation to the fullest extent, yet in no way did He become a sinner. Only a sinless perfect sacrifice could save us.

In Sunday School classes of the 1800s they taught the children that, at Calvary, there were three crosses and three dying men. One man was dying in sin (the unrepentant thief), another man was dying to sin (the repentant thief), but the man in the middle (Christ Jesus) was dying for sin. The children would then quote the following mantra, "One man had sin both on him and in him. Another man had no sin on him but sin in him; Christ Jesus had sin on Him, but none in Him." Those children were taught more than some of our dear adults are today.

Our sins were not in Christ they were on him and as such He received our awful penalty. His righteousness is, likewise, not created in us, but placed on us and as such we receive His marvelous reward. Our sin brought Jesus to the cross (Isa 53) but His righteousness will bring us to heaven (Phil 3:8-9). Furthermore, when He suffered for sin the shame was entirely ours, but when we shall be glorified the glory shall be entirely His. When Christ died, there was nothing in Him worthy of death, yet death was his lot; similarly, there is nothing in us worthy of heaven, yet heaven is ours.

God executed His Son because our sin was on Him; likewise, God will glorify us because Christ's righteousness is on us. Death deserving sin was imputed to Christ and heaven deserving righteousness is imputed to us (Isa 53:11).

And that's the Gospel Truth