Burn Your Books

No. 27

Jacob Hudgins

"Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. And a number of those who had practiced magic arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily" (Acts 19:18-20).

Following Christ means burning bridges and cutting ties with our former life. For these former magicians, it included a massive book bonfire. Why did they burned their books?

They burned their books because they were part of their past. All Christians have a dark chapter in their past that includes rebellion against God. Paul speaks of God's grace "though formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent opponent" (1 Tim 1:13). Each of us has a "formerly" description, but we shed those labels in Jesus Christ! When we do, our past is forgotten—"such were some of you" (1 Cor 6:11)—and we can move on from who we were!

They burned their books because they were valuable. "And they counted the value of them and found it came to fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19:19). This was a substantial sacrifice, but what else could they do with sinful books? Giving up things of value is symbolic of the strength of our commitment to Christ. "And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire" (Mark 9:43). Burn your books, no matter how valuable! Nothing is worth missing heaven!

They burned their books because <u>they were no longer needed</u>. Life changes were occurring and these Christians wanted to ensure they were permanent.

Even if they were tempted to return to a life of magic, they would be unable! Christians must clean house, doing everything to avoid a relapse into their old life. We must cut off bad friends, get rid of sinful movies and books, and rearrange our time to reflect godly priorities. We must burn all bridges back to our life of sin. Do the evil evidences of your former life still linger? Burn your books!

This act must have seemed extreme, but it clearly pleased the Lord. Burn your books and follow Jesus!

Imputed Righteousness

by Don Wright

The imputation of righteousness is one of the most glorious teachings of the Word of God, and it is a doctrine made possible by the inimitable love of God and the riches of His grace. As a result of God's willingness to impute righteousness to us, we can stand before Him in all holiness and without blame (Ephesians 1:4). This is great news because Isaiah once said that all our righteous deeds are as polluted garments (Isaiah 64:6), and Paul reminds us that no

one is righteous, no not one (Romans 3:10). God's willingness to put righteousness down on our account is critical to our salvation.

Sadly, though, even this glorious doctrine is not immune to perversion, especially by those who espouse the reformed doctrine produced by the sixteenth-century reformation movement. Listen to some who are of that persuasion.

"By having the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, we can be seen as sinless, as Jesus is sinless. It is not, therefore, our perfection, but His. When God looks at the Christian, He sees the holiness, perfection, and righteousness of Christ. Therefore, we can say with confidence, 'I am sinless, as Jesus is sinless'" (www.gotquestions.org/imputed-righteousness).

"Note this point. Not only were our sins taken away from us and the punishment for those sins endured by Christ, but the important third aspect of Imputation involved the placement of Christ's perfect righteousness on the head of every Christian" (Associates for Scriptural Knowledge).

These quotes actually teach two false doctrines concerning imputation. One is that our sins were literally transferred to Christ, making Him the greatest sinner this world has ever seen. Here is what Martin Luther writes about Jesus in his commentary on Galatians.

"All the prophets of old said that Christ should be the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, blasphemer that ever was or ever could be on earth. When He took the sins of the whole world upon Himself, Christ was no longer an innocent person. He was a sinner burdened with the sins of a Paul who was a blasphemer; burdened with the sins of a Peter who denied Christ; burdened with the sins of a David who committed adultery and murder, and gave the heathen occasion to laugh at the Lord. In short, Christ was charged with the sins of all men..."

Is that really how you want to view Christ, that is, as the greatest transgressor, murderer, adulterer, thief, and blasphemer that ever was or that ever could be on earth? I have exposed such thinking as false in previous articles, but what about the imputation of Christ's righteousness? Doesn't Paul clearly teach such in the book of Romans? No, he does not. He does teach the imputation of righteousness, but the righteousness under consideration is not the personal righteousness of Christ. Nowhere did Paul teach such a thing.

The Greek word for *righteousness* is a forensic term meaning "to be declared not guilty" or "to be acquitted." The Greek word for *impute* means, "to charge to the account of, or to credit" (Complete Bible Library, Greek-English Dictionary). Now, Calvinism teaches that the thing that is accredited to our account is the personal righteousness of Christ. Listen to a Baptist preacher explain this word.

"The word counted in Romans 4:3 is Logizomai and means to take something that belongs to someone else and credit it to another's account" (Billy Jenkins).

Do you see how Mr. Jenkins added his own belief or opinion to the definition of this term in order to promote his Calvinistic view? The Greek word does not demand that the thing charged to one's account *belongs to someone else*. He added that so that he can teach that it is the righteousness of Christ that is imputed. The truth is, the righteousness imputed is NOT the righteousness of Christ, it is a <u>state</u> of righteousness, that is, an acquittal of one's sins, based, not on the fact that our sins are literally transferred to Christ, but on the fact that they are forgiven because Jesus was willing to become our sin offering on the cross.

Imputed righteousness is a beautiful doctrine. Our salvation rests upon it, and our relationship with God would not be possible without it. We are truly blessed because our iniquities are forgiven and our sins are covered (Romans 4:7). We are saved, not because we have never sinned, but because, by the grace of God, our sins have been forgiven. There is no need to add a Calvinistic twist to this glorious doctrine. Its greatness stands on its own. We have the hope of heaven because God, as a matter of grace and mercy, declared us "not guilty" in heaven's court. To Him, we should be eternally grateful. *Brown Street Beacon - June 20, 2021*