

## **You Have Been Imputed** **Romans 5:13**

In 2009 a billionaire most Americans had never heard of suddenly became a household name, his name is Bernie Madoff. In that year Mr. Madoff was arrested and charged with breaking several Federal laws all having to do with how Mr. Madoff became so rich. The charges included international money laundering, securities fraud, false filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission, and theft from an employee benefit plan, all of which stemmed from his orchestration of the longest-running and largest Ponzi scheme in history. He was found guilty on all charges and sentenced to 159 years in Federal prison.

“Madoff and his wife Ruth were high school sweethearts and, at the time of his arrest, had been married for 50 years; when Madoff started his business, Ruth worked as his bookkeeper. Their sons Mark and Andrew—both now deceased—worked for the family firm and fought fiercely for their father’s approval. The brood was close enough that the most pressing question about them to this day is whether Madoff was truly able to keep his nefarious activities secret from such a tight-knit clan or if, contrary to everything they have claimed, they knew.” My guess is that the whole clan knew all along what was going on and the fact that Bernie and Ruth planned to commit suicide together speaks volumes. And since Ruth was her husband’s bookkeeper in their early years, I can’t imagine her not knowing. His victims, by the way, had to settle for splitting \$488 million measley dollars. Many of them never recovered from their huge losses.

I think it’s kinda funny that his last name is Madoff. He Madoff with billions, until he got caught.

Let’s take our Bibles and turn to Paul’s letter to the Romans, Romans chapter 5 and v.13. Romans chapter 5 and v.13. This verse is so packed with amazing truths that I’m going to work from it alone. We will, of course, examine its context as we must do if we hope to see what it is in fact teaching. And I will incorporate many other verses that support what I am seeing in our text. <sup>13</sup> for **until** the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not **imputed** when there is no law. (Rom. 5:13 NAU)

So let me see if I read that right. "... *for until the Law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.*" That means that from the fall in the garden to the giving of the law, sin was not imputed against sinners because there was no law. And that's exactly what Paul just said. <sup>13</sup> *for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.* That's amazing considering that from Adam to Moses was about 2500 years. That's an incredibly long period of time for millions, maybe billions of sinners to seemingly get away with their sins. Or did they? Of course not. Remember the flood? Remember Sodom and Gomorra? Remember Lot's wife? Not having one's sins imputed against that one doesn't mean that God has decided to look the other way. He hasn't. When His holy nature is offended the way it was in the days of Noah and then in the days of Abraham and Lot, God's wrath will be poured out.

God has never given anyone permission to sin, and He never will. But He has made gracious provision for the world's sins in and through the blood of His Son. <sup>16</sup> *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. (Jn. 3:16 NAU)*

And this from the apostle's first letter,

*1 John 2:1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.* That tells us that God has never given anyone permission to sin. And then this, *And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; <sup>2</sup> and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. (1 Jn. 2:1-2 NAU)* That tells us that God has made gracious provision for our sins.

And this remarkable verse, <sup>19</sup> *namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:19 NAU)*

State and Federal laws long ago decided that our highways needed some kind of regulations to prevent the increasing number of accidents

and deaths on our highways, so the first thing they did was set speed limits making them law and then posting those speed limits along our highways and byways.

I will spare you the details of how our laws evolved over the decades but suffice it to say that our current highway laws are sensible and enforced by officers who are for the most part very nice when they pull us over for speeding. It is even possible, by the grace of our governing officials, to take a test of some sort and by-pass traffic court and a speeding ticket that would cause your insurance to increase. That means that your violation of the law will not be imputed to your driving record. And if the officer who gave you the ticket offers you the opportunity to plead guilty to driving at a lower speed than you actually were, it means that you will not get points on your license nor will your auto insurance go up for the next three years. All you will do on the day you are in court is pay a fine. Your violation of the law will not be imputed to your record.

God has gone light years beyond the graciousness of our laws. He has taken us out from under the law. God ended the law of Moses by nailing it to the cross in the body of Christ. So when Paul says this, <sup>13</sup> *for until the Law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law*, the “when” in that verse is now.

Listen to this, beloved and blessed of God, ***Romans 10:1*** *Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.*

<sup>2</sup> *For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge.*

<sup>3</sup> *For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.*

<sup>4</sup> *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Rom. 10:1-4 NAU)*

That's it. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*

<sup>19</sup> Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God;

<sup>20</sup> because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.

<sup>21</sup> But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

<sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

<sup>24</sup> being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; (Rom. 3:19-24 NAU)

<sup>13</sup> When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions,

<sup>14</sup> having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, **having nailed it to the cross.** (Col. 2:13-14 NAU)

Now let me ask you a question or two. What has God imputed to you on your account? Let me tell you. He has imputed to your heavenly account the righteousness of His Son. Should it be that He actually would check our accounts once in a while, He would see written by your name, "Johnny Helms is a righteous dude." Put your name there and say with me, "I am a raised up righteous child of God."

You have been imputed.

Imputation results in justification.

God made a decision before time began, which is way beyond our comprehension, that He will never ever again see His children as anything but righteous and justified and redeemed and forgiven and reconciled. He decided that He will never ever again sees us as sinners but as His children forever.

What God decreed about Abraham, He has decreed about us. What God decreed about His Son, He has decreed about us.

<sup>21</sup> *and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.*

<sup>22</sup> *Therefore IT WAS ALSO CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

<sup>23</sup> *Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him,*

<sup>24</sup> *but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead,*

*(Rom. 4:21-24 NAU)*

Do you believe in Him who raised Jesus from the dead?

Bernie Madoff only thought he had made off like a bandit. But every crime the man had ever committed was imputed to him in a Federal Court of law and his sentence was nothing less than life in prison.

But for us, beloved, <sup>8</sup> *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8 NAU)*

You have been imputed.

In Jesus' name, amen.