

Since both the Gospel of Salvation and the Divine Attributes are at stake, and the deception of millions, a decisive point is reached for true Christians. They must bear witness to the Lord, His Gospel, and the First and Second Commandments by calling these things what they are: apostasy. To do otherwise is to deny the Lord, our Savior and His commandments.

## How Serious Is Apostasy?

We plead with the Evangelical signatories to the ECT documents to publish their “further and urgent exploration” regarding Marian devotion in the light of the high profile May 13<sup>th</sup> beatification celebration at Fátima. The joint Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) in May 1999 issued a statement “recognizing the Pope as the overall authority in the Christian World” and described him as “a gift to be received by all Churches”. How do the delegates of the Anglican Church worldwide and all those who have signed on to ARCIC assess the Pope’s endorsement of the apparitions of Mary at Fatima?

While apostasy is predicted in Scripture and has happened right through Christian history, it still comes as a shock to see it face-to-face. Nonetheless, the Apostle Paul’s command applies to believers in this present generation: “*And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.*” A plain warning against false doctrine is especially needed in the present day, even as J. C. Ryle said of his day, “Surely the dumb dog and the sleeping shepherd are the best allies of the wolf, the thief, and the robber.” To the devout Pharisees of His day, the Lord said, “...*you shall die in your sins if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins.*”<sup>25</sup> Fatima’s message has attempted to steal the Uniqueness and Glory of Christ Jesus the Lord. The Pope makes no secret of where he stands. Endorsers of ECT and ARCIC need to show their hand. Ecumenists who remain loyal to the Pope thereby spurn the exclusivity and splendor of Christ and His Gospel, and will likewise die in their sins.

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# Original Sin, The Atonement, and Justification

by Dr. Robert A. Morey

## Introduction

Most Christians understand that Adam is the “Father” of the human race in the sense that he was the first human being from which all other human beings originated. For this reason, Adam is called the “first” man in such places as [I Cor. 15:45](#).

What most modern Christians do not seem to understand is that we are related to Adam in more ways than simply by genetics. In [Rom. 5](#) and [I Cor. 15](#), the Apostle Paul draws several

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<sup>25</sup> [John 8:24](#).

parallels between Adam and Christ. Jesus is described as the “last Adam” just as Adam is described as the “first man” (I Cor. 15:45).

## **Adam and Christ**

In these passages it is clear that Adam’s fall into sin was substitutionary and vicarious in nature just like Christ’s atoning obedience. In fact, as we shall see, Rom. 5 says that we are condemned by virtue of Adam’s disobedience just as surely as we are justified by virtue of Christ’s obedience. While the imputation of Adam’s sin is the problem confronting all men (Rom. 5:12), the imputation of Christ’s righteousness is the remedy to that problem (Rom. 5:17).

## **Bound Together**

Our participation in Adam’s disobedience and our participation in Christ’s obedience are linked together in such a way that if one rejects the doctrine of the imputation of Adam’s sin—the basis of the doctrine of original sin—he must also logically reject the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, the basis of the doctrine of forensic justification.

Throughout church history, intelligent heretics have always seen that the doctrines of original sin, a substitutionary atonement, and forensic justification stand or fall together as a unit. This is why Socinus and Finney in the past and others in the present feel logically compelled to deny all three doctrines.

## **The Same Terms**

Our relationship to Adam is spoken of in the same terms that are used to speak of our relationship to Christ. For example, we are “in Adam” just as we are “in Christ.” Thus, union with Adam and union with Christ are two realities that share mutual meanings. All those “in Adam,” i.e. in union with Adam, receive certain things by virtue of that union just as all those “in Christ,” i.e. in union with Christ, receive certain things by virtue of that union.

## **Part I**

### **Inconsistent Denials**

Because the Evangelical world is filled with teachers, pastors, and evangelists who have very little theological knowledge, no grasp of church history and absolutely no training in logic; it is not surprising to find some people objecting to the doctrine of original sin on the grounds that it would be “unjust” if God were to punish us on the basis of the evil done by someone else. The very idea that God would view and treat us on the basis of what someone else did or did not do is “absurd” according to them.

Yet, at the same time, these same people when pressed will admit that God viewed and treated Jesus on the basis of their sin! If “Jesus died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:4), then how can it be unjust for us to die for Adam’s sin?

## **Church History**

Church history demonstrates that a rejection of the doctrine of original sin will in time lead to a rejection of the vicarious atonement and forensic justification. This is exactly what happened in 18th Century Liberal Theology.

Liberal theologians began with a rejection of the doctrine of original sin and its resulting depravity. This led them to reject the doctrine of Christ's substitutionary atonement. On the basis of "reason," they then concluded that if it is unjust to be condemned on the basis of the work of another, then it is equally unjust to be saved on the basis of the work of another. Their rationalism eventually led them to deny the blood atonement of Christ.

This is why the doctrine of original sin is absolutely essential to Christian theology and why the Christian Church has always condemned as heretical all Pelagian and semi-Pelagian views of man which in some way deny or weaken the doctrine of original sin and its resulting depravity. The validity of a substitutionary atonement and forensic justification is based on the validity of the imputation of Adam's sin to us.

### **Three Essential Concepts**

There are three essential concepts that form the basis of the doctrines of original sin, vicarious atonement, and forensic justification:

#### **#1 Solidarity**

The Bible teaches a concept of solidarity in which an individual is viewed and treated in terms of his relationship to a group, be it a tribe, a nation or mankind as a whole, while the "group" is viewed and treated in terms of its relationship to its original head.

#### **Man As Image Bearer**

This is why the Bible can speak of each individual human being as having dignity and worth by virtue of his or her participation in the solidarity of the human race. Each individual person is important because mankind as a whole is important. We can view each person we meet as being in the image of God by virtue of mankind's relationship to Adam who was created in the image of God ([Gen. 1:26–27](#); [James 3:9](#)).

#### **Corporate and Individual Election**

An individual Jew was viewed as "chosen" by virtue his participation in the solidarity of the "chosen" nation. Yet, at the same time, the nation was viewed as "chosen" because of its relationship to Abraham who was individually chosen by God ([Gen. 12:1–7](#)).

#### ***The Levitical Priesthood***

An individual could be blessed by virtue of his participation in the solidarity of his tribe. For example, an individual Levite could be a priest by virtue his participation in the solidarity of the Tribe of Levi while the Tribe of Levi was viewed as the priesthood by virtue of its relationship to Levi who was individually chosen to be the high priest ([Num. 18:6–24](#)).

## ***The Ninevites***

Each individual Ninevite was delivered from judgment by virtue of his participation in the solidarity of the nation of Nineveh whose King repented before God ([Jonah 3; 4:11](#)). He could just as easily have been punished for the corporate guilt he bore. But the nation as a whole was delivered on a corporate basis when its head repented in sackcloth and ashes. It did not matter if he, as an individual, had sinned or repented. The destiny of his nation was his destiny.

## ***Corporate Guilt and Punishment***

The suffering experienced by individual Egyptians during the plagues; by individual Canaanites, Philistines, Amorites, Hittites, etc., during the conquest; by individual Jews in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities; and all the other judgments sent against nations, were justified by God on the basis of their participation in the solidarity of their nation.

For example, even though a certain individual Egyptian may not have harmed or mistreated the Jews in any way, yet, because he was an Egyptian, he suffered under the ten plagues. His individual actions did not negate his corporate guilt that arose out of his participation in the solidarity of the nation of Egypt.

## ***Even The Righteous***

A righteous man can view himself guilty in a corporate sense by virtue of the solidarity of his tribe's or nation's sin. Thus Nehemiah confessed the corporate sins of his nation ([Neh. 1:5–11](#)).

In this passage, it is clear that an individual can be viewed and treated by God as being guilty of sins for which his nation was guilty. That he himself had not done the particular sins in question did not negate the corporate guilt he bore.

It is on this basis that the punishment for certain sins were visited on entire cities like Sodom or nations such as Egypt. Because of the solidarity of the family unit, the punishment for certain sins could rest on several generations ([Exo. 20:5](#); [Josh. 7:24–26](#); [Jer. 22:28–30](#); [36:31](#)).

God's corporate blessing or judgment on tribes, cities, nations, and mankind as a whole are possible only on the basis of the concept of solidarity. Such judgments as the Flood or the Conquest can only be understood and justified in this way.

## ***In Our Secular Life***

The concept of solidarity is also a necessary part of secular life as well as being a Biblical principle. When the leadership of a nation declares war on another nation, each individual citizen is at war whether he knows about it or agrees with it. He can be killed or his goods seized simply on the basis of his being a part of his nation. He must bear the corporate guilt and punishment due to the sins of his nation. Thus, human government itself is based on the concept of solidarity.

## **#2 Representation**

The Bible teaches a concept of representation in which the acts and decisions of one's representative is viewed and treated as being one's own acts and decisions.

In its secular sense, this concept serves as the basis for representative government. If our representatives in Congress declare war, it means that we are viewed and treated as having declared war.

If our representatives vote in a new tax, we have to pay it because we are viewed and treated as if we voted it into law. It does not matter if you disagree with or are ignorant of the actions of your representative. You are responsible legally and morally for the acts and decisions of your representatives.

### ***Examples in Scripture***

We find this same principle at work in Scripture. Individuals are viewed and treated by God according to the actions and decisions of their representatives. This worked for either cursing or for blessing.

#### ***For Cursing***

In terms of cursing, Pharaoh's stubbornness led to God's judgment on the entire nation ([Exo. 7–11](#)). Those who followed Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and On suffered their fate ([Num. 16](#)). Each evil king of Israel or Judah brought judgment on the entire nation. For example, Israel had no rain because of the evil deeds of King Ahab ([I Kings 17f](#)).

#### ***For Blessing***

In its positive sense, the actions and decisions of good kings brought blessing to the entire nation. For example, the nation was delivered because godly King Hezekiah sought the Lord ([II Kings 19](#)).

### ***The Atonement***

The greatest illustration of the principle of representation is the substitutionary and vicarious atonement of Christ ([I Cor. 15:3–4](#)). We are saved on the basis of the actions and decisions of Christ our representative. He is our Mediator, Advocate, and Great High Priest ([I Tim. 2:5](#); [I John 2:1](#); [Heb. 2:17](#)). The atonement and justification as well as original sin are all based on the principle of representation.

## **#3 Imputation**

The Bible teaches a concept of imputation in which God takes the life and works of someone and applies them to the record of another who is then treated on that basis. Christian theology has always taught that there are three great acts of imputation:

1. Adam's sin is imputed to us at conception.
2. Our sin was imputed to Christ in the atonement.
3. Christ's righteousness is imputed to us in justification.

### ***The Logic of It***

That Adam's sin is imputed to us should not bother us any more than that our sins were imputed to Christ. That we should suffer for Adam's sin is just as acceptable as Christ suffering for our sins. That death came to us through Adam is just as acceptable as life coming to us through Christ. Divine justice is as equally satisfied with the imputation of Adam's sin as it is with the imputation of Christ's righteousness. The justice of all three acts of imputation will rise or fall together.

### ***Biblical Examples***

That God can choose to "impute" sin or not to "impute" sin is clear from [Psa. 32:2](#) and [Rom. 4:6](#). That it is God who determines what sins are to be placed on one's record is clear from the usage of the word in Scripture: [Lev. 7:18](#); [17:3–4](#); [I Sam. 22:15](#); [Rom. 4:8, 11, 22, 23, 24](#); [5:13](#); [II Cor. 5:19](#); [James 2:23](#).

That Christ suffered and died for our sins which were imputed to His account by the Father is the very heart and soul of the Christian Gospel ([I Cor. 15:3–4](#)). Our sins were imputed to Christ and He was viewed and treated by God accordingly. Such passages as [Isa. 53:4–6](#); [John 1:29](#); [I Cor. 15:3–4](#); [II Cor. 5:21](#); [I Pet. 2:24](#), etc., are so clear that only a deranged mind could miss this point.

Once a person accepts the justice of Christ bearing his sin, guilt, and punishment, then he cannot logically or exegetically reject the justice of his bearing the sin, guilt, and punishment of Adam.

### ***Forensic Justification***

In the Biblical doctrine of justification, the righteousness of Christ is "imputed" to us, i.e., God places it on our record and then views and treats us in terms of that righteousness ([Rom. 5:1–21](#); [Phil. 3:9](#)).

Righteousness can be imputed to us because Christ is our representative ([Heb. 9:11–28](#)) and because of the solidarity of His people for whom He came ([Matt. 1:21](#)). Justification is based on the concept of imputation just as much as the doctrines of original sin and the atonement.

## **Part II**

### **Our Relationship To Adam**

#### **In What Ways are We Related to Adam?**

##### **#1. We are related to Adam in terms of a genetic solidarity.**

In Scripture, genetic solidarity in and of itself can serve as a sufficient basis for moral and spiritual implications. Thus the superiority of Christ's priesthood over against the Levitical priesthood is based solely on the fact that Abraham, the genetic source of Levi, paid tithes to Melchizedek ([Heb. 5:6](#); [7:4–10](#)).

That all men participate in a genetic solidarity with Adam is the basis for the doctrine that all men are created in the image of God. Thus if you deny the justice of genetic solidarity when it comes to original sin, you have also, in principle, denied that man is God's image bearer.

Ideas are not like taxi cabs in which you can get out when you want. You have to ride in that cab until you get to the end of your journey. The attempt to deny the principle of solidarity when it comes to the Fall but accept it when it comes to the Creation, is sheer hypocrisy.

## **#2. We are related to Adam in terms of a spiritual solidarity.**

Adam procreated his descendants “in his own image” which had been corrupted by his fall into sin and guilt ([Gen. 5:3](#)). That Adam’s depravity was passed on to his children is manifested by the universality and inevitability of man’s sinfulness that reveals itself “from the womb” and even “in the womb” ([Gen. 6:5](#); [8:21](#); [25:22–26](#); [Psa. 14:1–6](#); [51:5](#); [58:3](#); [Rom. 3:23](#); [Eph. 2:1–3](#)).

## **#3. We are related to Adam in terms of representation.**

In [Rom. 5:12–21](#), Paul clearly draws several parallels between the representative nature of Christ’s actions and the representative nature of Adam’s actions.

In [I Cor. 15](#), Paul tells us that by virtue of our being “in Adam,” i.e. in union with Adam as our head and representative, we are all spiritually dead. He sets forth a parallel between being “in Adam” and being “in Christ.”

What Adam or Christ did is viewed by God as what we did. When Adam sinned, we sinned ([Rom. 5:12](#)). When he died spiritually, we died spiritually ([I Cor. 15:22](#)). When Christ was crucified, we were crucified ([Gal. 2:20](#)). We died, were buried and rose when Christ our Head and Representative died, was buried and rose from the dead ([Rom. 6:1–6](#); [Eph. 2:6](#)).

## **#4. We are related to Adam by way of imputation.**

[Rom. 5](#) clearly teaches that Adam’s sin and condemnation were imputed to his descendants. Thus the universality of death is traced to the solidarity of mankind’s participation in the sin of Adam (v. [12–17](#)).

The universality of condemnation is also traced back to man’s solidarity in Adam (v. [18](#)). Paul also tells us that all men are “constituted” or “made” sinners by virtue of their union with Adam (v. [19](#)).

## **Part III**

### **Eden and Calvary**

What Christ did on Mt. Calvary is viewed in Scripture as the opposite of what Adam did in the Garden. Thus, as our legal representative and substitute, Christ lived and died in our place. In other words, what He did was credited to our account as if we did it. His life and death are substitutionary in the same way that Adam’s life and death were substitutionary.

Christ’s atoning work also provided the remedy to undo the consequences of Adam’s fall into sin and guilt. Thus forensic justification is designed to remove the imputation of Adam’s guilt while progressive sanctification is designed to remove the impartation of Adam’s depravity.

The atonement of Christ is thus structured to be the reverse parallel to the imputation and impartation of Adam’s sin and guilt. To claim that it is unjust for us to share in Adam’s sin and yet, at the same time, to claim that it is just to share in Christ’s righteousness is irrational as well as anti-scriptural. You cannot have your cake and eat it too!

### ***The Temptation***



The obvious parallel between Christ's temptation in the wilderness ([Matt. 4](#)) and Adam's temptation in the Garden ([Gen. 3:1–7](#)) cannot be denied. But whereas Adam was defeated by the devil, Christ was now victorious.

Why did Christ have to go through the temptation at the outset of His public ministry? Jesus begins at the beginning of man's sin, the Fall of Adam in the Garden. He must thus begin by passing the same temptation that foiled the first Adam.

### ***The Parallels***

The following chart reveals some of the parallels between Adam and Christ:

The First Adam  
The Last Adam  
The Son of God ([Lk. 3:38](#))  
The Son of God ([Mk. 1:1](#))  
Temptation ([Gen. 3](#))  
Temptation ([Matt. 4](#))  
Disobedience ([Gen. 3](#))  
Obedience ([Matt. 4](#))  
Condemnation ([Rom. 5](#))  
Justification ([Rom. 5](#))  
Death ([Rom. 5](#); [1 Cor. 15](#))  
Life ([Rom. 5](#); [1 Cor. 15](#))

### ***Obedience Vs. Disobedience***

The chart above reveals that it is the “obedience” of Christ which removes the “disobedience” of Adam ([Rom. 5:19](#); [Phil. 2:5–11](#); [Heb. 5:8](#)). We are saved by His active and passive obedience and not just by His death on the cross alone.

### ***Creation***

All men are viewed as being in the image of God because of their solidarity with Adam who, as their representative, was created in the image of God. Although this image is marred by sin, man is still the image-bearer of God and thus has intrinsic worth and dignity ([Gen. 1:26–27](#) cf. [James 3:9](#)).

### ***The Cultural Mandate***

Because of man's solidarity with Adam, when he was given the task of taking dominion over the earth, all his descendants were given the responsibility to be good stewards of the earth and its resources. Thus mankind as a whole was given the cultural mandate through Adam their representative ([Gen. 1:27–30](#); [2:1–17](#)).

### ***The Radical Fall***



The imputation of Adam's sin, guilt, and condemnation to his descendants and the resulting universality of death and totality of depravity are clearly revealed in Scripture. In [Rom. 5:12–21](#), we are said to receive the following things from our solidarity with Adam our representative:

1. sin ([v. 12a](#)) -legal and personal
2. physical death ([v.12b](#)) -consequence
3. spiritual death ([v.15](#)) -depravity
4. judgment/condemnation ([v.16](#)) -guilt
5. the reign of death ([v.17](#)) -bondage
6. condemnation for all ([v.18](#)) -guilt
7. all made sinners ([v.19](#)) -depravity

In [I Cor. 15](#), our union with Adam means:

1. death ([v.21](#)) -consequence
2. all “in Adam” died when he spiritually died ([v.22](#)) -consequence
3. we bear his image and likeness which is sinful, mortal and corrupt ([v.45–49](#)) -nature

## ***Redemption***

The results of Adam's disobedience and Christ's obedience are paralleled to each other in Scripture.

Adam  
Christ  
depravity  
condemnation (position)  
death (future)  
(condition)  
sanctification  
justification (position)  
life (future)  
(condition)

## **Conclusion**

The doctrine of original sin is based on the same essential principles that underlie the doctrines of man as the image bearer of God, the atonement and justification. We are viewed and treated by God as sinners on the basis of the imputation of Adam's sin, guilt, and condemnation to our account and the impartation of Adam's depravity and death to our natures. In short, we sin because we are sinners by nature from conception. Thus it is no surprise that sin and death are both universal and inevitable.

All of humanity is in solidarity with Adam in his creation and his fall. Just as man's dignity is based on his solidarity with Adam in his creation, man's depravity is based on his solidarity with Adam in his fall. Both begin at conception. To reject the one is to reject the other.

Christ's work of atonement is based on the same kind of solidarity and representation that are found in our relationship to Adam. They are both substitutionary and vicarious in nature. To reject the one is to reject the other.

The imputation of Christ's righteousness in justification is structured in Scripture to be the remedy to the imputation of Adam's unrighteousness in original sin. To reject the one is to reject the other.

The impartation of Christ's righteousness to our natures in sanctification is structured in Scripture to be the remedy to the impartation of Adam's depravity and death to our natures. To reject the one is to reject the other.

In short, the decisions and actions of Adam and Christ are so intertwined in Scripture that they cannot be separated. To deny the one is to deny the other. Thus any denial of the doctrines of original sin, substitutionary atonement and forensic justification must be deemed as serious heresy and as sufficient grounds for excommunication.

### **Application**

Since Roman Catholicism denies the Biblical doctrine of original sin, the finality and perfection of Christ's atonement, it is no wonder that it denies forever the Biblical doctrine of justification. Thus it has denied the essential core of the Gospel and stands under the condemnation of [Gal. 1:8](#).

## **Not Those Works, But These Works! Qualifying the good works approved by God in Roman Catholic justification**

**By: Robert Michael Zins**

If it were possible, we would cause a sleep to fall over every Seminary and Bible College student and professor for just a little while. We would do so that we might go into our institutes of higher learning to place in front of all students and professors one question which they must answer correctly, upon awakening, or lose their standing as pupil or instructor. This question is the most important question that one can possibly ask. How we answer this question will display our understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It truly does separate the sheep from the goats, so to speak. It is the question which should be the chief inquiry of all evangelism. It is that important. What then is this question? It is as follows:

*“What is the righteousness contemplated by God in the verdict of justification?”*

This question appears easy enough to answer. We are simply asking what righteousness does God have in mind when He justifies the ungodly? We are asking, “What does God take into account when He justifies the unrighteous?” What is the basis of justification? What averts the wrath of God so that He can justify the ungodly? Is it faith? Is it good works? Is it good works done in faith? Is it a contractual arrangement of obligation by God to accept good works? Is it faith plus works? Is it condign merit [merit deserved in virtue of grace]? Is it congruent merit [merit given as fitting]? Is it faithfulness? Is it fruitful faith? Is there anything at all in the sinner to which God looks in the satisfaction of His justice?