



Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?

John Piper

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Are Christians merely forgiven, or do they possess the righteousness of Christ? Recently the time-honored understanding of the doctrine of justification has come under attack. Many question how—or if—we receive the full righteousness of Christ.

Martin Luther said that if we understand justification “we are in the clearest light; if we do not know it, we dwell in the densest darkness.” And now, in this new and important book, John Piper accepts Luther’s challenge. He points out that we need to see ourselves as having been recipients of the imputation of Christ’s righteousness and therefore enjoy full acceptance with God and the everlasting inheritance of life and joy.

Piper writes as both a pastor and a scholar. His pastor’s heart is shown in his zeal for the welfare of the church. His careful scholarship is evident in each explanation and undergirds each conclusion.

Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness? Details

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From Reader Review Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness? for online ebook

Justin Wilson says

Very well written and easy to follow. Piper does a marvelous job of helping you read and think about the different texts. He is very gifted in asking good questions and finding God honoring answers. Highly recommend it to readers willing to open the Scripture and dive into the text. Piper is very kind and fair to Gundry, and approaches the subject with reverence. Imputed righteousness is a much debated subject and usually it's fought because man wants "something" that he can add to his standing before God. Christ payed it all, all to Him I owe!!!

Aaron says

In polemic against Robert Gundry, Piper has written an exegetical defense of a specific and vital point in the doctrine of justification: the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers as the ground of their justification before God. Piper's whole exegesis is thorough and compelling. His treatments of Romans 3:24-26 and Romans 5:12-21 are particularly good.

I think anyone who has caught a glimpse of how important this discussion is will greatly appreciate this book.

Lee says

Piper attempts to defend the doctrine proper known as the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, specifically challenging the position of Robert H. Gundry as laid out in a series of articles for Christianity Today. He erroneously lumps several other scholars with Gundry and treats their respective works as though his response to Gundry sufficiently refutes them all. Piper quite fairly represents Gundry's position throughout. While it would be a great idea to read Gundry's work (as well as the varied works of the numerous other scholars mentioned), one need not do so in order to understand the arguments. The end result: Gundry wins the battle in Piper's own book. Piper's defense is strained, and he unnecessarily stretches his interpretations of seemingly-pertinent New Testament texts much too far. A more effective response would have been one of silence, of ignoring Gundry. Instead, he has done Gundry a service.

Andrew Mcneill says

Wonderfully clear and exegetically precise discussion of how we should understand justification and imputed righteousness. Piper argues that we should not abandon the imputed righteousness of Christ because, while not explicitly spelled out in Scripture, the doctrine is akin to that of the Trinity: exegetically defensible and best understood by a cumulative look at various passages which strongly support the idea that

Christ's righteousness is imputed to us. Well worth reading in light of both historic (from some strands of Brethren teaching) and contemporary (from the New Perspective people) challenges to the doctrine.

Jenkins says

"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

(Jeremiah 33:14-16)

Jacob Aitken says

I can admit that a strong imputational thrust is found in Romans 4, but I still don't see it as an open and shut case. 2 Cor. 5:21 says--and only says--we might **become** the righteousness of God. It does **not** say it is imputed to us. I am specifically talking about that next and I am affirming a form of imputation.

Imputation language is found in the New testament, but in Romans 6 and talking about baptism.

Danny Daley says

Like all of Piper's books, this is well written and fiercely biblical. Piper treats the major issues that one might expect to find in any standard evangelical treatment on imputed righteousness. However, because the book was a polemic, it also plays out as little more than an apologetic for the "correct" way that evangelicals should see this very difficult topic. Piper rarely cites his "opponents" favorably, and in his efforts to be strong in his theology, he does not treat the very important historical and linguistic considerations that would shed considerable light on the exegesis. There were some serious questions, particularly in regard to the precise relationship between justification and sanctification, that needed to be addressed for a more thorough treatment, that Piper never touches on. Overall, an evangelical reader will find much to embrace, and the book is very helpful in many exegetical details.

David Harris says

Does Jesus' record of obedience get credited to believers? Does it matter?

That is the question dealt with by this book. Until I started into Piper's defense of imputation, I was totally unaware that (besides Roman Catholics) there were those in the Christian community who don't believe justification includes the imputation of Jesus' righteousness, or who are at least shying away from this assertion. A series of articles written in CT by Robert H. Gundry spurned Piper to write this treatment of the subject. It turns out Gundry is not the only one who has taken the liberty to adjust this doctrine, as there are a growing number of individuals who reject or understate this important Christian position.

Through careful (and often extremely technical) exegesis of the primary textual evidences, Piper demonstrates that the believer's righteousness does not consist in his faith, nor is that righteousness granted on the basis of that faith. Rather, faith is simply the instrument by which we have access to Jesus, who is our righteousness, and whose perfect record is imputed to us, as our sin was imputed to Him. If our justification rests on the grounds of our faith (as Roman Catholics believe, and as some others are now willing to concede) then that means the basis of our righteousness is found within ourselves, not outside of ourselves. This is not mere semantics. This debate is at the heart of what it means to be a Christian!

This book is a very thorough work, but it is the duty of serious Christians to think through these issues, and the duty of preachers to understand them. And although I have disagreements with the author in multiple areas, he is spot on in helping us stay biblically faithful in the issue addressed here.

I will close with a final statement from the book: "This doctrine bestows on Jesus Christ the fullest honor that he deserves. Not only should he be honored as the one who died to pardon us...he should also be honored as the one who provided a perfect righteousness for us as the ground of our full acceptance and endorsement by God."

Tim Woody says

The only reason I gave this book a two star rating and not a three star rating is because the book is a response to another author and not really a book on Imputation. Now Piper does address imputation but it felt like unless you have a grasp of the source material he is critiquing your not going to be able to fully jump into his book. Apart from that John Piper is very thorough and does a great job with imputation texts.

Mark A Powell says

Are Christians justified by an internal or external righteousness? Piper presents a thorough, step-by-step exegetical argument that leaves only one clear interpretation: Christians are justified by the imputation of an external righteousness, the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Just as Adam's sin is imputed to all of humanity, Christ's righteousness is imputed to all those who are in Him. Piper's work brings much needed clarity to one of the most critical and necessary components of Christian faith.

John Kim says

I just finished reading *Counted Righteous in Christ* by John Piper (2002, Crossway Books).

In this book, Piper addresses the doctrine of imputation of Christ's righteousness (i.e. passive **and** active obedience), which apparently has been questioned in some modern theological dialogue. Unlike some of his other books that I read before (e.g., *Desiring God, Pleasures of God*), this book was not as easy to read due to the technical nature of the discussion. Piper uses lots of Greek, refers to other commentaries, and has many lengthy (but helpful) footnotes. In addition, he is primarily interacting with and critiquing another theologian named Robert Gundry whose work I was not aware of, so there was no compelling reason for me to labor through this book.

However, I am glad that I did, because I found this book very good and helpful. I am certainly not as widely read as I should be on this very important topic, but what I found to be very refreshing about this book is that it is thoroughly **exegetical**. A major portion of the book is devoted to wrestling with what the Bible texts has to say on this topic. Unlike a few other books that I read that mainly addresses the issue from a systematic point of view (which is no doubt also helpful), I appreciate how Piper guides the reader to engage with Scripture itself and derive our theology based on what the text says. Of course, those of opposing view would also claim that their reading of Scripture is either just as correct or more correct. As somebody else said somewhere else, however, I do think that there is such a thing as honest exegesis, and I believe Piper does provide us with an excellent one (or, at least more honest than those he is challenging).

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the topic. I especially would recommend reading Piper's treatment of Romans 5 in this book. In closing, I leave with you a question that Piper poses himself in the onset of the book:

"Why would a pressured pastor with a family to care for, a flock to shepherd, weekly messages to prepare, a personal concern for wayward children, a love for biblical counseling, a burden for racial justice, a commitment to see abortion become unthinkable, a zeal for world evangelization, a focus on local church planting, and a life-goal of spreading a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ devote so much time and energy to the controversy over the imputation of Christ's righteousness? And why should schoolteachers, engineers, accountants, firemen, computer programmers, and homemakers take the time to work through a books like this?"

And to paraphrase his answer, because *much* is at stake, including my marriage, my [future] children, and the glory of Christ.

Ruthanne Bowers says

A lot of it was over my head. But I was reading it on a Kindle and sometimes I find real books better to read. So maybe if I read a hardcopy of it I would get more out of it.

Ben Adkison says

I recently finished reading Counted Righteous in Christ by John Piper. It is a concise, 135 page book which defends the doctrine of imputation. Generally speaking, imputation means ascribing a quality (such as guilt or righteousness) to someone based on the actions of someone else (Apple Dictionary). Theologically, Piper describes it as "the act in which God counts sinners to be righteousness through their faith in Christ on the basis of Christ's perfect blood and righteousness, specifically the righteousness that Christ accomplished by his perfect obedience in life and death" (Piper, 41). There are two parts to this imputation: 1) Christ's suffering and death is substituted for the curse and condemnation we deserve, and 2) Christ's suffering and perfectly, obedient life is substituted for the imperfectly obedient lives that we live (Piper, 41). In other words Jesus gets all the glory because He did all of the work of salvation. Piper writes this book as a response to recent trends in theology that deny the Biblical foundation of imputation. Most notably Piper's rebuttal is directed towards Robert Gundry. The book is divided into four chapters, but the largest portion of the book is contained in chapter three where Piper defends imputation using careful exegesis of the relevant

texts in the Bible. I found this book compelling, easy to read, encouraging, and enlightening. It is compelling because imputation is one of those theological words that is thrown around often but rarely precisely defined. I found this book easy to read because of its length, but truthfully many will find it challenging because of the precise nature in which Piper exegetes the Bible and appeals to the Greek and Hebrew languages. It is encouraging because it is true and reminds me that salvation has nothing to do with my effort and everything to do with Jesus' effort and accomplishments (Eph 2:8-9). And finally it is enlightening because I had no idea prior to reading *Counted Righteous in Christ* that the doctrine of imputation was under attack. Now I not only realize that it is under attack, but I am better prepared to recognize theological errors that I may come across while reading other books. *Counted Righteous in Christ* is a wonderful explanation and defense of the traditional Protestant doctrine of imputation. The first several pages of the book include praise from many trustworthy authors such as: John MacArthur, John Frame, R. C. Sproul, John Stott, Bruce Ware, and Page Patterson. Read this book if you want to understand imputation. Read this book if you want to understand salvation.

Mayowa Adebiyi says

The bulk of the argument is in the 3rd chapter where Piper presents exegetical arguments for imputed righteousness, particularly in Romans (and other related pauline texts). Although, the rest of the book - especially the first 3 chapters - could appear to be padding in order to convert an essay into a book (which it is); it does also provide the pastoral and practical background to the arguments presented against Gundry. This sets Piper apart from his opponents in the same way Augustine differed from Pelagius - one was coming from the hard slug of pastoral concerns, the other mostly academic.

Chapter 3 could either be a hard slug or the meat of the matter depending on who is reading. Expect references to the Greek text. The general advice to read just the Introduction and Conclusion (chapter 1,2 and 4) to get the gist of the matter applies here also. Wade into chapter 3 at your own peril.

Joseph McBee says

This book was a challenging read, not one you can sit down and skim or read through quickly. It demands careful thought and consideration. It also demands--in my case at least--re-reading paragraphs and in one case and entire chapter, in order to "get it."

I imagine that someone with a theological degree at the undergraduate level at least, would have an easier time with this book. I am in no way suggesting that only people with a background in theology read this book though. On the contrary, books like these help to define and defend our faith and should be read by those who identify themselves with Christ as His people.
