

### Imputed Righteousness

*2 Cor 5: 21: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*

God made Jesus to be sin for us. God made us to become his righteousness.  
In classical Christianity, this is called *imputed righteousness*.  
But what does it mean?

To “impute” is a verb that attaches to a person responsibility (and therefore financial liability) for acts or injuries to another, because of a particular relationship, such as mother to child, guardian to ward, employer to employee, or amongst business associates.  
For example: a 16-year-old boy drives his father’s car without a license and runs someone down. The child’s negligence may be imputed to the parent,  
or, in the reverse, a mother drives her car and collides with a truck driven over the speed limit, and her baby in the front seat of the car is badly injured, in part due to not being put in a safety seat with a seat belt. The mother’s negligence can be imputed to the child in any claim on behalf of the child against the truck driver.

Imputed liability is a legal term that assigns liability for an injury to a person who did not cause the injury, but who has a particular legal relationship to the person who did act negligently. It is also referred to as imputed negligence.

(Afrikaans: toegerekende aanspreeklikheid, soos in die sin: Die minister het toegerekende aanspreeklikheid vir die nalatigheid van beamptes in sy staatsdepartement.)

**Imputed righteousness** is a concept in Christian teaching which proposes that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers, that means, treated as if it were theirs through faith. It is on the basis of this “alien” (i.e. from the outside, imputed) righteousness that God adopts sinners as his children and find them “not guilty” of their sins.

Imputed righteousness teaches that God looks at us, as if we are as perfect and without sin as Jesus is, and it means that God looked at Jesus as if he was as sinful and disobedient as we are, and punished him through his suffering, cross and death for all we have sinned against a holy God.

Our faith relationship with Jesus Christ - he the King, we the followers, he the Head and we the body, he the Groom and we the bride, attaches our sin to him and makes him liable, through imputed liability, for all our sins. This same relationship makes us righteous in the eyes of a holy God, on the ground of our justification, meaning our being found “not guilty”, by his imputed righteousness.

This is what Paul teaches in *2 Cor 5: 21: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NIV)*

or

*2 Cor 5: 21: Christ never sinned! But God treated him as a sinner, so that Christ could make us acceptable to God. (CEV)*

*2 Kor. 5: 21: Christus was sonder sonde, maar God het Hom in ons plek as sondaar behandel sodat ons, deur ons eenheid met Christus, deur God vrygespreek kan wees. (1983 Vert.)*