

Righteousness Credited to Believer's Account at Salvation, Gen 15:6; Romans 4:3; Doctrine of Justification: Imputation of Righteousness Precedes Justification

41. It will be helpful to note the definitions of these two words, first *chashav*:

In translations of the LXX [the Septuagint], in three quarters of all the *chashav* passages, the verb is represented by *logizomai* [λογίζομαι] and its compounds used as a technical term for “mercantile accounting.” (p. 232)

The construction appears to be a fixed idiom meaning “reckon something to someone’s account.” (Genesis 15:6) (p. 234)

The act of accepting faith is finally reckoned as a deciding factor in the relationship with Yahweh. The expression calls the outcome of the events depicted a settlement of accounts in a theological sense, deliberately echoing commercial language—as the context shows. The interpretation of the promise to Abraham found in Genesis 15:1-6 uses such expressions and ideas throughout. Note the promise of great reward (v. 1), the question of how it is to be paid (v. 2), the negotiations about property and inheritance (vv. 3-5), and the demonstration of numbers (v. 5). All of this leads up to *chashav*. The reckoning of belief as *sethaqah* [שֶׁתָּקָה “righteousness”] documents the conclusion of the transaction.¹ (p. 243)

42. Similar analysis defines the use of *logizomai* in the New Testament. Here are comments on its use in Romans 4:

Romans 4 offers a clear solution to the problem of Genesis 15:6 for it excludes all thought of merit. One might well say that faith is acknowledged to him [Abram] for righteousness, or that righteousness is allotted to the believer. The seat of judgment is in the gracious will of God, and this makes it quite impossible for human insight to anticipate the judgment in terms of merit. Once the idea of merit is banished, a positive answer can then be given, though without ascribing any particular worth or deserving to faith as a human attitude. In the light of the typical faith of Abraham this runs as follows. Faith confidently subjects itself to the judgment and grace of the cross. It is thus the only human attitude in face of which God’s λογίζομαι [*logizomai*] takes place. Only the believer is ready to live by God’s grace. Hence this grace is allotted to him as righteousness.

The meaning of λογίζομαι never allows us to forget that this is possible only as a repetition of the justification effected at the cross, i.e., in faith. If God counts faith as righteous, man is wholly righteous in God’s eyes. And the reality of God’s judgment is normative for man. He becomes a new creature through God’s λογίζομαι.²

¹ K. Seybold, “שֶׁתָּקָה *chashav*,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1986), 5:232, 234, 243.

² H. W. Heidland, “λογίζομαι,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), 4:291-92.

43. These excerpts highlight the central concept of *chashav* and *logizomai*: to credit something to someone's account. In Genesis 15:6 this credit is the result of Abraham's faith response to the gospel.
44. This credit is an imputation of divine righteousness, indicated by the noun **הַשְׂתַּחֲוֹת *sethaqah***.

Genesis 15:6 - And Abram already had been caused to believe [אָמַן *'aman*] in the Lord; and the Lord credited it to his account [חָשַׁב *chashav*] as righteousness [הַשְׂתַּחֲוֹת *sethaqah*].

45. The righteousness of God was imputed to Abram when he believed the gospel of salvation: faith alone in Messiah alone.
46. In debating with the Judaizers, Paul quotes this verse to introduce his defense of salvation and justification by grace through faith alone in Christ alone. Here again is Paul's quotation in:

Romans 4:3 - For what does the Scripture say? [**Genesis 15:6**] "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

47. Here the Koine Greek word for "believed" is the aorist active indicative of the verb **πιστεύω, *pisteuō***. This is a transitive verb and it demands an object. The object is Christ who is the subject of the gospel of salvation.
48. The aorist tense is constative which gathers the act of believing into one entirety. The entire act of believing may take a few seconds at most. The active voice means that Abraham produced the action of believing in Christ. The indicative mood is declarative indicating that this is an historical fact and thus a statement of absolute truth.
49. The word "credited" is the aorist passive indicative of the verb **λογίζομαι, *logizomai***. The aorist tense is culminative which signifies effort or process and denotes the attainment of the end of such effort or process. When Abraham believed he received credit to his account of divine righteousness.
50. The passive voice indicates that Abraham received the action of the imputation of divine righteousness and the indicative mood confirms this as a fact.
51. The imputation of divine righteousness is indicated by the accusative of purpose of the noun **δικαιοσύνη, *dikaïosunē***: righteousness.

Romans 4:3 - For what does the Scripture say? [**Genesis 15:6**] "Abraham had believed God, and it [**faith alone in Christ alone**] was credited to his account as righteousness [δικαιοσύνη, *dikaïosunē*]."

52. Was Abram justified by works or by faith? Paul takes the Judaizers back to Genesis and quotes the case of how Abram's free-will response to the gospel was sufficient for God to impute to him His righteousness.

53. When anyone believes in Christ he is immediately imputed God's righteousness, he is subsequently justified and vindicated of all guilt.
54. Before moving to verse 4, we need to observe a few principles regarding justification.

The Doctrine of Justification

1. The noun *dikaioṡnē* pertains to the integrity of God. In Romans 4:3 it refers to the imputation of divine righteousness to Abraham and by application to anyone that believes in Christ.
2. All the mechanics of salvation occur simultaneously but they may be analyzed in three logical steps: (1) the person's expression of faith alone in Christ alone, (2) the justice of God imputes divine righteousness to the individual, and (3) the believer is judicially justified before the Supreme Court of Heaven.
3. Justification has nothing to do with the forgiveness of presalvation sins. It is not a subtraction but an addition and, the culmination of the mechanics of salvation.
4. A technical use of the noun *dikaiōma* is justification which is a judicial act of vindication where God recognizes His perfect righteousness in us. Paul summarizes this in:

Romans 5:16 - In fact the gift [Jesus Christ] is not like what occurred through the one who sinned [Adam]. For on the one hand the judicial verdict [imputation of Adam's original sin] came by one transgression [Adam's] resulting in condemnation, but on the other hand that gracious gift [Christ & His work on the cross] came because of the many transgressions [personal sins of the human race] resulting in a judicial act of justification [δικαίωμα, *dikaiōma*].