

## The Second Use of *ἁμαρτία* and *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in 2 Corinthians 5:21 Revisited

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### 1. Introduction

Paul's destiny was to live for both God and the Corinthians either "if he is beside himself" or "if he is in his right mind" (2 Co 5:13). What made his life this way? It was God's working through Christ's death and resurrection; Paul was "the one who could and must no longer live for himself, but for Christ who for his sake died and was raised" (5:15). Unlike the Corinthians, who has a perspective and life based on worldly, fleshly standards, Paul had a perspective and a life based on spiritual standards; in Christ, God reconciled Paul to himself, and as an ambassador Paul accomplished his task to reconcile the world to God (5:19-20). 2 Corinthians 5:21 shows the content of "the word of reconciliation" that brought about the reconciliation in relationship between God and Paul himself and between God and the world. It is a marvelous verse in the Scriptures. Despite its beauty, scholars debate the second use of *ἁμαρτία* and *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ* in the verse. As a matter of fact, the two terms are the most controversial ones in 2 Corinthians and even the New Testament.

In the scope of the limited space, this paper will investigate the meanings of the second use, *ἁμαρτίαν* and *δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ*. In order to grasp the two, after identifying the structure of verse 21, the next section will examine whether the second use, *ἁμαρτίαν* has the sense of a sin offering or not, including objections and defenses, then explain the sense of a sin offering in 5:17-20 encompassing 5:21, and a sin offering sense in light of the book of Isaiah. The following

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section will explore the meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, interacting with N. T. Wright who interprets on ἡμεῖς in verse 21 and opposes imputed righteousness, fathoming about whether verse 21 can be limited to imputation or not.

## 2. The Structure of 2 Corinthians 5:21

Verse 21 can be divided into two parts: in the first part, “God” is the subject, and as a double accusative, ἐποίησεν modifies the direct object, τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἀμαρτίαν, and predicate, ἀμαρτίαν. In the second part, a ἵνα clause, the subject is ἡμεῖς, and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ the complement. Regarding its structure, the opinions of some scholars are as follows:

<b>A</b> τὸν μὴ γνόντα	<b>a</b> ἀμαρτίαν	<b>B</b> ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν	<b>C</b> ἀμαρτίαν	<b>D</b> ἐποίησεν
<b>A'</b> (ἵνα) ἡμεῖς		<b>B'</b> γενώμεθα	<b>C'</b> δικαιοσύνη	<b>D'</b> ἐν αὐτῷ
			<b>c</b> θεοῦ	

Barrett presents A-A'/B-D'/C-C'/D-B'<sup>1)</sup> and Kistemaker A-A'/B-D'/C-C' centering on D.<sup>2)</sup> However, it is unlikely that ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν and ἐν αὐτῷ are parallel because the two are prepositional phrases, even though the two are related to the word “reconciliation.” Harris presents A-D'/a-C'/B-A' centering on CD,<sup>3)</sup> and Barnett A-D'/B-B'/C-C'/D-c,<sup>4)</sup> which is similar to Kistemaker's; Barnett sees the subject of the first part as parallel to c as the implied subject of the second part.

In this way, scholars present slightly different structures rather than a consensus because it is a little difficult to find a chiasmus that makes it easily understood. Nevertheless, on the basis of their common emphases, it seems to be

1) C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Black's New Testament Commentaries (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993), 179.

2) Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1997), 200.

3) Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Milton Keynes: Paternoster Press, 2005), 449.

4) Paul William Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1997), 312.

proper to recognize two things in relation to the entire argument of the paper rather than to make a possible chiasmus. Above all, the subjects of the two parts should be examined; the subject of the first part is “God,” and the subject of the second part is “We.” However, as Harris, Kistemaker, and Barnett emphasize, even though the subject in the second part is “We,” it is appropriate to consider “God” as an implied subject because the actual subject of the second part is not an active agent but a passive one who receives something given or acted by God through (or in) Christ’s redemptive works. Secondly, as a number of commentators note, the second use, ἁμαρτίαν in the first part is parallel to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in the second part.<sup>5)</sup>

### 3. The Second Use, ἁμαρτίαν

There have been constant debates concerning the second use, ἁμαρτίαν. Indeed, there were diverse views on it even in the Patristic period,<sup>6)</sup> even though not the same as in today’s circumstances that have animated discussion due to the development of printing technique. What is the issue at point? As Harris points out, all those who interpret the ἁμαρτίαν presuppose the idea of Christ’s identification with sinful humanity;<sup>7)</sup> God identified something foreign to Jesus

5) Harris argues that the first use, ἁμαρτίαν is parallel to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 449) because he does not totally agree with the sense of a sin offering in verse 21 because of unavoidable weaknesses, though he concedes that the sense of a sin offering could be possible (Ibid., 452-453).

6) Ambrosiaster, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Herveius, and Erasmus argue that the second use, ἁμαρτίαν has the sense of a sin offering, and Gregory of Nazianzus, Cyril of Alexandria, and Chrysostom think that the sense can not be found (Margaret E. Thrall, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994], 440-441; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians: the English Text with Introduction, Exposition and Notes*, New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1962], 214; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999], 300; Paul William Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 314, n. 65).

7) Both those who find the sense of a sin offering and those who deny it agree to Christ’s identification with sinful humanity. Yet, regarding the idea of the identification, all of them differ slightly in considering sin as sin, a sin bearer, or a sinner. Of course, some take ἁμαρτία as mixed of these various opinions.

Christ with Him.<sup>8)</sup> Here, the point of dispute is whether the second use, ἁμαρτίαν has the sense of a sin offering or not.

### 3.1. The Sense of a Sin Offering from the Second Use, ἁμαρτίαν

Those who argue that there is the sense of a sin offering present a linguistic basis;<sup>9)</sup> for them, Paul might have the Hebrew idioms, חַטָּאת and עֲוֹן in mind in relation to sin. In fact, the Hebrew words can denote both sin and a sin offering. For example, in some verses such as Leviticus 4:25, 32, and 34, חַטָּאת represents a sin offering rather than sin itself, and LXX renders it ἁμαρτία.<sup>10)</sup> The possibility that Paul follows the Hebrew idioms also seems to be related to עֲוֹן in Isaiah 53:10, in which God's will is to crush his servant as a sin offering and to put him to grief. What is noteworthy is that LXX renders to עֲוֹן in Isaiah 53:10 περὶ ἁμαρτίας, a phrase that is used in Romans 8:3, in which God sends his own son as a sin offering and condemns sin in the flesh.<sup>11)</sup> Moreover, just as the sacrifices that were offered as sin offerings were without blemish to remove the sins of those who sinned,<sup>12)</sup> as in the passim of the New Testament, Jesus

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8) Harris presents two options about when this identification of Christ with sinful humanity occurs: incarnation and crucifixion (Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 451).

9) F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, New Century Bible (London: Oliphants, 1971), 210; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 453; Thomas D. Stegman, *Second Corinthians*, Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 143; Ernest Best, *Second Corinthians*, Interpretation (Louisville; Atlanta: J. Knox Press, 1987) 57-59; Nigel Watson, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Epworth Commentaries (London: Epworth Press, 1993), 66; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, Word Biblical Commentary (Waco: Word Books, 1986), 157; James M. Scott, *2 Corinthians*, New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody: Hendrickson; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1998), 142; Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 247; N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1991), 220-225.

10) F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 210; Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 157; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 452. Although he totally does not agree to the sense of a sin offering, he introduces the evidences for it in verses such as Exo 29:14; Lev 4:24; Jos 18:9; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300.

11) David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300; F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 210; Linda L. Belleville, *2 Corinthians*, IVP New Testament Commentary Series (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996) 159; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 452.

12) Lev 4:3, 23, 28, 32.

Christ is described as one who had no sin, was the unblemished offering<sup>13)</sup> for sinners (ὕπερ ἡμῶν),<sup>14)</sup> and was sacrificially killed.<sup>15)</sup>

### 3.2. The raised Objections and Defenses to the Sense of a Sin Offering

A number of scholars object to the sense of a sin offering. The first objection is that if ἁμαρτία means a sin offering, it should be used with the preposition περί as in Romans 8:3 (and Isa 53:10).<sup>16)</sup> Furthermore, scholars observe acutely that when ἁμαρτία is used alone in other parts of the New Testament, it does not represent a sin offering; there is no place where it is used as a sin offering in Paul's letters or elsewhere in New Testament.<sup>17)</sup> Of course, their observation that ἁμαρτία is not used to refer to a sin offering without περί is very piercing and persuasive. Technically speaking, when ἁμαρτία is used with περί in the Old Testament, it evidently signifies a sin offering.<sup>18)</sup> However, such a phenomenon does not apply only to the occurrences where the two are used together; ἁμαρτία can denote a sin offering without the preposition περί.<sup>19)</sup> In that sense, since one

13) Joh 8:46; Act 3:14; 2Co 5:21; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1Pe 1:19; 2:22; 3:18; 1Jo 3:5.

14) There is a debate about whether the phrase, ὕπερ ἡμῶν signifies Substitutionary Death ("in our place," "instead of") or Representative Death ("in behalf of us," "for our benefit," "for the benefit of") (David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 301). Of course, although two opinions on it are not seriously debatable, it is true that there is the sensitive point between the two; if one argues SD, SD demands RD. However, if another argues only RD, RD does not hold SD. For a detailed discussion of this word see Paul William Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 289; Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians*, Anchor Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1984), 340; Bradley H. McLean, *The Cursed Christ: Mediterranean Expulsion Rituals and Pauline Soteriology*, Journal for the Study of the New Testament (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 110-113; Morna Dorothy Hooker, *From Adam to Christ: Essays on Paul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 22; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 631.

15) David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300.

16) Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 441; Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, Thornapple Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 148.

17) Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 453; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300; Bradley H. McLean, "The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology", *New Testament Study* 38 (1992), 543; Erin Lothes Bibiano, *The Paradox of Christian Sacrifice: The Loss of Self, the Gift of Self* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2007), 243.

18) N. T. Wright, *The Climax of the Covenant*, 222, n. 11. See Lev 5:8; 6:25 (LXX/MT 6:18); 6:30 (LXX/MT 6:23), 7:7; 9:7, 10, 12; 10:17, 19; 14:13, 19; 16:25; Num 29:11.

19) *Ibid.*, 221, n. 10. See Exo 29:14, 36; Lev 4:8, 20, 24, 25, 29, 32, 33, 34; 5:12; 6:17 (LXX/MT

can find such an example in the Old Testament, it is probable that such a precedent can be applied to the New Testament; although περί does not occur in 5:21, ἁμαρτία can be taken as a sin offering. Furthermore, if they insist that the sense of a sin offering cannot be expected in 5:21 because it does not occur in the New Testament, they would miss a key factor for interpreting 5:21. Among many significant factors for appropriately understanding the words and sentences of the Scriptures, a thorough investigation of the entire context of the passages encompassing the words and sentences is one of the most important factors for suitable interpretation. Lastly, the reason that the two are not used together, as Harris indicates, may be because of “the literary contrast between ἁμαρτία and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ.”<sup>20)</sup>

The second objection is that if ἁμαρτία has the sense of a sin offering, the first use of ἁμαρτία<sup>21)</sup> should take the same meaning.<sup>22)</sup> However, ironically, those who argue that the two uses of ἁμαρτία must have the same meaning also understand the two differently. Thrall and Hughes take the second ἁμαρτία as the result of sin, signifying the fact that as the objects of wrath, sinners cannot stand before God.<sup>23)</sup> Garland asserts that the second ἁμαρτία includes sin, the sin bearer, and the sinner.<sup>24)</sup> Hodge and Lambrecht take it only as referring to the sinner.<sup>25)</sup> In that sense, their view on two uses of ἁμαρτία is nothing other than the view of those who take the second ἁμαρτία as referring to a sin offering.

The third objection is raised in light of the parallelism between ἁμαρτία and

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6:10); 6:25 (LXX/MT 6:18); Num 6:14.

20) Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 453.

21) In the phrase, τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν, γινώσκω has the sense of Hebrew עָרַף; it means knowledge from actual experiences as well as involvement with sin. However, it is absolutely obvious that even though he recognized the reality of sin and observed sin that existed in others (Heb 12:3), Christ did not know sin and was not involved with sin (Joh 8:46; Act 3:14; Heb 4:15; 7:26; 1Pe 1:19; 2:22; 3:18; 1Jo 3:5).

22) Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 441; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 215; Jan Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1999), 101; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300; Charles Hodge, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 148; Bradley H. McLean, “The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul’s Soteriology”, 543.

23) Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 213; Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 442.

24) David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 301.

25) Charles Hodge, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 149; Jan Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 101.

δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. Some scholars maintain that because of the antithetical contrast, the two uses of ἁμαρτία and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ should be taken not as a sin offering but as sin.<sup>26)</sup> However, even if one argues that ἁμαρτία refers to a sin offering, the parallelism between the two may not be broken; just as they argue that Christ was identified with sin itself, a sin bearer, or a sinner in order to remove sin, those with the sin offering view argue that Christ was made a sin offering to remove sin. Moreover, others insist that if ἁμαρτία and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ are parallel, ἁμαρτία has a forensic meaning rather than a sacrificial one.<sup>27)</sup> However, as they indicate, it is very doubtful that the meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ can be limited only to the forensic sense.<sup>28)</sup> If δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ can go beyond the forensic sense, it would also be likely that ἁμαρτία could refer to a sin offering.

The fourth objection is that if ἁμαρτία is considered to refer to a sin offering, it would be used with different verbs such as προέθετο (Rom 3:25), ἔδωκεν, or ἔθηκεν, not ποιέω.<sup>29)</sup> However, if one case can be taken as an example, Romans 3:25 says, ὃν προέθετο ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον διὰ [τῆς] πίστεως ἐν τῷ αὐτοῦ αἵματι (“whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood,” ESV). Here, προέθετο is closely related to ἱλαστήριον (“propitiation”), which has only a single sense. In a different way, ἁμαρτία in verse 21 has a pregnant sense, not a single sense. If ἁμαρτία had only the single sense of a sin offering, it would be used with the verbs mentioned above. On the other hand, if προέθετο, ἔδωκεν, or ἔθηκεν were used with ἁμαρτία, the result would be strange in that the meaning of ‘Christ’s identification with sinful humanity’ would obviously be feeble.

The last objection that is dealt in this paper is from McLean who inquires about whether or not the concept of atoning sacrifice appears in Paul’s

26) Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 441; Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 215; Jan Lambrecht, *Second Corinthians*, 101; Charles Hodge, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 148; Bradley H. McLean, “The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul’s Soteriology”, 543.

27) Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 453; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300.

28) The meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ will be touched on in the last part of the paper.

29) Although he presents three Greek verbs, Harris discusses only one citation, Rom 3:25 (Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 453); Garland presents two English verbs, “presented” and “offered”, not Greek verbs (David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300); Martin argues that the reason why ἐποίησεν is used would be because of the non Pauline character (Ralph P. Martin, *2 Corinthians*, 157).

soteriology. He fundamentally doubts whether **תִּנְחֵם**, which Christian scholars relate to Christ's atonement, has the sense of a sin offering. He says, "**תִּנְחֵם** offering is a purification offering, not a sin offering. In other words, the function of the **תִּנְחֵם** was to cleanse the *sanctuary* (not the offerer) of the contamination conferred by the sin or impurity of the offerer."<sup>30</sup> For him, the blood of **תִּנְחֵם** was not be applied to persons but to the sanctuary, the sanctuary furniture and the altar (Lev 8:15).<sup>31</sup> In that sense, for him, if ἀμαρτία in verse 21 is used to refer to atoning for the sins of persons through a sin offering, it would not be related to **תִּנְחֵם**. In addition, by explaining in detail the ritual orders that were done in the **תִּנְחֵם** sacrifice, McLean highlights the obvious difference between **תִּנְחֵם**'s sacrificial death and Christ's sacrificial one.<sup>32</sup> In a sense, McLean's observation may not totally be wrong; as a matter of fact, regarding the time when a priest sins, Leviticus 4:5-7 says as follows:

And the anointed priest shall take some of the blood of the bull and bring it into the tent of meeting, and the priest shall dip his finger in the blood and sprinkle part of the blood seven times before the LORD in front of the veil of the sanctuary. And the priest shall put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense before the LORD that is in the tent of meeting, and all the rest of the blood of the bull he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

In cases of "the whole congregation" (v. 13), a "leader" (v. 22), or "anyone of the common people" (v. 27), though the kinds of sacrificial animals are different, the ritual phenomena happen in the same way.

Although whether **תִּנְחֵם** is a sin offering or a purification offering can not be

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30) Bradley H. McLean, "The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology", 534, his italics. He presents as follows; 1) sacrifice does not atone for personal sin (532-538); 2) a sacrificial victim becomes neither sinful nor accursed, but remains holy (538-542); 3) there are no explicit textual references in Paul's letters to Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice (542-545); 4) references to Christ's blood in Paul's letters cannot be interpreted as implicit references to an atoning sacrifices (546-548); 5) Paul's interpretation of the suffering and death of Christ is incompatible with sacrificial theology (548-553). In particular, regarding the background of the Old Testament, his arguments seem to be basis on the argument of Jacob Milgrom.

31) Bradley H. McLean, "The Absence of an Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology", 534.

32) Ibid.

dealt with in this paper on account of limited space, McLean's argument seems to miss an important fact. Though  $\text{כִּפֹּרֶת}$  has the function of purifying the sanctuary, as he argues, it is doubtful whether the factor of "individual forgiveness" can be excluded from the function of  $\text{כִּפֹּרֶת}$ . As a matter of fact, personal atonement must be a prerequisite for the purification of the sanctuary,<sup>33)</sup> because there are some verses where the forgiveness of sin appears in relation to  $\text{כִּפֹּרֶת}$  in Leviticus 4, and the verses seem to have approximately the same formula: "[T]he priest shall make atonement for them, and they (or he) shall be forgiven."<sup>34)</sup> Furthermore, as McLean argues, although the death of Christ can not exactly be compared with the ritual orders of  $\text{כִּפֹּרֶת}$ , it is obvious that the death of Christ in 2 Corinthians 5:21 has the sense of sacrificial death.<sup>35)</sup> Lastly, in that the purification of the sanctuary brings about the reconciliation of the relationship between God and those who sin,  $\text{כִּפֹּרֶת}$  is related to  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha$  in 5:21 in which a sin offering can be taken as having the sense of reconciliation.<sup>36)</sup>

### 3.3. The Sense of a Sin Offering in 5:17-20 Encompassing 5:21

5:21 is directly related to 5:17-20 in that both  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\sigma\omega$  and  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\gamma\acute{\eta}$  occur 5 times.<sup>37)</sup> Of course, the reconciliation word group seldom occurs in

33) Although he hesitates to consider  $\text{כִּפֹּרֶת}$  as a sin offering (717), Averbeck also believes in the cleanness (or atonement) of worshipper that precedes the purification of sanctuary, saying, "[T]he issue was physical impurity, which also contaminated the tabernacle, but the result in such instances was that the worshipper would 'become clean'" (Richard E. Averbeck, "Sacrifices and Offering", T. Desmond Alexander and David W. Baker, eds., *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003], 719.)

34) There is the forgiveness of sin in relation to the whole congregation, a leader, and a lay person in the Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18, 26. In particular, the same formula in 4:20, 26, 31, 35 is found,  $\text{וַיִּכְפֹּר עֲלֵיהֶם הַכֹּהֵן}$  ("the priest shall make atonement for them"). In other words, as a mediator, the priest plays an important role to mediate between God and the whole congregation, a leader, and a lay person. In that sense, it is probable that the verse of the forgiveness does not appear in case of a priest who sins because as a mediator, he is directly related with God.

35) Robert A. Peterson, *Salvation Accomplished by the Son: The Work of Christ* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2011), 381-384.

36) Brian J. Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness: Paul's Theology of Imputation* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2006), 161. For a more detailed exposition, see Robert A. Peterson, *Salvation Accomplished by the Son*, 381-382. Cf. Jarvis Williams, *One New Man: The Cross and Racial Reconciliation in Pauline Theology* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 110-112.

37)  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\acute{\alpha}\sigma\omega$  in verses 18, 19, 20;  $\kappa\alpha\tau\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha\gamma\acute{\eta}$  in verses 18, 19.

LXX,<sup>38)</sup> but ἀφίημι and ἐξιλάσκομαι which share a semantic domain with καταλλάσω and καταλλαγή occur frequently in sacrificial contexts.<sup>39)</sup> In particular, it is remarkable that ἀφίημι and ἐξιλάσκομαι fit very well with the sense of a sin offering in 5:21; ἀφίημι holds the concept of the forgiveness together with a sin offering or sin<sup>40)</sup> and then ἐξιλάσκομαι retains the concept of atonement that καταλλάσω and καταλλαγή possess.<sup>41)</sup> Leviticus 4:20 is the supporting example that best occurs together with the three words, ἀμαρτία, ἀφίημι and ἐξιλάσκομαι.

:םהל ׀ ׀לסני ׀ההה ׀הלע ׀רפזי יל־השע׀ נב ׀תאפֿהה ׀רפז ׀השע ׀רפז ׀השע׀

καὶ ποιήσει τὸν μόσχον ὡς τρόπον ἐποίησεν τὸν μόσχον τὸν <τῆς ἀμαρτίας>  
 οὕτως ποιηθήσεται καὶ <ἐξιλάσεται> περὶ αὐτῶν ὁ ἱερεὺς καὶ <ἀφεθήσεται> αὐτοῖς  
 ἢ ἀμαρτία

Thus shall he do with the bull. As he did with the bull of the sin offering, so  
 shall he do with this. And the priest shall <make atonement> for them, and they  
 shall <be forgiven>.

In addition, regarding Leviticus 4-5, ἀφίημι and ἐξιλάσκομαι are used together in 4:20, 26, 31, 35, and 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18, 26 in LXX.<sup>42)</sup> On the basis of this investigation, the occurrences of both ἀφίημι and ἐξιλάσκομαι in Leviticus

38) καταλλάσω occurs 2Ma 1:5; 7:33; 8:29; Jer 31:39; Rom 5:10; 1Co 7:11, and καταλλαγή in 2Ma 5:20; Isa 9:4; Rom 5:11; 11:15.

39) Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida include καταλλάσω, καταλλαγή, ἀποκαταλλάσω, συναλλάσω, διαλλάσσομαι, ἀπαλλάσσομαι, εἰρηνοποιῶ, εἰρηνοποιός, μεσίτης, ἄσπυδος, ἀφίημι, ἄφεσις, ἀπολύω, ἰλάσκομαι, χαρίζομαι, ἐπικαλύπτω, ἰλασμός, ἰλαστήριον in the semantic domain (Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains*, vol. 1 [New York: United Bible Societies, 1989], 502-504); ἐξιλάσκομαι does not occur in Louw and Nida because it probably is not used in the New Testament. In that sense, Louw and Nida mention only ἰλάσκομαι, ἰλασμός, and ἰλαστήριον. Nevertheless, what is obvious is that ἐξιλάσκομαι belongs to ἰλάσκομαι, ἰλασμός, and ἰλαστήριον in the same semantic (Brian J. Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness*, 164, n. 14).

40) Brian J. Vickers, *Jesus' Blood and Righteousness*, 164.

41) *Ibid.*, 165.

42) Strictly speaking, 5:6 could be excluded because although the phrase ("the priest shall make atonement for him") is used, the word, forgiveness does not appear. I found that the translators of LXX translate ׀ב into ἀφίημι and ׀כ into ἐξιλάσκομαι. But regarding 5:6, although ἀφίημι appears, ׀ב does not appear.

support considering *ἀμαρτία* in 5:21 as referring to a sin offering in that the two verbs belong together with *καταλλάσω* and *καταλλαγή*, in the semantic domain. As substitutes, sacrifices for sin make atonement (*ἐξιλάσκομαι*) for the ones who bring sacrifices, and as a result, a priest, the whole congregation, a leader, or a lay person can be reconciled in relationship with God.<sup>43)</sup>

### 3.4. The Second Use of *ἀμαρτία* in 5:21 in light of the Book of Isaiah

Beale argues that 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 is linked with “the inaugurated fulfillment of Isaiah’s and the prophets’ promise of a new creation in which Israel would be restored into a peaceful relationship with God.”<sup>44)</sup> For Beale, Paul employs the book of Isaiah in order to draw the concept of the reality of new creation.<sup>45)</sup> Beale presents the similar words between 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Isaiah 43:18-19 and 65:17;

μη μνημονεύετε τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τὰ ἀρχαῖα μὴ συλλογίζεσθε ἰδοὺ ποιῶ καινὰ.  
(Isa 43:18-19)

ἔσται γὰρ ὁ οὐρανὸς καινός καὶ ἡ γῆ καινὴ καὶ οὐ μὴ μνησθῶσιν τῶν προτέρων. (Isa 65:17)

εἴ τις ἐν Χριστῷ, καινὴ κτίσις· τὰ ἀρχαῖα παρῆλθεν, ἰδοὺ γέγονεν καινὰ. (2Co 5:17)

The background of Isaiah 43:18-19 is the promise that God will make the Israelites to return from Babylon and recover their land (Isa 43:1-21). In Isaiah 43:18-19 Israel is exhorted not to reflect on their past sins, God’s judgment, or their exile but to grasp the promise of God’s recovery.<sup>46)</sup> As an important point of Isaiah 65:17-25, Isaiah 65:17 also highlights their recovery under God’s new

43) Stephen Finlan, *The Background and Content of Paul’s Cultic Atonement Metaphors* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2004), 98-101.

44) G. K. Beale, “The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7 and Its Bearing on the Literary Problem of 2 Corinthians 6.14-7.1”, *New Testament Study* 35 (1989): 551. For recent discussion on this see Mark Gignilliat, *Paul and Isaiah’s Servants: Paul’s Theological Reading of Isaiah 40-66 in 2*, *The Library of New Testament Studies* (Bloomsbury: T. & T. Clark, 2007), 40-41.

45) *Ibid.*, 553.

46) G. K. Beale, “The Old Testament Background of Reconciliation in 2 Corinthians 5-7”, 554.

creation.<sup>47)</sup> In particular, Beale provides two vital contexts; in a broad context, on the one hand, Beale presents that as new creation, the recovery of the exiled Israel is a big theme that flows through Isaiah 40-66,<sup>48)</sup> which shows the reconciliation between God and exiled Israel.<sup>49)</sup> Here, Beale points out that the move from Israel's miserable state to the reconciliation between God and Israel is "by the sacrificial death of the Servant, who becomes the  $\alpha\lambda\theta\epsilon\iota\sigma\mu\acute{o}\varsigma$  for the people" (53:4-12).<sup>50)</sup> On the other hand, in the limited scope of Isaiah 43, recovery and new creation occur through "the payment of ransom" (43:3) and "the forgiveness of sins" (43:22).<sup>51)</sup> On the basis of Beale's arguments that presents a thematic overview in Isaiah 40-66, 2 Corinthians 5:17 shows that Isaiah's promise of recovery from Israel's exile is fulfilled by forgiveness and atonement in Christ. Here, it is obvious that the second use, ἁμαρτίαν, although there are some objections, has the sense of a sin offering in the various aspects explained above; "For our sake God made Christ who knew no sin to be sin" (Christ's identification with sinful humanity and a sin offering).<sup>52)</sup>

#### 4. The Meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ

One of two debatable issues, the second use, ἁμαρτίαν has been treated. Now, another arguable item should be touched upon. It is δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ about which there are different opinions. The main reason for the variety of opinions is

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47) Ibid.

48) Ibid., 555.

49) Beale indicates various expressions that show the broken relationship between God and Israel in Isa 40-66; Israel's exile as an expression of divine "wrath" (51:20; 60:10), "anger" (47:6; 51: 17, 22; 54:8; 57:16-17; 64:5, 9), "forsakenness" (49:14; 54:6-7; 62:4), "rejection" (54:6), "hiddenness" (54:8; 57:17; 59:2; 64:7) and consequent "separation" between God and the nation (59:2). At the same time, Beale finds the promise of the reconciled relationship with God, saying, "God's restoration of Israel from this estrangement is described not only as a redemptive new creation but as a time when the nation will not be forsaken (62:12); it will be reunited with God (45:14) and know him (43:10) because of his gracious initiative in regathering them (54:6-8)." Ibid., 556.

50) Ibid.

51) Ibid.

52) Aletti Jean-Noël, *New Approaches For Interpreting The Letters Of Saint Paul: Collected Essays Rhetoric, Soteriology, Christology And Ecclesiology*, Subsidia Biblica 43 (Roma: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2012), 203-208.

because of the genitive θεοῦ that could be either a possessive genitive, subjective genitive, genitive of origin, or objective genitive.<sup>53)</sup> What is important is that the meaning of δικαιοσύνη is clarified by the genitive θεοῦ.<sup>54)</sup> This paper will be focusing on the view of N. T. Wright who has been spotlighted by many scholars, pastors, and lay persons, interacting about how much his opinion on 2 Corinthians 5:21 is reasonable.<sup>55)</sup>

Wright's fundamental presupposition is to see the genitive θεοῦ as a quality in God (possessive genitive) on the basis of God's own righteousness because of Jewish evidences in relation to covenant. Also, Wright considers δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as meaning "the covenant-faithfulness of [Israel's] God" and as being a Pauline technical term.<sup>56)</sup> Of course, although the background of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ that Wright understands can not be treated because of the limitation of

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53) Christopher D. Marshall, *Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment*, Studies in Peace and Scripture (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2001), 38-40.

54) Explaining the interpretation on the genitive θεοῦ in detail, Wright provides a very helpful chart; the phrase, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ can broadly be divided into two parts: God's own righteousness and a status of righteousness which humans have before God. God's own righteousness is divided into righteousness as a moral quality (of God as a possessive genitive) and righteousness as God's salvation-creating power (of God as a subjective genitive), a status of righteousness which humans have before God is divided into righteousness as a righteous standing from God (of God as a genitive of origin) and righteousness as a quality which comes before God or avails with God (of God as an objective genitive). N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the real founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans; Cincinnati: Forward Movement Publications, 1997), 101.

55) For a detailed discussion on Wright's opinion, see Jonathan R. Huggins, *Living Justification: A Historical-Theological Study of the Reformed Doctrine of Justification in the Writings of John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, and N. T. Wright* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2013), 157-194.

56) N. T. Wright, "On Becoming the Righteousness of God: 2 Corinthians 5:21", David M. Hay, ed., *Pauline Theology*, vol. II, 1 and 2 Corinthians (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002), 203; *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 103. As a matter of fact, the argument of Wright does not seem to be original; Ziesler already argued that in his book 'the righteousness of God' is God's own covenant loyalty that is God's own righteousness (J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: a Linguistic and Theological Enquiry*, Society for New Testament Studies [Cambridge: University Press, 1972], 159-161). Of course, regarding 2 Corinthians 5:21, although they are similar to understand "the righteousness of God," the arguments of the both is not same; Ziesler views the subject, "We" as a general idea that indicates all people who participate in God's own covenant loyalty. For recent discussion on this, see Ben C. Blackwell, *Christosis: Pauline Soteriology in Light of Deification in Irenaeus and Cyril of Alexandria*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 228-230; Michael J. Gorman, *Becoming the Gospel: Paul, Participation, and Mission*, The Gospel and Our Culture Series (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2015), 246-249.

space,<sup>57)</sup> Wright's two ways of interpreting 2 Corinthians 5:21 can be addressed.<sup>58)</sup>

First, understanding ἡμεῖς as the main key to understanding the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ exactly,<sup>59)</sup> Wright says as follows:

What Paul is saying is that he and his fellow apostles, in their suffering and fear, their faithful witness against all the odds, are not just talking about God's faithfulness; they are actually embodying it. The death of the Messiah has taken care of their apparent failure; now, in him, they are 'the righteousness of God', the living embodiment of the message they proclaim.<sup>60)</sup>

The reason why Wright insists that ἡμεῖς is Paul and his fellow apostles is because of the whole context of 2 Corinthians 3-5 in which Paul appeals to his apostleship and apostolic ministry.<sup>61)</sup> Claiming that ἡμεῖς is Paul and his fellow apostles, Wright understands the phrase, δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ as "an incarnation of the covenant faithfulness of God."<sup>62)</sup>

However, regarding Wright's first argument, it is uncertain whether ἡμεῖς is applied only to Paul and his fellows. As a matter of fact, it is accurate that he has been in the context of defending his true apostleship and apostolic ministry.

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57) See Mark A. Seifrid, "Righteousness Language in the Hebrew Scriptures and Early Judaism", D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid, eds., *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament, Reihe 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 415-442. In particular, Seifrid directly does not mention N. T. Wright but John Ziesler, dealing with the relationship between God's righteousness and God's covenant-faithfulness that the both argue (422-423).

58) See A. Andrew Das, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 128.

59) N. T. Wright, "On Becoming the Righteousness of God", 203.

60) N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 105.

61) The arguments of Wright can be summarized as follows; Paul is described as a minister of new covenant (3:6). Various difficulties from which he suffered mean that he is really a true apostle (4:7-18). Thus, he can use "boldness" (3:12-18). He does his best to persuade people because all people should stand before the judgment seat of Christ (5:1-10). He shows what his apostleship involves (3:1; 4:2; 5:12; 6:4). In particular, for Wright, both 5:14-15 and 5:16-17 contribute to 5:18-19 that focuses on Paul's whole activity; Paul, who is reconciled with God by the death of Christ, has the duty to make people be reconciled with God. The concept of the duty takes concrete form in verse 20. Wright claims that in these contextual situation, ἡμεῖς should be limited to Paul (and his fellow apostles). N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 104; "On Becoming the Righteousness of God", 204-206.

62) N. T. Wright, "On Becoming the Righteousness of God", 206; *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 104-105.

Nevertheless, in order to justify his belief, “the covenant faithfulness of God,” it is not proper for Wright to limit the concept of ἡμεῖς to 5:21 because Paul considers it as a universal referent including himself and the Corinthians. Also Paul intends a comprehensive meaning rather than a restricted one in several verses; in 3:18 Paul designs a broad referent, ἡμεῖς πάντες including himself, describing that “we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord.” Wright insists on 5:1-10, saying, “since *all* will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, with the prospect, for those who are Christ’s, of receiving the ‘further clothing’ of the glorious resurrection body, *the apostle* is spurred on to do the work of ‘persuading human beings.’”<sup>63)</sup> Wright attempts to keep a distance between Paul and all others. However, it is obvious that by using τοὺς πάντας ἡμᾶς Paul points out a general referent that signifies “all” including Paul himself; “we all” must stand before God including Paul, his opponents, and his followers.<sup>64)</sup> Wright claims about 5:14-19, “the statement of 5:14-15, on the one hand, and 5:16-17, on the other, are not to be detached from this argument and treated as mere snippets of traditional soteriology.”<sup>65)</sup> What is noteworthy, however, is that both πάντων and πάντες in verse 14, and πάντων in verse 15 obviously represent all believers including Paul and his fellows.<sup>66)</sup> In addition, τις ἐν Χριστῷ in verse 17 indicates the sense of a general referent to point out all believers.<sup>67)</sup> Also, it is clear that κόσμον in verse 19 denotes a general referent,<sup>68)</sup> saying, “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them...” It is obvious, as Wright argues in 5:20-21, that Paul appeals the concept of his own task. However, it is doubtful that “we” in verse 20 and “we” in verse 21 should be considered to have the same sense. Verse 20 refers to the point of time when Paul accomplished his apostolic task, and as the content of the word of reconciliation that he takes while accomplishing the mission verse 21 implies the point of time that

63) N. T. Wright, “On Becoming the Righteousness of God”, 204, bold and italics are mine.

64) F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 207; Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 405-407; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 266-267; Paul William Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 273-275; Brian J. Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 176.

65) N. T. Wright, “On Becoming the Righteousness of God”, 205.

66) Murray J. Harris, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 419.

67) David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 286-287.

68) Paul William Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 307; Brian J. Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 179.

manifests Christ's redemptive work for all who are in Christ. In that sense, it is unlikely that ἡμεῖς in 5:21 should be applied only to Paul and his fellow apostles; ἡμεῖς has all believers in Christ as a general referent.

Second, Wright maintains that the sense of imputed righteousness does not appear in 5:21, saying, "the 'righteousness of God' in this verse is not a human status in virtue of which the one who has 'become' it stands 'righteous' before God."<sup>69</sup>) For Wright, Paul appeals to the apostolic ministry that he has done on the basis of his true apostleship and apostolic ministry, not justification. Accentuating that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ is "the covenant faithfulness of God," Wright asserts that to find imputed righteousness in 5:21 is to misread what Paul really said; Paul defends his true apostleship. However, Wright's view is unconvincing whether the traditional view on imputation can be taken away from 5:21 or not; Christ's redemptive work is revealed throughout verses 14-20. It is Christ who died and was resurrected for all (vv. 14-15). Whoever is in Christ is a new creation on the basis of his death and resurrection (v. 17). The prepositional phrase, διὰ Χριστοῦ emphasizes Christ's redemptive work that brought reconciliation between God and human beings (v. 18). In relation to Christ's reconciliation Paul says, "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting [λογιζόμενος] their trespasses against them" (v. 19); Christ's death brought the result that their trespasses are not counted against them. There is obviously a forensic sense; Christ was identified with sinful humanity, and as a result God does not count their sins against them. Verse 21 should be understood in light of the forensic sense. Just as Christ was identified with sinful humanity that was foreign to him, righteousness that was foreign to them was imputed to sinful humanity.<sup>70</sup>) In that sense, Carson points out rightly, "the text does not explicitly *say* that God imputes our sins to Christ, but as long as we perceive that Jesus dies in our place, and bear our curse, and was made 'sin' for us, it is extraordinarily difficult to avoid the notion of the imputation of our sins to him."<sup>71</sup>) Carson continues to say that the theme of imputation is found in Paul's

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69) N. T. Wright, "On Becoming the Righteousness of God", 206; *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 104-105.

70) Brenda B. Colijn, *Images of Salvation in the New Testament* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2010), 204-217.

71) D. A. Carson, "The Vindication of Imputation", Mark Husbands and Daniel J. Treier, eds., *Justification: What's at stake in the current Debates* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 69, his italics.

letters (Rom 3-4; Phi 3:8-9); “God credits righteousness to the ungodly.”<sup>72)</sup> As a matter of fact, the majority of scholars mentioned in this paper acknowledge imputation, though not all scholars do.<sup>73)</sup>

Here, although a number of scholars find the concept of imputation in verse 21, an important question can be raised,<sup>74)</sup> “is the verse only limited to imputation?” It is striking that the verse can not be limited only to imputation.<sup>75)</sup> It is the phrase ἐν αὐτῷ (Χριστῷ) that should be noted. “In Christ” reflects “union with Christ” (Col 3:3-4; Gal 2:20).<sup>76)</sup> On the one hand, regarding the

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72) Ibid.

73) Jean Calvin, *The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians and the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon*, T. A. Smail, trans., David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance, eds., Calvin’s Commentaries (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 81; Charles Hodge, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 150-151; John Piper, *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ’s Righteousness?* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2002), 81-83; Bruce calls imputation “sweet exchange.” For him, sinners have “a righteous status before God through the righteous one who absorbed their sin (and its judgment) in himself” (F. F. Bruce, *1 and 2 Corinthians*, 211); understanding imputation in light of the concept of exchange, Barrett says that believers “are acquitted in his [God’s] court, justified, reconciled” (C. K. Barrett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 180); Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, *Paul’s Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 214; Scott J. Hafemann, *2 Corinthians*, 248; David E. Garland, *2 Corinthians*, 300; Paul William Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 315; Brian J. Vickers, *Jesus’ Blood and Righteousness*, 173.

74) This question is also asked to Wright because he objects “God’s salvation-creating power or activity” that will be treated here. Wright says, “Käsemann deliberately splits this meaning off from anything ‘covenantal, since he wants to emphasize that God’s salvation-creating power addresses-indeed, conquers-the whole world, not just Israel (N. T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 103). Nevertheless, Wright does not completely exclude the sense of the whole world, saying, “A significant part of his whole argument in that letter [Romans] is, I believe, that the nonethnic people of God in Christ really is, despite initial appearances, the family promised to Abraham” (N. T. Wright, “On Becoming the Righteousness of God”, 202). What is obvious, however, is that he does not acknowledge “God’s salvation-creating power,” that is, God’s own action.

75) Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, the Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 2014), 255-268. “Paul’s language is obviously forensic. But to reduce it to the idea of ‘imputation’ is to do violence to it.” Margaret E. Thrall, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians*, 444. She says that in verse 21 the concept of “an imputed alien righteousness” is out of place. Nevertheless, she does not exclude the concept of imputation (442). The reason why she says like that is because the verse can not limit to the concept of imputation.

76) D. A. Carson, “The Vindication of Imputation”, 71. Seifrid says that the phrase is used “as a flexible idiom instrumentality, mode of action, or locality” in various ways in Paul’s letters (Mark A. Seifrid, “IN CHRIST”, Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, eds., *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993], 433). In particular, regarding 5:21, English versions seem to be a slight difference about whether the phrase is related either to ἡμεῖς or δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. If the phrase is related to ἡμεῖς, it may have the sense of locality. If it is related

phrase, Carson points out, “if we speak of justification or of imputation (whether of our sins to Christ or of δικαιοσύνη being credited to us) *apart* from a grasp of this in incorporation into Christ, we will constantly be in danger of contemplating some sort of transfer *apart* from being included in Christ, *apart* from union with Christ.”<sup>77)</sup> Focusing on the Corinthians who are in Christ, Paul describes their present state in reality in two verses. 1 Corinthians 1:30 says, ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὃς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ, δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἀριασμός καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις. Paul depicts the Corinthians as those who are in Christ, the one “who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption.” Also, 1 Corinthians 6:11 says, ἀλλὰ ἀπελούσασθε, ἀλλὰ ἡγιασθητε, ἀλλὰ ἐδικαιώθητε ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν. Of course, it is debatable whether ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is associated with baptism, but what is essential is that Paul emphasizes the Corinthians’ spiritually transformed state made possible through Christ.<sup>78)</sup> It is obvious that Paul believes that they “were washed, were sanctified, and were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”

On the other hand, as Seifrid points out exactly, the phrase, “in Christ” conveys “Paul’s belief that God’s saving purposes are decisively effected through Christ.”<sup>79)</sup> Both verses mentioned above clearly confirm Seifrid’s argument; regarding 1 Corinthians 1:30, in the first phrase, ἐξ αὐτοῦ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, as many English versions recognize, it is obvious that even though the actual subject is ὑμεῖς, an implied subject is God.<sup>80)</sup> In the second phrase, ὃς ἐγενήθη σοφία ἡμῖν ἀπὸ θεοῦ, δικαιοσύνη τε καὶ ἀριασμός καὶ ἀπολύτρωσις, Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ is the actual subject of a relative clause and the implied subject is God. Fee supports this, saying, “Gk. ἀπὸ θεοῦ, rightly translated ‘from God’. But it is not ‘wisdom from God’ that Christ was made for

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to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ, it may have the sense of instrumentality. ESV, NIV, and RSV translate as follows; “...in him we...” Yet, KJV and NAS translate as follows; “...the righteousness of God in him.” The paper takes the sense of locality, although the sense of instrumentality can not be excluded.

77) D. A. Carson, “The Vindication of Imputation”, 72, his italics.

78) Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: W. B. Eerdmans, 1987), 246-247.

79) Mark A. Seifrid, “IN CHRIST”, 433.

80) ESV, KJV, NAS, NIV, RSV.

us; rather it is ‘wisdom for us from God’; i.e., God made him wisdom on our behalf.”<sup>81)</sup> 1 Corinthians 6:11 displays God’s action that transformed the Corinthians in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. In the same way, 2 Corinthians 5:21 shows God’s action; ὥστε in verse 17 means the result of the death and resurrection of Christ for all (vv. 14-15). Paul explains the result as follows, “therefore, if anyone is in Christ (ἐν Χριστῷ), he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” It is true that those who are in Christ become a new creation on the basis of what God had done in Christ. Saying that “in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself,” Paul manifests God’s work in Christ (v. 19). Finally, Paul displays God’s cosmic, salvational work (v. 21); δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ signifies “God’s act of judgment and the revelation of God’s own righteousness” in Christ who was identified with sinful humanity and was made to be a sin offering.<sup>82)</sup> In that sense, Seifrid writes precisely, “what the apostle says here cannot rightly be reduced to the idea of an imputed righteousness. He obviously speaks in a more encompassing way of the human being created anew in Christ.”<sup>83)</sup>

## 5. Conclusion

Two most debatable uses, the second use of ἁμαρτία and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in 2 Corinthians, have been treated in this paper. In a sense, the serious debates among scholars imply that the two are so important much as to necessitate understanding what salvation occurring in human beings is. In this moment that comes to conclusion, just as a miner digs in the ground to find two diamonds, finds the two, and looks to the beautiful colors of the two glittered by the light, those who have read this paper may find the beautiful colors of 2 Corinthians 5:21 glittering by the light of reason transformed by God’s grace: the second use of ἁμαρτία and the use of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. The second use, ἁμαρτίαν has the sense of both Christ’s identification and a sin offering, and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ signifies both imputation and God’s action in Christ.

81) Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 85, n. 35.

82) Mark A. Seifrid, *The Second Letter to the Corinthians*, 260-268.

83) *Ibid.*, 313.

<Keywords>

2 Corinthians 5:21, Christ's Identification, a Sin Offering, imputation, God's Action.

고린도후서 5:21, 그리스도의 사람됨, 속죄 제물, 의의 전가, 하나님의 구속사역.

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<Abstract>

**The Second Use of ἁμαρτία (*hamartia*) and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ (*dikaiosune theou*) in 2 Corinthians 5:21 Revisited**

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Unlike the Corinthians who had a worldly, fleshly perspective and lived their lives according to such standards, Paul had a different perspective and lived a life based on spiritual standards. In Christ, God reconciled Paul to himself, and as an ambassador, Paul accomplished his task to reconcile the world to God (5:19-20). 2 Corinthians 5:21 shows the content of “the word of reconciliation” that brought about reconciliation in the relationship between God and Paul himself, and between God and the world. It is a marvelous verse in the Scriptures. Despite its beauty, scholars debate the second use of ἁμαρτία and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in the verse. As a matter of fact, the two terms are the most controversial ones in 2 Corinthians and even the New Testament. In this paper, I investigate the meanings of the second use of ἁμαρτίαν and δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ. First, having identified the structure of verse 21, I examine two grammatical issues: 1) Even though the subject in the second part of verse 21 is “we,” it is appropriate to consider “God” as an implied subject because the actual subject of the second part is not an active agent but a passive one who receives something given or acted by God through (or in) Christ’s redemptive works. 2) The second use of ἁμαρτίαν in the first part is parallel to δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in the second part. Second, in defense of objections raised against the sense of a sin offering, I argue that the second use of ἁμαρτίαν has the sense of a sin offering in the context of 5:17-20 and in light of the book of Isaiah that God sends His own son, Jesus Christ, as a sin offering and condemns sin in the flesh. Third, I explore the meaning of δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ in interaction with N. T. Wright who interprets ἡμεῖς in verse 21 and opposes imputed righteousness. In particular, I focus on his two ways of interpreting 2 Corinthians 5:21: ἡμεῖς as the main key to understanding the phrase δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ and the sense of imputed righteousness which does not appear in 5:21. On the basis of the above

arguments, I argue in this paper that the second use of ἁμαρτίαν has the sense of both Christ's identification and a sin offering, and that δικαιοσύνη θεοῦ signifies both imputation and God's action in Christ.