



Romans 4:9-12

Justification is Not by Ordinances (Circumcision) – 4:9-12

- Romans 3:22-4:12
 - ‘faith’ or ‘believe’ are used 15 times
- Romans 4:9-12
 - ‘circumcision’ is used 7 times and ‘uncircumcised’ used 5 times
- Romans 4:3-8 – faith alone – apart from works
- Romans 4:9-12 – faith alone – apart from circumcision
- Paul had already made clear that circumcision carries no merit in becoming righteousness before God (See Romans 2:17-29)
- But there must have still been confusion or Paul is anticipating confusion and is now addressing the question, is the receiving of God’s righteousness in any way connected with receiving the ordinances or is it completely separate?
- Paul asks two questions;
 - Is this blessing then upon the circumcised or upon the uncircumcised also?
 - Was Abraham circumcised or uncircumcised when his faith was reckoned to him as righteousness?



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- What happened when?
 - Genesis 12:1-3 – Initiation of Abrahamic Covenant
 - I will make you a great nation
 - I will bless you and make your name great
 - In you all the families of the earth will be blessed
 - Genesis 13:14-18 - Reiteration of Covenant
 - Genesis 15:1-6 – First mention that Abraham believed in the Lord and God reckoned it to him as righteous
 - Genesis 17:9-11 – Abraham and his descendents are told to be circumcised
 - Some say that there was fourteen years and some say twenty-nine years between his faith being reckoned as righteousness and his being circumcised
- Faith came first then circumcision.
 - It was his faith/belief which was reckoned as righteousness completely independent of circumcision because circumcision came years later
 - The ordinance of circumcision was not reckoned as righteousness, nor was it faith plus circumcision which was reckoned as righteousness



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- As in the verses 1-8 ‘good works’ or anything else such as circumcision that man can do to earn merit was being set aside.
- Paul was trying to get them to see that it was the simple faith of Abraham which he had before circumcision which was counted as righteous.
- What ordinances or sacraments do people trust in today?
 - Baptism
 - The Lord’s Supper/Communion
 - The mass, christening, confirmation
- Genesis 17:11 says that it is a ‘sign’ as Romans 4:11 does.
 - In Genesis it is a sign of the covenant, the Abrahamic Covenant, between God and Abraham in which God said
 - Sign - How a person is distinguished from others
 - It was an identifying marker, which came after their faith in God, for the people of God that they have been set apart from the rest of the world
 - Similar to baptism today, which comes after faith, as an outward sign that the believer has now been placed into Christ and is separated from the world.



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- In Romans circumcision is said to be a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised.
 - Seal – that by which anything is confirmed, proved, authenticated, as by a seal – from Thayer's Complete Greek lexicon
 - Abrahams circumcision confirms his righteous status before God.
 - See – 'seal' used in 1 Cor. 9:2
- Faith was reckoned as righteousness while uncircumcised so that :
 - he might be the spiritual father of all who believe, either Jews or Gentiles, circumcised or uncircumcised it doesn't matter, Abraham is the spiritual father of all.
- Father of those without being circumcised
 - So that righteousness might be reckoned to them.
 - If someone believes without circumcision, no problem, because that is the same way that Abraham was. The issue is faith.
 - Because Abraham believed while uncircumcised he is the spiritual father of all Gentile believers



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- Father of circumcision
 - Because he believed and was also circumcised he is the spiritual father of the Jewish believers.
 - Not only of the circumcision but to those who follow in the steps of the faith of Abraham while he was uncircumcised.
 - These would be Jewish Christians
 - If someone is only circumcised but has not believed in God then Abraham is not their spiritual father.
 - Again, circumcision or ordinances do not save, it is faith alone.
- The focus of circumcision is removed and the focus is put on faith.
 - The act that man did, circumcision, was removed so that man would have nothing to boast of.
 - This leaves only faith as the way to enter into the righteousness of God.