

**Romans 4:9-12 (NKJV)**

**9** Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

**10** How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.

1

**Rom. 4:11** And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also,

**12** and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

2

- Paul is writing to the church at Rome, those who are BELIEVERS – both Jews and Gentiles
- 1:16 – GOSPEL = the good news that those BELIEVERS who are producing faith-filled works of righteousness are considered justified by God and will be rewarded with kingdom inheritance
- SALVATION = not *initial* salvation of the *spirit* (regeneration) that results when one initially believes on Jesus; It is *ongoing* salvation (sanctification) for those who continue to believe, resulting in the saving of the *soul*

3

- This is important for the believers at Rome, who are characterized by disunity and division, caused by carnality and ethnic prejudices
- 1:17 “the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith”
- RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD = God’s salvation of His faithful children at the Judgment Seat of Christ, those who have lived righteously – they are the subset of believers who are living *from faith* (initial, saving faith) *to faith* (ongoing, sanctifying faith)

4

- Latter half of ch. 1 – Paul rebukes both Jewish and Gentile believers for sinning, and warns of God’s wrath upon those who continue in sinfulness
- The Gentile believers are mainly guilty of committing *outward* sins, such as immorality and other forms of licentious living
- The Jewish believers are guilty of observing the letter of the law *outwardly*, while ignoring the spirit of the law *inwardly*, by committing sins of the heart (e.g., bitterness, hatred, lust, pride, strife, etc.)

5

- ch. 2 – Paul admonishes the Jewish believers for clinging to the ritual aspects of the law, thinking their physical circumcision guarantees covenant acceptance, even though God is focused on circumcision of the heart
- He shocks the Jews by claiming God accepts even uncircumcised Gentiles who are living righteously
- ch. 3 – Paul teaches that the Jewish believers are just as sinful as the Gentile believers, emphasizing that mere deeds of the law do not sanctify or mean one is living righteously

6

- The first section of Romans (1:1-3:20) concludes with:  
Rom 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.
- deeds of the law = a term Paul uses to refer to observing the ritual aspects of the law (things like circumcision, dietary laws, observing feast days and sabbaths) – and expecting those things to make one sanctified and righteous (which they do not!)

7

- He uses *deeds of the law* in contradistinction to *the righteous requirements of the law* = fulfilling the moral law of God – which is truly righteous living
- Again, this has nothing to do with initial salvation; Paul is writing to believers about the saving of the soul, which is about living righteously and inheriting rewards at the JSC
- His point: observing the Mosaic rituals cannot save the soul

8

- The application for modern-day believers: “keeping a list” and/or “holding to standards” does not make one spiritual
- God forbids this mentality, and wants His children to obey the law of Christ, the law of love – to that end, He has given us Jesus Himself, living within, as our enabler
- 3:22 specifies that we can live righteously as believers when we continue to believe Jesus in our daily lives, depending on Him to enable us to live righteously, in a manner that pleases God

9

- 3:24 specifies that we are justified (declared righteous by God) freely, as an act of His grace, when we appropriate this truth
- It’s not a matter of keeping a list to make us spiritual, but rather depending upon Him for daily victory over sins
- Paul sums it up in:  
Rom 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.

10

- Again, he’s talking to believers about living righteously by depending on Jesus, as opposed to keeping the Mosaic rituals or keeping a list of religious rules
- In 4:1-8, Paul refers to two OT heroes whom all the Jews revered, to illustrate his point
- Abraham, who lived righteously, but not by keeping the law – indeed, Abraham lived BEFORE the Mosaic law was given
- He lived righteously by believing God and trusting Him

11

- Paul quotes Gen. 15:6:  
Rom 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”
- This is NOT referring to Abraham’s initial “salvation” – we don’t know when Abraham first believed God
  - All we know that is that he left the city of Ur much earlier in his life, when God told him to go to Canaan land
  - His life was characterized by faith-filled works

12

- In Gen. 15:6 he believes God's announcement that Eliezer will not be his descendant, but one who would come from his own body
- On this basis, God's pronounces in Gen. 15:6 that Abraham believed God, as he had done all through the years, so that God considered him a righteous man
- King David is used as an illustration in vs. 7-8
- After David sinned with Bathsheba, he eventually recognized his sin, confessed it, and made it right with God

13

- God, who is faithful and just, forgave David and considered him righteous once again
- Paul's point in v. 6 – God considered David as living righteously, once his sins were confessed and forgiven
- This was of faith, not of works of the law; that is, David did not have to earn God's forgiveness and cleansing by practicing the rituals of the law
- Granted, he offered sacrifices in the tabernacle under the OT sacrificial system, so works are involved in a righteous lifestyle

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- However, his forgiveness was not contingent on WORKS OF THE LAW
- God simply forgave when David, by faith, offered sacrifices and sought forgiveness
- The same is true of you – When you confess your sins (which is a work on your part), you don't have to keep a list of religious rules before you will be forgiven
- You simply believe on the basis of 1 John 1:9 that God has forgiven you, and when you do, God reckons you righteous!

15

- "accounted" (v. 3) and "imputes" (v. 6)
- Rom 4:3 "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."
- Rom 4:6 just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works:
- In both cases, it is the Greek word *logizomai* = to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over; hence, to take into account, to make account of (Thayer)
  - Strong: to take an inventory

16

- *logizomai* is used 11 times in Rom. 4, and a total of 19 times in the book of Romans

Translation of the Greek Verb <i>logizomai</i>				
	KJV	NKJV	ESV	Young's
4:3	counted	accounted	counted	reckoned
4:4	reckoned	counted	counted	reckoned
4:5	counted	accounted	counted	reckoned
4:6	imputeth	imputes	counts	reckon
4:8	impute	impute	count	reckon
4:9	reckoned	accounted	counted	reckoned
4:10	reckoned	accounted	counted	reckoned
4:11	imputed	imputed	counted	reckoned
4:22	imputed	accounted	counted	reckoned
4:23	imputed	imputed	counted	reckoned
4:24	imputed	imputed	counted	reckoned

17

- In my opinion, IMPUTED is not a good translation of *logizomai*
- Ever since the Reformation, Protestants (including Baptists) have been led to believe that when we are saved, Christ's righteousness is imputed (i.e., credited) to our account
- However, the Reformation doctrine of positional justification is unscriptural – not taught in Galatians or Hebrews or Romans, not even in the OT

18

- Justification is God's reckoning that a person is righteous if they are **LIVING** righteously, by faith
- The word *imputes* implies that we possess His righteousness automatically, regardless of how we are living – that is incorrect!
- Even Webster's Dictionary has been tainted by Reformation doctrines:
  - **IMPUTE:** *In Theology* [to] ascribe (righteousness, guilt, etc.) to someone by virtue of a similar quality in another: *Christ's righteousness has been imputed to us.*

19

- Young's Literal has chosen the best word to translate Gr. *logizomai* into English: *reckoned*
- In other words, God does the accounting, He takes inventory and reckons – He can see that this person over here is living righteously, while that person over there is not
- *Logizomai* does NOT mean that HIS righteousness is credited to our account
- Thankfully, we have been given the provision of Christ in us, but that is no guarantee that we will appropriate His provision and actually **LIVE** righteously

20

• In vs. 9-10 Paul returns to his continuing argument, which is a series of questions

Rom 4:9 Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness.

Rom 4:10 How then was it accounted? While he was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised.

21

- Paul asks rhetorically if the blessedness of God declaring a person righteous is only for Jews under the covenant – those who are circumcised – or if it applies to others also
- The answer is obvious – it applies to all!
- After all, Abraham was not yet circumcised when God said this about him – those instructions were not given to him until ch. 17
- God declares as righteous those who are believing Him and thereby living righteously, **APART FROM** “works of the law”

22

Rom 4:11-12 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are uncircumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also walk in the steps of the faith which our father Abraham had while still uncircumcised.

23

- To make sure his audience is clear on the matter, Paul reemphasizes that Abraham was reckoned as righteous **BEFORE** he was ever circumcised
- James Dunn: “Abraham's circumcision was dependent on his previously having been accepted by God and on his already having been reckoned righteous—not the other way round.”
- The key to being reckoned as righteous is not doing mere religious rituals, it is living by faith, depending on God to live uprightly

24

- Dunn: “The point has thus been established that Abraham’s righteousness was dependent solely on a believing which clearly preceded circumcision and which therefore is clearly distinct from works of the law.”
- Consequently, he is the spiritual father of ALL who live by faith, both Jews and Gentiles

25

- Dunn: “Because faith is the crucial factor, all those who believe as he did are his children, whether circumcised or uncircumcised. He is father of the circumcised, but they enter into their full sonship only when they exercise faith as Abraham did, in a way which shows it to be independent of circumcision. And uncircumcised Gentiles who believe can properly call Abraham “our father” too.”
- *full sonship* = the idea of becoming a mature, firstborn son – as summed up by the Gr. word *huios*

26

- In the book of Galatians, Paul takes up the same subject – contrasting those believers who merely do works of the law vs. those believers who live by faith, concluding:  
Gal 3:5-6 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.”  
Gal 3:7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

27

- *sons* = Greek word *huios*
- Thus, only those BELIEVERS who are living by faith – in contrast to those who are living by mere works of the law (rituals, or a list of some sort) – are firstborn inheritors, who will be rewarded at the Judgment Seat of Christ
- This is, unequivocally, the message shared over and over again in Paul’s epistles, and for that matter, throughout the entire NT

28

- It’s time to cast off the Reformation doctrine handed down through the centuries, which teaches that all who are in Christ have positional justification – a legal standing of righteousness before God, regardless of how they are living
- That unscriptural teaching has led generations of Christians to believe the Judgment Seat of Christ will be a glorified awards ceremony, having no serious negative consequences

29

- Consequently, Satan has, through this errant doctrine, led multitudes of believers down the wide path that leads to destruction
- Instead of becoming sons to glory and being given clothing of glorification and crowns of righteousness, signifying rulership, they will be cast into the darkness outside of the ruling realm of His kingdom, naked and ashamed
- What a tragedy!

30

- In v. 13 Paul introduces a new word  
Rom 4:13 For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.
- PROMISE – used 4 times in this chapter – What is this promise?
- The answer is found in Gen. 15:5, the passage which Paul quotes in Rom. 4:3

31

- Gen 15:5 Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”
- According to Dunn, the Jews understood this to mean that Abraham’s descendants would inherit the earth
  - While we know that the nation of Israel will inherit a place of ruling on Earth in the Millennium, the actual promise made in Gen. 15:5 is that Abraham’s descendants will be like the stars of heaven

32

- Some believe these stars are church-age believers who are found righteous and faithful and consequently rewarded with the privilege of serving as Christ’s bride and co-rulers in the age to come
- They will reign over the Earth, from New Jerusalem – God told Daniel:  
Dan 12:3 Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever.

33

- Thus, God promises Abraham that his descendants will be like the stars of heaven, that is, inheritors in the kingdom of the heavens
- That is likely what is meant by the phrase: “the promise that he would be heir of the world,” if we interpret it in the context of Gen. 15
- These “stars” will rule over the earth in the Messianic age, as Abraham’s descendants

34

- Abraham believed that God would fulfill this promise, and God declared Abraham righteous, for he acted in faith rather than unbelief
- This promise would not be fulfilled through works of the law, for the law had not yet been given
- In fact, in Gal. 3:17 Paul says the (Mosaic) law came 430 after this
- Even the rite of circumcision had not been given yet to Abraham

35

- Rather, this promise would be fulfilled through the *righteousness of faith*
- In other words, Abraham’s descendants will inherit the Earth and rule over it—that is, those who live righteously, by faith, just like Abraham
- How would this come about?

36

**Arlen Chitwood:** God is presently in the process of accomplishing a work which will result in “many sons” being brought “unto glory” (Heb. 2:10; cf. Rom. 8:18, 19). These “sons” are mainly individuals being removed from the nations presently holding the sceptre, with a view to these sons one day holding the sceptre. The immersion in the Spirit of those believing on the Lord Jesus Christ places them “in Christ,” a part of the one new man. And because they are positionally “in Christ” (Who is Abraham’s Seed), this allows God to recognize them as “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise (cf. Rom. 4:13; Gal. 3:26-29).”

37

- Because of our relationship as being “in Christ,” believers are POTENTIAL heirs; we are NOT AUTOMATIC heirs
- As Paul already pointed out in 4:13, heirship will be given to those spiritual descendants of Abraham who live righteously, by faith, as he lived
- What about those believers who think keeping a list of rules or rituals will result in being accepted by God?

38

**Rom 4:14-15** For if those who are of the law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise made of no effect, because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law there is no transgression.

- Those who have legalistic behavior nullify the promise, for they are not living by faith
- They will not be inheritors in the age to come
- Indeed, they bring God’s wrath upon themselves, for that is the function of the law: to condemn

39

**Rom 4:16-17a** Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”)

- Dunn sums it up nicely: “God’s intention, as attested by Gen 15:6, was that the promise of grace through faith might embrace all who are willing to accept that same grace, whether Jews or not, just as Abraham did.”

40

- That’s the only way God’s promise of Abraham becoming a father of many nations could be fulfilled (Gen. 17:5)

An odd parenthesis: Rom 4:17b in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did; who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.”

41

- From a human standpoint, Abraham’s situation was impossible
- He and Sarah were old and had no children, their bodies were “good as dead” (Heb. 11:12)
- Yet God had promised that his heirs would come from his own body
- Amidst this perplexing dilemma, Abraham believed in the Creator God, “who gives life to the dead (i.e., He resurrects)” and calls into existence things that do not exist (which is what He did in Gen. 1:1, *ex nihilo*)

42

- If anyone can bring life from “good-as-dead” bodies, Creator God can
- Abraham trusted in this incredible God to solve his impossible situation
- And contrary to hope, Abraham believed and became hopeful, and God brought His promise to pass in this man’s life –
- He indeed, became the father of many nations

43

Rom 4:19 And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb.

20-21 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

22 And therefore “it was accounted to him for righteousness.”

44

- Remember the words the angel Gabriel said to Mary when announcing the virgin birth?  
Luke 1:37 With God nothing will be impossible.
- Abraham believed God can do anything!  
Rom 4:20-21 He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.
- As a result, God reckoned Abraham as righteous, because he believed God as he lived out his life

45

- Paul makes abundantly clear that God declared Abraham righteous, not because he submitted to circumcision or carried out certain rituals
- Rather, God declared Abraham righteous, because he simply trusted God throughout his life – he hoped in God’s faithfulness even amidst his hopeless predicament
- From Abraham’s life we learn that it’s not necessarily about how much we do; it’s about trusting Him day by day, living righteously, pleasing Him by our life

46

Dunn: “God’s extending righteousness to his human creation is not a once-for-all event, whether in the past or in the future. It is God’s acceptance of persons, whether as an initial acceptance, or as a repeated sustaining (God’s saving acts), or as his final acquittal. What makes a person thus acceptable to God is nothing he or she is or does, but simply the kind of faith which Abraham exercised, as described in Gen 15:6.”

47

4:23-24 Now it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead,

- We should learn from Abraham’s faith!
- God says that He deliberately included the account of Abraham’s faith—and God’s reckoning of him as righteous—for our benefit
- God will also reckon us to be righteous if we believe Him as did Abraham

48



- **Now the climax – a profound statement about Jesus ...**

**Rom 4:25 who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification.**

- **Jesus DIED so we can have forgiveness of sins – a subject that Paul will develop further in ch. 5**
- **But Jesus AROSE from the grave so we can live righteously, having power over the gravitational pull of sins in our lives**

49

**Bob Wilkin (editorial comment in Zane Hodges' Commentary on Romans): "An alternate translation for Rom 4:25 might be *raised for our righteous living* (i.e., raised that we might live righteously in our experience)." (p. 129)**

- **By rising again, Jesus became the victor over sin**
- **That means we can have victory over sin too**
- **Do you have victory in your Christian life?**
- **Jesus was raised so you could live righteously**

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