

#20 - Romans 4:9-12

Context:

- Clement of Rome (late 1st century) - "having been called through his [God's] will in Christ Jesus, [we] are not justified through ourselves or through our own wisdom or understanding or piety or works which we have done in holiness of heart, but through faith, by which the almighty God has justified all who have existed from the beginning." (Quoted in Allison, *Historical Theology*, p. 499)

I. The Blessing of Sins Covered and Not Counted (v. 7-8; "*this blessing*" v. 9)

- Letter to Diognetus (2nd century) - "For what else but his righteousness could have covered our sins? In whom was it possible for us, the lawless and the ungodly, to be justified, except in the Son of God alone? O the sweet exchange, O the incomprehensible work of God, O the unexpected blessings, that the sinfulness of many should be hidden in on righteous man, while the righteousness of one should justify many sinners." (Quoted in Allison, p. 499)
- Who's the blessing for?
 - Judaism's Response: the circumcised.

II. The Blessing of Righteousness Apart from Works (Circumcision) (v. 9b-11a)

- Cf. Gen. 15:5-6 to see the OT background of v. 9
- Cf. Gen. 17:1-14 to see the OT background of v. 10
 - 29 years later, according to the rabbinic chronology
- Sign and Seal:
 - Sign = distinguishing mark, by which something is known (Dunn)
 - Seal = outward confirmation or authentication (Thiselton)
 - "Abraham's circumcision confirms his righteous status, a status that was his by virtue of his faith." - Douglas Moo, p. 269
- The 'faith counted as righteousness' was granted before the sign and seal were given.

III. The Blessing of Abraham as the Father of All Who Believe (v. 11b-12a)

- Abraham's belief prior to circumcision = Father of Gentiles
- Abraham's believed and was also circumcised = Father of Jews

IV. The Blessing of Faith that Walks (v. 12)

- "Merely circumcised" - See James

- “Circumcision has no independent value. It cannot effect one’s entrance into the people of God; nor does it even ‘mark’ a person as belonging to God’s people apart from a prior justifying act.” - Douglas Moo, p. 269
- “Good works demonstrate the integrity of the faith that we profess and we are led into good works by the Holy Spirit.” - Michael Bird

The Proper Value of Circumcision:

“...as a mark of a relationship they enjoy with the Lord through their faith rather than as a visa that will automatically insure their entrance into heaven.” - Douglas Moo, 271