

JEWS AND GENTILES JUSTIFIED BY FAITH

Romans 4:9-15

9. "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness."

10. "How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision."

When was Abraham saved? It is clear, of course, that he was saved several hundred years before the law was given through Moses. It is also clear then that Abraham cannot have been saved by the law.

But, some might argue, God gave to him the rite of circumcision, and thus Abraham was identified with the chosen people and the law that should be given to them, and through them to the world, much later.

But, the calendar of events proves that this is clearly not true. When was Abraham counted as justified? The scriptures show that he was saved long before God revealed to him the sign of circumcision that was to mark his body as faith in God's word was to mark his soul and his spirit.

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11. "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised: that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:"

12. "And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised."

Circumcision is the outward symbol of the inward reality. How the heart of man shows its perversity! Man continuously desires to seek salvation in the symbol of the reality rather than in the reality itself.

Shall we then criticize the Jew for clinging to circumcision rather than to the simplicity of faith? We must take care that we ourselves are not part of the "churchianity" that seeks salvation in baptism, the symbol of salvation, rather than in the simplicity of faith alone.

Christ is the only salvation! There is no salvation by ordinances! There is no salvation in the sacraments! There is

There is no salvation in confirmation!

The only salvation that there is is the salvation that is in Christ Jesus!

There are many people who are so blind to the nature of salvation that they will cry, almost automatically, "But surely there must have been something in Abraham that attracted the attention of God!" To hold such an idea is to contradict the Word of God. It is to deny the nature of God and the nature of sin.

If this idea were valid, we would have to conclude that the perfection of God could be satisfied with the imperfection of man. From that, it logically follows that there would be no place at which the dividing line could be drawn, and a universalism of salvation would then be found necessary. Sin could then operate unbounded and all the Bible teaching about the justice of God would become nonsense.

There could be no eternal punishment and Satan would be the overall victor. There are those who believe that and worship Satan today. But it is a lie and God's justice will prevail.

And this has already been accomplished by His payment. His love made the payment to His justice.

Jesus paid it all!
All to Him I owe!
Sin had left a crimson stain!
He washed it white as snow!

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13. "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."

14. "For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect:"

The human race lay in its total blindness, and God stooped from Heaven to appear unto Abraham.

If an angel had asked the Lord why He was choosing Abraham, God could have well answered, "Because it pleases me to choose Abraham."

If the angel had continued, saying, "But there is no good in Abraham," God could have well answered, "There is no good in any creature; but I choose to set my love upon him."

And if the angel had then asked, "But will you not dirty your being by folding this Satan worshipper to your breast?" God could have well answered, "I will go down and give my only Son to die for Abraham, and the blood of my Son will cleanse Abraham of his filth, so that I shall not be soiled when I draw him to myself."

And if the angel had once more asked, "But does not Abraham deserve judgement as much as any other man of Ur of the Chaldees?" God could have well replied, "All of them deserve the same from me, but I propose to give my beloved Son to take the stroke of that judgement, so that I may look upon Abraham as righteous."

And if the angel had finally said, "But will not Abraham have to make some steps in righteousness before it is possible to count him as righteous?" God could have well replied, "Never, for it is while he is yet ungodly that I shall account him righteous and it is the power of the new life that I shall plant in him which shall cause his steps to move toward me, slowly at first and then more firmly as time goes on."

Abraham's case is presented in Romans as the example and pattern of all salvation. The manner in which God saved Abraham is the manner in which God saves you. If you are not willing to be saved as Abraham was saved, then you cannot be saved.

If you insist on clinging to the rags of your own righteousness, you are going to Hell and the Lake of Fire.

On the other hand, if you are truly saved, it is because you have been saved exactly the same way that Abraham was saved.

It was the sovereign God reaching out to you in the heart of His love and in the wonder of His grace and bringing you to life and immortality through the gospel of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

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15. "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression."

We have peace with God through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. But this peace is a gift of God's grace: it has nothing to do with God's law. The effect of the law is not

peace. The effect of the law is wrath.

But before the law was given to Moses, no transgression could occur. Sin could occur, but not transgression, because transgression is, by definition, a breaking of the law. Without the law, there was nothing to be broken.

Seventy-five years ago there was no law against driving down the road at 90 miles per hour. If anyone had possessed a car that could attain such speeds, and if they could have found a road smooth enough, they could have gone down that road at 90 miles per hour and no police officer could have stopped them.

Even if pedestrians had been terrified and forced to hastily jump out of the way, even if horses had reared and bucked and smashed down greenhouses with the carriages they were drawing, there would have been no law under which the driver could have been arrested for speeding.

There would have been folly, but no transgression. There would have been stupidity, but no transgression. There would have been sin, but no transgression. There was no law to break!

There would have been folly and stupidity because there was no consideration of the possible consequences of driving at such a speed. There would have been sin because they were recklessly endangering the lives and property of others. But there would have been no transgression because there was no law to transgress!

God's law is, first and foremost, a gift from God to warn us that we need a Savior!

There was a time before God gave the law to Moses on Mount Sinai when God had never expressed His principles of holiness in a detailed list.

Cain killed Abel and it was the sin of murder, but the law saying "Thou shalt not kill" had not yet been given. Cain sinned, but he did not transgress the law because the law had not yet been given.

Ham dishonored his father Noah and it was a sin, but the law saying "Honor thy father and thy mother" had not yet been given. Ham sinned, but he did not transgress the law because the law had not yet been given.

Cain knew what he did was wrong. Ham knew what he did was

wrong. But there was still no law. There was sin, but there was no transgression.

But, when the law was given, it brought man's guilt before him in a clear and definite way. The law made it possible for the Holy Spirit to grip our hearts with specific charges. The law brought our need before us in a much clearer way.

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The law worketh wrath. Romans 1:18 says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men..." The law is a gift of God to convince us that we need to turn to Jesus and ask Him to save us.

James 2:10 says, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." If you transgress even one of God's laws, you are guilty of transgressing the entire law.

Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." If you have ever broken one of God's laws, the penalty is eternal death and separation from God.

Do you say, "I've never killed anyone. I've never stolen anything. Haven't I kept God's law?" When asked what the greatest commandment was, Jesus said, "...thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength..." (Mark 12:30).

No one has ever kept the first commandment. You are guilty of transgressing God's law. The penalty is death.

John 3:16-18 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

And John 3:36 says, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

You have broken God's law and the penalty is death. The

penalty must be paid! Either you must pay it yourself by spending all of eternity in Hell and the Lake of Fire, or you must turn to Jesus who paid the penalty for you on the cross.

Thank God for His law which makes our need clear. And thank God for the Gospel; the Good News about Jesus Christ who has met our need and stands ready to save us the moment we turn to Him!

Hallelujah! Amen!

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