

Romans 3:29-30

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rom/rom-3/romans-329-30/>

No one is justified before God by following the law; anyone, whether they follow the law or not, can be justified by faith.

One of the great gifts the Jewish people brought to humanity was the law, and the rule of law as the basis for civilization. God gave the law to the newly forming nation of Israel at Mount Sinai as one of the first and most foundational acts of forming the new nation (Exodus 20).

God appointed the Jews to be His chosen instrument to demonstrate to the world how to live constructively (Exodus 19:6). His covenant/treaty with Israel shows them how to be self-governing, and live constructively by loving one another. Of course such a society will flourish, and God promises as much, telling Israel that living according to His commands is a path that leads to life (Deuteronomy 30:19).

The ten commandments have two basic parts. The first four commandments make clear that God and God alone makes the laws; He created moral cause-effect as surely as He created physical cause-effect. People can claim to make laws on behalf of themselves or some other power (idols), but that will not alter the reality that only God is the ultimate lawgiver; all things operate according to His decrees (Colossians 1:16-17). The fifth command basically holds that those too young to recognize God's authority ought to obey their parents.

The last five commands make clear that the main thing God wants us to do is to treat others like we want to be treated, to be constructive with one another. To love our neighbor as ourselves (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:37-39).

Self-governance based on loving and respecting one another builds society and brings life to all. Selfishness and envy are destroyers. The pagan culture of exploitation brings violence and corruption to society, and leads it to destruction. God destroyed the world of Noah because it had filled with violence (Genesis 6:11).

God makes clear that His intent is to bless all people of the earth. He even put this notion in His original promise to Abraham, that from his descendants all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

There is one Creator God, and that Creator God is the God of all humanity. He is not only the God of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles: *Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also* (vs 29). God is God of all. That was from the beginning. And Jesus died for all peoples (John 3:16).

Paul continues, *since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one* (v 30). Just as *God is one*, so the human race *is one*. One race, one Creator. This One God came to earth to die for all of humanity. Both the Jews (*circumcised*) and Gentiles (*uncircumcised*) are justified before God in the same way: *by faith*.

Why is Paul bringing this up? Because his audience is, reportedly, the most influential Gentile believers in the world (Romans 1:8), and some Jewish “authorities” who are competing with Paul have slandered his message of good news (Romans 3:8). Their objective is to overthrow Paul’s grace message, namely that justification in the presence of God comes through a freely given gift, a give that is freely given apart from the law. It is likely that in writing this letter, Paul was coming to the aid of Aquila and Priscilla, his fellow Jews and co-laborers in the gospel of salvation by grace through faith (Acts 18:2; Romans 16:3). They were teammates, contending for the some gospel message.

The competing Jewish “authorities” maintained that justification before God requires these Gentile Roman believers to practice Jewish customs, such as circumcision. The Apostle Paul, who consistently upheld Jewish customs for his entire life (Acts 28:17) is adamant that the Gentiles are under no such obligation. This was, by the way, a position endorsed by the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. There the apostles and elders affirmed that justification before God comes solely by grace (Acts 15:11).

Paul repeats the conclusion of the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15, that both Jews and Gentiles are saved in the same manner, by grace. During that council, there was a lot of dispute, and some believing Pharisees maintained that it was necessary for Gentiles to be circumcised in order to be saved (Acts 15:5).

The Apostle Peter, however, spoke the definitive word of the council and stated emphatically that he saw firsthand that God had given His Spirit to the Gentiles without circumcision (Acts 15:8–9). Further, the Apostle Peter noted that the Jews had never done well keeping the law, and that at the end of the day every person was justified before God the same way: by grace through faith (Acts 15:10–11).

The church authorities, the apostles and the elders of the Jerusalem church, agreed with this conclusion, and Paul echoes this argument in this letter to the Roman believers. In Romans, Paul urges the Romans to accept the grace message. He asserts that being circumcised and obeying a certain form of religious order is not necessary to be justified before God. Justification before God comes only one way, and that is through the work of Jesus. Justification in God’s sight is freely given and received by faith to all peoples, to the *Jews* as well as the *Gentiles*, the *circumcised* as well as the *uncircumcised*.

Biblical Text

29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, 30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.