

Romans 4:12

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/rom/rom-4/romans-412/>

Paul is emphasizing that Abraham is the father of all who believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised.

Paul has just asserted that Abraham was justified before God by faith years prior to being circumcised. Therefore, Abraham is the father of the uncircumcised people who believe. Now, to make perfectly clear that he is by no means setting aside the importance of the Jews, Paul now states that Abraham is also the father of those who are circumcised who walk in faith: *And the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised* (v 12).

This again harkens back to the theme verse of Romans 1:16–17, that the righteous or just man is one who walks by faith (rather than in pride). Paul overtly made this point previously in Romans 3:1–3, stating that Jews had a great advantage, chiefly because God gave them the Scriptures. It is these Scriptures that give us God’s word upon which we can believe and walk in that belief. God’s word shows us how to choose life, and avoid death (Deuteronomy 30:19).

The competing Jewish “authorities” want to overturn Paul’s gospel of grace, claiming that Paul teaches that believers ought to sin a lot because that makes God’s grace even larger (Romans 3:8). Paul does teach that we cannot out-sin God’s grace, since His grace is infinite (Romans 5:20). But Paul also displays the highest reverence for God’s Word, which teaches us God’s ways, explaining why believers ought to walk in obedience to God’s ways, even though we have been unconditionally delivered from the penalty of sin through God’s grace. The reason is simple: when we choose sin we suffer the consequences of sin, which are death, slavery, and destruction (Romans 1:18, 24, 26, 28, 6:16, 23).

It is the Scriptures Paul has appealed to so far as authority for his defense against the slander of his gospel to the Gentiles (Romans 3:8). It is the Scriptures, of which his detractors (the competing Jewish “authorities”) claim to be teachers—but are actually slandering by their actions. This letter to the Roman believers will also help Paul’s ministry partners Aquila and Priscilla, who host a church in their house in Rome, to counter the arguments of the competing Jewish “authorities” (Romans 16:3; Acts 18:2, 18, 26).

The Word of God includes the promise of God to Abraham that Abraham followed in faith (Genesis 12:1-3). Abraham left his home to go to a new country because God asked him to (Genesis 12:4). Abraham did as God requested and did not withhold his only son (Genesis 22:9). These are the *steps of the faith of our father Abraham* which Paul wants each person to walk in, the *steps* of believing God’s words and promises, just as Abraham walked. Abraham walked in faith even *while uncircumcised*.

Biblical Text

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