

“Signed, Sealed, Delivered...by Faith”

**Romans 4:9-12
January 10, 2021**

I. Message of the Passage in the Context of Romans

- A. Abraham was justified by faith *before* (15-30 yrs. before!) he was circumcised.
- B. Circumcision was a sign (symbol) and seal (visible promise) of the righteousness he already possessed by faith.
- C. God ordered Abraham’s life this way in order to make him the spiritual father of those who believe and are not circumcised (Gentiles).
- D. True Israel was not merely the circumcised, but those who also *believe* as Abraham did.

II. Message of the Passage Concerning Baptism and the Lord’s Supper

- A. The sacraments of the Old Covenant (Circumcision, Passover, etc.) anticipated and were fulfilled (in Christ) and then replaced by Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.
- B. Our sacraments as God’s New Covenant people are still signs and not the realities they signify.
- C. Yet the sacraments also truly seal to *believers* the realities promised by God in them:

Acts 22:16 - ‘Now why do you delay? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on His name.’

1 Peter 3:21 - Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:16 - Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the blood of Christ? Is not the bread which we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

- D. The sacraments are not professions we make; they are God’s professions to us, professions to be received by a lifelong faith.

Therefore, as often as we fall away, we ought to recall the memory of our own baptism and fortify our mind with it that we always be sure and confident of the forgiveness of sins.

(John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion 4.15.4)