

Romans 4:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Analysis

Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Paul quotes Psalm 32:1, David's beatitude on forgiveness. The Greek uses two terms for sin: *anomia* (ἀνομία, "lawlessnesses/iniquities") and *hamartiai* (ἁμαρτίαι, "sins/failures"). Both are plural, emphasizing the totality of human transgression. Two corresponding verbs describe God's action: *aphethēsan* (ἀφέθησαν, "were forgiven/sent away") and *epikalyphthēsan* (ἐπεκαλύφθησαν, "were covered").

The covering imagery evokes the atonement—blood covering sin, making it invisible to divine judgment. This is not denial or overlooking of sin but satisfaction of justice through substitutionary sacrifice. The passive voice indicates God's action: He forgives, He covers. These are divine initiatives, not human achievements. The blessedness (*makarioi*, μακάριοι) belongs to those who receive forgiveness, not those who earn it. Paul's argument accumulates: Abraham received credited righteousness (v. 3), David describes forgiveness apart from works (v. 6), and this blessedness extends to all who believe.

Historical Context

The language of 'covering' sin would resonate with Paul's readers familiar with the sacrificial system, where animal blood symbolically covered the sins of Israel. Paul is preparing to show that this blessing extends beyond ethnic Israel to all who

believe, both circumcised and uncircumcised—a revolutionary claim that will fully unfold in verses 9-12.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What is the significance of using two different terms for sin and two different verbs for God's dealing with sin?
2. How does the 'covering' of sin point forward to Christ's atonement as the ultimate satisfaction of divine justice?
3. Why does Paul emphasize that this blessedness belongs to those who receive rather than achieve forgiveness?

Interlinear Text

Μακάριοι	ὧν	ἀφέθησαν	αἱ	ἀνομίαι	καὶ
Saying Blessed	are they whose	are forgiven	G3588	iniquities	and
G3107	G3739	G863		G458	G2532
ὧν	ἐπεκαλύφθησαν	αἱ	ἁμαρτίαι·		
are they whose	are covered	G3588	sins		
G3739	G1943		G266		

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 85:2 (Sin): Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered all their sin. Selah.

Matthew 9:2 (Sin): And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

