

## The Epistle to the Romans ch. 4

### A Quick Review on where we are

Chapter 3: the universal law condemns us all

Defining law: Gk Nomos: sin is not "normal" is sickness

Hebrew: Torah "A letter of the father to his long lost son"

The Law is still valid and good: Shemini Azaret, the last day of Succoth

It is our instructor: Paidagogue

3:20 Knowledge of the Law brings the consciousness of sin

Justification with God does not come from the law

### 2. Key Themes in chapter 4

\*Abraham: the "father of nations"

Abraham is considered the first Jew (Genesis 12)

The Origin of the Covenant: a deal with God and obligations on both sides

A bit of Hebrew biology-to the effect that we were all there in a microcosm - so God's blessing was on all of the Jewish people

\*Justification: Greek: Diskousine

"credited to" reckoned = an accounting term

Justification: the process of being made righteous (verb)

Justification as a goal, the state of being made right (noun)

Almost identical words

God is righteous because He is perfect, without fault, without blame

This attribute of God is shared with men

The means by which we are given this state is by faith (pistis)

- First def of faith It is not simply a matter of believing in God, but believing towards God

It is not simply having faith, as a quantifiable ("great" or "weak")

Rather it is looking at something which we do not understand

One cannot say "have no faith in God" but rather "I stopped looking for God."

### 3, 4:1-12: The Case of Abraham and David

Was "justified" or made righteous even before circumcision"

Abraham was declared righteous before he was circumcised

David: regarded as a prophet and author of the Psalms

Blessedness: Makaroi - the state of being happy- not in the sense of giggling but supremely happy. Ref. Plato "happiness is having the good and keeping it"

Circumcision: submission to the Law (Judaism)

Paul, it is a seal v. 11, like a royal seal or promise

Paul: do as Abraham did, not what he was

4:13-25

\* Christianity is not a religion of obeying the rules: righteousness comes from faith, and not human works. But obeying the rules, Torah or modern -does not save one

So and so "was a good person" - according to Paul NO

(or) "I don't need to go to church to be a good person"

Paul would reply that this is true & irrelevant: goodness does not save

People often ask, how can I be forgiven for doing X

The bad news: there is nothing you can do

The Good news: Christ can do what you cannot

Being faithful does not mean keeping rules or doing good

It is the state of looking to God for everything

Compare with Islam, Hindu and Buddhism: salvation by merit

\*Religion is not ethnic! C. 17 One does not inherit because of one's clever ancestors; it is a personal and individual thing. Cite A. as 'father of many nations

\*belief is hope against hope - its not a mathematical equation

I have never been raised from the dead but U still believe in it

Ref. Soren Kierkegaard's dilemma of Abraham ("Fear and Trembling")

Kierkegaard claims that Abraham did not act out of a resignation that God must always be obeyed but rather out of faith that God would not do something that was ethically wrong. Abraham knew that killing Isaac was ethically wrong, but he had faith that God would spare his son.

\*"Multiculturalism" is not our faith - it is a byproduct of our faith

Clearer in Galatians 3:26 ff.

\*promises made to A are also promises made to us

\*Christ's death and resurrection are God's seal on this promise