

LESSON 8: ROMANS 4:1-25

Abraham's Example

1. According to Paul, how were Old Testament saints, such as Abraham and David, justified? How do you know this (4:1-8)? Were Old Testament saints therefore saved in the same way as New Testament saints are today? How might the Old Testament saints' experience of salvation been the same as ours? Different?
2. What are some of the differences between justification by faith and by works (vv. 1-12)? What would works righteousness require? What is significant about David's picture of sins being covered (v. 7: *epi + kalupto* vs. *apo + kalupto*)? What do you think is the significance of both Paul and David using the word "count" (vv. 5 and 8, *logizomai*: reckon, credit, place to one's account) in regard to God's not counting our sin and counting us righteous? What is significant about Paul's phrase speaking of our trusting "him who justifies the ungodly" (v. 5)? Why is this so important for Christians to grasp and affirm? How can a sinful person be acceptable to a holy God?
3. How does Paul refute the idea that unless a person is circumcised he has no hope of being saved (vv. 10-12)? What was circumcision therefore? How might this line of thinking have significance in the modern church?
4. What point is Paul making in his whole discussion setting our works and wages against God's promise and grace (vv. 13-16)? What point do you think Paul is making in verses 15 and 16?
5. The word "believe" is crucial word to this chapter. What did Abraham believe about God? How was this reflected in his life (vv. 17-23)? What must you believe in order to be justified? How is it to be reflected in your life? So what's wrong with a little sprinkling of works righteousness in addition to my faith...?
6. What is the purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection? In what sense are our sins the cause of Jesus' death? (See 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:5-11.) Why do people find it easier to accept the idea of "works righteousness" rather than "faith righteousness"?

Righteousness of God is the wrath being revealed always, and to come.

World at large: given over.

Jews: not righteous because they know the law, but only if they do the law.

No special privilege here: the one who does the law is righteous, Jew or no Jew.

But as it happens: there is none righteous, no, not one.

Thus, no one is saved by law, but condemned by it.

What advantage then has the Jew?

To them the oracles (the Law, his Word)

Law doesn't save: the greatness of the law is that it reveals our sin.

It reveals our need of Christ!

Otherwise, no difference:

All have sinned; world under judgment.

Central, crucial bad news of gospel: universal condemnation.

But now the righteousness from God is being revealed!

Justification as a gift by grace through redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

He is both just and the justifier of the one whose faith is in Jesus!

This is the law of faith (as opposed to the law of works), and it allows for no boasting.

In view here is a radical vision: a world under judgment, and the pardon only through faith in Christ.

Radical Christ reliance is called for; total complete trust for one's status before God.

How then was this shown in the OT? Now we see! And we'll also see how the Jews and Gentiles are connected in and through him....