

We are considering two incredible time periods in the history of the nation of Israel. The first time period is the typical salvation of Abraham's seed out of Egypt into the Promised Land. The second is the Gospels through to the end of the book of Acts. Remember a Passover started both these time periods. The Acts period features the imminent fulfillment of those events that were foreshadowed in the Exodus. Just as Joshua led Israel into the Land at Trumpets, so during Acts, the hope was the return of the greater Joshua at the fulfillment of the Feast of Trumpets to re-gather Israel into the same Land.

Deuteronomy and Romans were written late in probationary periods upon Israel after great failures of faith. Despite these failures, God remained faithful to Israel in both probationary periods. He did not start anything new. His ultimate act of grace at the time of Deuteronomy was to take Israel into their and His inheritance because of His promises to their fathers. During Acts this same faithfulness of God was in view. The promises made to Israel's fathers were the hope of the Acts period.

In our opening lesson we observed Paul's use of Deuteronomy 30:11-14 in Romans 10:6-8. Paul links the great doctrine of justification by faith to the writings of Moses. Paul links the Acts period doctrine of justification by faith to the Deuteronomy probationary period. Justification by faith is found in both probationary periods of Israel and now we more deeply examine the dispensational setting of this great doctrine. Is justification by faith the start of something new, or is it yet another proof that God remained faithful to His promises to Israel's fathers? To begin we remain in the Acts period and turn to a letter written earlier than Romans, Paul's letter to the Galatians;

[Gal 1:11](#) .. brothers, I make known to you the gospel which was preached by me, that it is not according to man.
[Gal 1:12](#) For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught *it* except by a revelation of Jesus Christ.

The gospel Paul received by revelation during the Acts included the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. In Christ was found forgiveness of sins and righteousness; justification by faith. Reading further into Galatians we find Paul expounding the gospel he received by revelation;

[Gal 3:5](#) ..He supplying the Spirit to you and working powerful works in you, *is it* by works of *the* law, or by hearing of faith?

[Gal 3:6](#) Even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.

[Gal 3:7,9](#) Therefore know that those of faith, these are the sons of Abraham ...and... are blessed with faithful Abraham.

Abraham's justification by faith (v 6) looks back to Gen 15:6 but Paul's gospel included justification (righteousness) for the Gentiles by faith. Those Gentiles who had believed, their faith was just as effective as Abraham's in the matter of righteousness reckoned by grace. To show the Scriptural basis of the Gentiles' justification, Paul goes way back to the call of Abraham as found here;

[Gal 3:8](#) And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the nations through faith, preached the gospel before to Abraham, *saying*, "In you shall all nations be blessed."

[Gen 12:1](#) And Jehovah said to Abram, Go out of your country, and from your kindred, and from your father's house into a land that I will show you.

[Gen 12:2](#) And I will make you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great. And you shall be a blessing.

[Gen 12:3](#) And I will bless those that bless you and curse the one who curses you. And in you shall all families of the earth be blessed.

What gospel was it that the Scriptures (here personified) preached before to Abraham? Did the Scriptures indeed preach Paul's gospel before Paul received it? Paul received it by revelation but doesn't Paul himself say his gospel was clearly foreseen? Absolutely! Once we acknowledge this we can see a huge difference between this revelation of the Acts period and the post Acts revelation of

Eph. 3:1-3a, 7-9. The post Acts revelation of Ephesians was not preached before, not foreseen, it was unsearchable even hidden in God and has nothing to do with Abraham.

In the Acts period letters of Galatians and Romans, Paul expounds the great doctrine of justification by faith. In this great probationary period upon Israel, this great doctrine is proclaimed. Justification for Abraham was when he believed God as recorded in Genesis 15:6 but the justification of the Gentiles was found in the call of Abraham, that is, before Abraham experienced the grace of God. When Jehovah called Abram, He embedded in that call the promise of justification for the Nations. Let us go back and see clearly the first dispensational setting of the promise of justification by faith for the Gentiles.

In Genesis 10:23 and 11:8-9 the Lord scattered the descendants of Adam and in so doing He scattered them according to this passage in Deuteronomy;

[Deu 32:8](#) When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the sons of Israel.

[Deu 32:9](#) For Jehovah's portion is His people. Jacob is the lot of His inheritance.

Please notice very carefully, justification (righteousness) was promised to the Gentiles after the Gentiles had been scattered in a relationship with Israel. Justification by faith for the Gentiles is firmly set in God's faithfulness to Israel, His people, His inheritance. The Scriptures preached justification by faith for Gentiles when God called the father of Israel; when He began the great nation through whom the scattered Gentiles would be blessed. Israel was His called out people for a purpose;

[Isa 61:6](#) But you will be named the priests of Jehovah; it will be said of you, Ministers of our God; you will eat the riches of the nations, and you will revel in their glory.

[Isa 61:11](#) For as the earth comes out with its bud, and as the garden causes that which is sown to grow; so the Lord Jehovah will cause righteousness and praise to grow before all the nations.

Justification by faith is in the call of Abraham and in the life of Abraham. This great doctrine of justification by faith is firmly set in the beginnings of Israel, not in the beginnings of "the church". In the light of these facts, how could any teach that justification by faith in Paul's Acts gospel given by revelation is the genesis of God's purposes for heavenly places and the new creation of Ephesians which has nothing to do with Israel, the Nations and the earth?

Justification by faith is not an Acts period launch pad to Ephesians, it is a cause way leading back to the very beginning of Israel and the promises made to their fathers.

Justification by faith was foreseen & preached to Abraham in Gen.12 because the Gentiles had been put aside not Israel. How can any teach that justification by faith was taught as the beginning of Ephesians truth because Israel was set aside? How back to front is that? Is justification by faith a glorious doctrine for us today? If we affirm it is, we must however recognize that during Acts, it is embedded in the earthly purposes of God and must be left in that setting. This great doctrine does not of itself signal any change of dispensation, quite the opposite, during Acts it affirms the continuance of God's earthly purposes through Israel.

During the Acts period Israel remained God's people; they had not been cast aside and justification by faith was preached to Gentiles who were then included in the blessings given to Abraham. This was in perfect harmony with the call of Abraham, the father of that nation through whom the world would be blessed. And here is an amazing parallel which cannot be understated. During Acts it was Jew first (Acts 3:25-26 & Roms.1:16-17) and way back in Genesis it was Jew first. Abraham, we can

call him a Jew, was made righteous by faith first, Gen.15:6. Back in Genesis it wasn't the cast off nations dragging Abraham into a new calling; it was Abraham being made righteous by faith first in an earthly dispensation. If it was an earthly calling in Genesis when justification by faith was foreseen, then it is also an earthly calling during Acts when it was made plain. The passages from Galatians below prove this fact.

The Acts period was not and is not a transition or a progressive revelation. Israel remained stumbling and unfaithful, but just like Deuteronomy, God remained faithful. He declared His "gifts and calling" were without change of mind (irrevocable), Roms.11:29. All that was included in the call of Abraham was being fully disclosed during Acts and this included the justification of the Gentiles by faith.

We return to Galatians and Paul's gospel given by revelation to find the earthly setting of justification by faith fully and clearly outlined;

Those Gentiles who were justified by faith were the Sons, that is, the Heirs of Abraham.

[Gal 3:7](#) Therefore know that those of faith, these are the sons of Abraham.

They would be blessed with Abraham.

[Gal 3:9](#) So then those of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

They enjoyed the blessing of Abraham, the supernatural gifts and powerful works of the Spirit.

[Gal 3:5](#) Then He supplying the Spirit to you and working powerful works in you, *is it by works of the law, or by hearing of faith?*

[Gal 3:14](#) so that the blessing of Abraham might be to the nations in Jesus Christ, and that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Their inheritance was the very land of inheritance given to Abraham by promise.

[Gal 3:18](#) For if the inheritance is of Law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by way of promise.

The Gentiles of faith were included in Abraham's "seed" because they had put on Christ.

[Gal 3:27](#) For as many as were baptized into Christ, you put on Christ.

[Gal 3:28](#) There cannot be Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is no male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

[Gal 3:29](#) And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Like Abraham, they also looked for a city whose builder and maker is God, Hebrews 11:8-10, 12:22. Their rejoicing is in harmony with the prophecy of Isaiah 54, see verses 1-5, and they, like Isaac, were children of promise.

[Gal 4:26](#) But the Jerusalem *from above* is free, who is the mother of us all.

[Gal 4:27](#) For it is written, "Rejoice, barren one not bearing; break forth and shout, you not travailing; for more are the children of the desolate than she having the husband." (Isaiah 54)

[Gal 4:28](#) But brothers, we, like Isaac, are children of promise.

Justification by faith in this gospel given to Paul by revelation during Acts is set firmly and emphatically on the earth. It was preached to Abraham after Gentiles had been put aside around Israel. To take it out of this dispensational setting and claim it begins another in the heavenly places is not right division at all and totally out of step with the Word of God.

Next lesson we move to Romans where we find Paul emphasizing that justification by faith was witnessed by the Law and the Prophets. And we find it especially in Deuteronomy, that book of Moses written late in a probationary period on Israel just before they entered the Promised Land at Trumpets.