

When the Apostle Paul was defending himself before King Agrippa as recorded in Acts 26, he made two incredible statements about the hope he held and his ministry up until that time. This is what Paul said just two chapters prior to the close of the book; **And now I stand and am judged for *the hope of the promise made to our fathers* by God, to which *promise* our twelve tribes hope to attain, serving God fervently night and day. For the sake of this hope, king Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews. Act 26:6-7**

After this, king Agrippa, I did not disobey the heavenly vision. But to those first in Damascus, and Jerusalem, and to all the country of Judea, and to the nations, I made known *the command* to repent and to turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance Because of these things, having caught *me* in the temple, The Jews tried to kill *me*.

Then having obtained help from God, **I stand until this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said was going to happen;** whether the Christ *was* liable to suffer, whether first by a resurrection of *the dead* He was going to proclaim light to the people and to the nations. Act 26:19-23

King Agrippa, do you believe **the Prophets**? I know that you believe. Act 26:27

Paul's hope at Acts 26 was the same hope the 12 unrepentant tribes of Israel held. The resurrection contained in Paul's hope was the resurrection the 12 tribes hoped to come. Paul's ministry was "no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said was going to happen". Paul's appeal to Agrippa was that he believed the prophets.

One of the prophets Paul used is Habakkuk. Here are three occurrences of that Prophet in Paul's writings. First Paul used Hab.1:5 as a warning to the Jews in Acts 13:49;

Therefore beware lest that come on you which is spoken of in the Prophets: "Behold, you despisers, and marvel, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no way believe, though a man declare *it* to you." Act 13:40-41 (Hab.1:5)

The prophet speaks of a northern army wreaking havoc in the Land of Israel; the wrath of God on those Israelites who refused to listen. Please compare Roms.3:15, Proverbs 1:15-25, Is.28:14-22 and Roms.10:21.

Paul uses Habakkuk again in Romans here;

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is *the power of God* unto salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." Rom 1:16-17 (Hab.2:4)

Paul turns to Hab.2:4 to find Scriptures which declare justification by faith at the opening of Romans. If indeed the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to use a prophecy, then we would be wise to consider the context of that prophecy because Paul and the prophecy are harmonized by the Holy Spirit.

When we turn to Habakkuk 2 as Paul did, we find a context which is about the earth. Here are two verses from Hab.2, the first is the verse Paul used in Romans 1 and the second confirms the dispensational setting of Romans and justification by faith; **Behold, the soul of him is lifted up, and is not upright; but the just shall live by his faith. Hab 2:4**

For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. Hab 2:14

We have already demonstrated that justification by faith is firmly established in the purpose of God for the earth when we compared Deut.30 and Romans 10. But here again, we have Paul's teaching of justification by faith set yet again in the earthly purposes of God by the prophet Habakkuk. Justification by faith is not a spring board to the dispensation found in Ephesians and Colossians. Justification by faith is a common feature of the two different callings, essential in the Acts period company and essential for us today. We call such a doctrine, a fundamental, horizontal or universal truth: a common doctrine found in different purposes of God.

Justification by faith in Habakkuk is set in the earth and looks to the day when the knowledge of the glory of the Lord shall fill the earth. Here is a fascinating consistency in God's Word. When we looked at the hope of Romans as found in chapter 15 verses 4, 8-13 we found Paul included a reference to Isaiah as one of the promises made to the fathers. Roms.15:12 is a quote from Isaiah 11:1, 10. What else does Isaiah 11 speak about? Look at this amazing harmony between Habakkuk, Isaiah and Romans; [They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea. Isa 11:9](#)

Isaiah and Habakkuk are practically word for word regarding the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord and Paul quotes both prophets in Romans. Paul's warning to the Jews in Acts 13 was not that they would be cut off nationally and a new calling introduced, but that they would suffer under the wrath of God as the prophets had spoken. In Romans 1 and 15 Paul uses two prophets Habakkuk and Isaiah to link Justification by faith with the earthly hope in view during the Acts period.

We know Paul uses Habakkuk 2:4 in Gals.3:11 and Galatians was written early in the Acts period. Galatians is in harmony with Paul's claim in Acts 26 that the hope at that time, was the same hope the 12 tribes of Israel expected. Galatians was written early in Acts, Romans was written last in Acts and there is no change or progression in Paul.

To find the earthly hope of Galatians, please read Gal.3:8-9 where Gen.12 is quoted by Paul and Gen.12 and concerns the call of Abram to a land. See also Gal.3:18 where the inheritance of the believing Jews and Gentiles during Acts was the land promised to Abraham in a covenant. See also Gal.3:28-29 where the believers of that time were the seed of Abraham and heirs according to that promise given Abraham. See also Gal.4:26-28 where the believers of the Acts period were like Isaac, children of promise of Abraham. None of these things are dispensationally compatible with our calling today as found in Ephesians and Colossians.

If we accept that Paul wrote Hebrews then we find Habakkuk used again by the Apostle in this verse;  
[Now, "the Just shall live by faith. But if he draws back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him."](#)  
[Heb 10:38](#)

Here is a fascinating consistency of Scripture. Hebrews, also written late in the Acts period, declares that the believers were expecting the following;

But you have come to Mount Zion and to *the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, Heb 12:22* Compare Roms.11:25-26 and the Gals' verses above.

This is the very same hope of Romans and Galatians. But wait, there's more. Here are two more encouraging consistencies between Romans and Hebrews. Let us return to chapter 10 of Hebrews to that very context where Paul quoted Hab.2:4. In Hebrews 10 Paul quotes Jeremiah and the new Covenant;

"*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord; I will put My Laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,*" also *He adds,* "their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more." *Heb 10:16-17*

Paul refers to this very same covenant in Romans 11:27.

But wait there's more still; more wonderfully consistent parallels to be seen. In Hebs.10:30 Paul quotes the Song of Moses, the very song found in Roms.12 and 15 and in Revelation;

*For we know Him who has said, "Vengeance belongs to Me, I will repay, says the Lord." And again, "The Lord shall judge His people." Heb 10:30* Please see Deut.32:35-36.

The Song of Moses is found in Israel's typical redemption just prior to Joshua leading Israel into the Promised Land at Trumpets. The Song of Moses is found in Romans the hope of which is the earth. The Song of Moses in Hebrews, the hope of which is Zion in the earth and the New Jerusalem. The Song of Moses in the book of Revelation, the hope of which is Trumpets fulfilled and the redeemed on Mount Zion singing a deliverance song just like Israel did after the Lord had destroyed Pharaoh and his armies. Romans, Hebrews, Galatians and Revelation were written during the Acts period when the ends of the ages were upon them and the Feast of Trumpets was expected in their lifetimes.

Paul's hope in Galatians is the earth and the New Jerusalem which descends to the earth. Paul's hope in Romans is the earth. Paul's hope in Hebrews is ZION and the New Jerusalem. Justification by faith and the hope of the Gentiles of the Acts period are both found in prophecies which speak of the glory of the Lord filling the earth. Can we accept the truth of Paul's confession?

*Then having obtained help from God, I stand until this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said was going to happen; whether the Christ was liable to suffer, whether first by a resurrection of the dead He was going to proclaim light to the people and to the nations. Act 26:19-23*

Next lesson we shall bring this series to a close. But my prayer is that, by the grace of God, we are beginning to see the monumental dispensational differences in Paul. Those letters written during Acts were the hope of the church Israel; those letters written after Acts are our hope, the hope of the church which is His body.