

## Acts 28 – The Great N.T. dispensational divide

### Paul, Hebrews, Habakkuk and the end of the ages The context of the just shall live by faith.

We universally acknowledge the maxim that every text has a context, but despite this, Christianity constantly ignores it. This Bible study rule is overlooked even in dispensational circles.

Many promote Paul's gospel as being one long progression of truth as in Romans through Philemon because he called it "my gospel" either side of Acts 28, but when we compare Paul's gospel in all his letters, we find significant dispensational differences. The context of each letter clearly shows these differences. Paul must be rightly divided, his letters are dispensationally different.

Another incredible example of context ignored is Habakkuk and his prophesy regarding the just by his faith shall live. If we extract righteousness from the prophet and ignore the context, we are open to error. Likewise, if we ignore the contexts where the prophet is featured in the New Testament, we will not notice Habakkuk, the Gospels and Acts are the same dispensationally.

Habakkuk is Paul during Acts and Paul during Acts is Habakkuk.

Habakkuk.

Here are five essential features of Habakkuk which were brought directly into the Acts period, potentially the very time the prophet foretold. It is critical to note, that the time was clearly given as, "at the end it shall speak". Justification in Habakkuk is set in the end times where righteousness is found in those who live in these end time conditions, and in these end times national apostacy is rife. These features alone make us hesitate to label Paul and righteousness reckoned during Acts as the opening of something new and previously hidden.

The prophets said, the just by their faith shall live, in times of apostacy.

*Behold, the soul of him is lifted up, and is not upright; but the just shall live by his faith.* Hab 2:4.

The prophet spoke about timing.

*And the LORD answered me,...For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* Hab 2:2a-3.

The prophet warned the apostate Israelis that God was going to do a work in their day.

*Look among the nations, and behold and wonder marvelously; for I will work a work in your days which you will not believe, not even if it is declared to you.* Hab 1:5.

The prophet spoke about a northern army bringing God's wrath.

*For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, the bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess homes not their own.* Hab 1:6.

The Prophet declared the earth full of knowledge of the Lord's glory.

*For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

Hab 2:14.

This is the context of justification in the prophet and before we turn to Paul, these dispensational features must be recognized. Justification by faith from Abel via Habakkuk to Paul before Acts 28, was set in the land.

Justification was proclaimed many years before Paul when Abel by faith was made righteous. Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness, and in that context the Promised Land is the only location in view, Gen.15. Moses wrote of righteousness by faith, Deut.30:11-14 as we find in Roms.10:6-8, and it was Moses who rejoiced in the day the Lord would be merciful for his land and his people, Deut.32:43. King David also knew the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputed righteousness without works, and Psa.89 looked for that day when David's seed would be established forever, his throne to all generations, and his days as the days of heaven.

The Scriptures unfold righteousness by faith from the beginning, and Habakkuk is not introducing any new doctrine or bringing out anything hidden in God. He is used four times in the New Testament prior to Acts 28. The original dispensational setting of the prophet is the identical setting of the Acts period. Here is a summary of the same dispensational settings where Habakkuk is used.

Paul first used Habakkuk in Acts 13 where he preached his gospel to the Jews and God-fearing Gentiles in a Jewish synagogue. He specifically described his gospel with the words "this salvation" in Acts 13:26. This salvation gospel of Paul, preached to Jews and Gentiles, contained justification inseparable from these features.

The first feature is the savior is the seed of David, promised to sit on David's throne, Lk.1:32, Psa.132:11. He was raised to Israel, not to the Gentile world. The King promised was the savior preached in whom was forgiveness and justification, up to Acts 28.

*And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will. Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: Act 13:22-23.*

Paul preaching "my gospel" declares the death burial and resurrection of Christ fulfilled the prophesy of Psa.2, and Isa.55, where the King was set on the holy hill of Zion as a leader and commander of the people, Acts 13:33-34. Psalm two also features in Hebrews which quotes Habakkuk, the just shall live by faith. This is Paul's gospel, and he goes on to emphasis for that audience at that time, that through this man, David's seed, Israel's King, is forgiveness and justification provided. Justification by faith, preached by Paul in Acts 13 is in the risen King of Israel.

Paul then turns to Habakkuk to deliver a warning to the Jews opposing the message, perhaps their soul was lifted up and not upright.

*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. Act 13:38-41.*

Acts and Habakkuk.

Paul's first mention of justification is accompanied by clear statements about Christ as Israel's King raised to sit on David's throne as per Lk.1:32. Zion is the center of that hope. This is Paul's gospel; this is the context of justification by faith. In that setting Paul turns to Habakkuk warning the

unresponsive Israelis of God's judgment. This also confirms the dispensational setting of the Acts period, and all Paul wrote during that time.

Christ as King and commander, his imminent return at Trumpets, and the warning of Habakkuk were postponed at Acts 28.

Justification by faith is not the building block of our present calling. To promote the idea that Paul, in Acts, preached justification as the beginning of something hidden in God is to ignore the context of Habakkuk and the writings of Paul. Paul does not use Habakkuk after Acts 28.

Romans and Habakkuk.

The prophets said, the just shall live by their faith, in times of apostasy.

*Behold, the soul of him is lifted up, and is not upright; but the just shall live by his faith.* Hab 2:4.

Paul writes the just shall live by their faith, while the nation was disobedient and contradicting.

*For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.* Rom 1:17.

The prophet spoke about timing.

*And the LORD answered me,...For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* Hab 2:2a-3.

Paul writes of the same timing, the very end it shall speak of Habakkuk.

*This also, knowing the time, that it is already time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light* Rom 13:11-12.

*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.* Rom 16:20. See also 1Cor.7:29-31, 1Cor.10:11 (ends of the ages), 15:51, 1Thess.4:15, 17.

The prophet spoke about a northern army bringing God's wrath.

*For lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, the bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land to possess homes not their own.* Hab 1:6.

Paul warns the Romans about the day of God's wrath, and the man of sin in 2Thess.2 would fit the prophesy of Habakkuk.

*But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;* Rom 2:5 . Roms.1:18, 1Thess.1:10.

The Prophet declared the earth full of knowledge of the Lord's glory.

*For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*

Hab 2:14.

Paul in Romans looks to the earth.

*And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins* Rom 11:26-27.

*For I consider that our present sufferings cannot even be compared to the glory that will be revealed to us.*

Rom 8:18. NET.

*Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also,* Rom 8:21-23.

*Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people* Deu 32:43, Roms.15:10.

*They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.* Isa 11:9-10. Roms.15:12.

Habakkuk and Hebrews.

The prophets said, the just shall live by their faith, in times of apostasy.

*Behold, the soul of him is lifted up, and is not upright; but the just shall live by his faith.* Hab 2:4.

The prophet spoke about timing.

*And the LORD answered me,...For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.* Hab 2:2a-3.

Hebrews, justification, times of apostasy and the ends of the ages, judgment.

*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* Heb 10:25.

This is the Day of the Lord, and the meeting in the clouds, see 2Thess.2:1, gathering together unto him.

*For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.* Heb 10:25-27.

*For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.* Heb 10:35-39.

Hebrews is full of warnings and reminds the readers of the fiery judgment of God. It looks past the antichrist and his armies and brings the "second coming" of the Lord into focus as a day when not only the earth is shaken, but the heavens as well.

*See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.* Heb 12:25-26.

*For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.* Hag 2:6-7.

*When the mountains see you, they shake. The torrential downpour sweeps through.....* Hab 3:10. NET.

There is no doubt that Hebrews looks to the heavenly country, the New Jerusalem, the New Covenant, Zion, Trumpets, Angels and the greater earthquakes than Mt Sinai. Hebrews looks to the time when his house shall be filled with his glory and the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. This is the setting of the just shall live by faith, not only herein Hebrews, but in Acts 13, Romans and Galatians.

Habakkuk and Galatians.

Galatians also features Habakkuk and like the prophet, the direction of hope is entirely earthly.

*Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children [sons = heirs] of Abraham.* Gal 3:6-7.

*But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*

Gal 3:11.

*And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* Gal 3:29.

*But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that*

*bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.* Isa.54:1. Gal 4:26-27.

*Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed: neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame: for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more. For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.* Isa 54:4-5.

Abraham and Habakkuk coincidentally are both featured in Romans, Galatians and Hebrews, Abraham made righteous when he was given the Land by promise, and Habakkuk foretold at the end it will be when the just by their faith shall live and all the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

These are the contexts in which the text sits and fits. Paul and the just shall live by faith; prior to Acts 28 is at the end it shall be. Righteousness by faith, prior to Acts 28, is immovable from no other things than those which were promised to Abraham and which the prophets and Moses did say should come.

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