

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

**Romans does not provide the foundation to Ephesians  
Redemptive truths reside in different dispensations.**

It has been suggested that Paul's Acts period letter to the Romans provides a foundation for the post Acts letter of Ephesians, but is this true?

It could be true that since Paul's gospel up until Acts 28 was given by revelation, and The Mystery given to Paul alone after Acts 28 was given by revelation, that The Mystery for today did not need any previous foundation, both were complete packages given by Christ to Paul, one prior to Acts 28, the other after Acts 28.

We might find that redemptive truths about our Lord's faithfulness, his vicarious offering and faith and righteousness reckoned appear before and after Acts 28, but since both gospels were given by revelation, does this mean The Mystery is founded on Romans because of common redemptive truths? Obviously not, since dispensational truths are not founded on redemptive truths.

The idea that Ephesians came through Romans might have originated from the truth that Paul is the Apostle of the Gentiles either side of Acts 28. This fact alone invites some to theorize Paul was given a progressive, transitional revelation culminating in the glorious dispensational truths of Ephesians and Colossians. Consequently, the dispensationally disastrous ideology of Romans through Philemon infects their right division and the proclamation of the truth.

Justification by faith through grace is a truth found before and after Acts 28, Roms.3:22, & Phils.3:9. This creates a stumbling block for some who imagine that, since it is [supposedly] unique to Paul, then it is a dispensational pillar of the church which is his body since we know that calling is definitely unique to Paul. However, justification by faith is not a dispensational truth and not unique to Paul. Paul's vigorous claim he received his Acts period apostleship and gospel directly from Christ as per Gals.1:1, 11-12, 15-16, does not mean that his gospel was previously hid in God. Justification by faith in Paul's Acts period writings, a redemptive truth, was already embedded in the Law and the lives of Israel's fathers as Paul clearly states and references, Roms.3:21, 4:1-8 & 10:6-8 et al.

The fact that redemptive truths appear in Romans does not give weight to any progressive revelation theory, or that Romans is foundation to Ephesians. For Romans to be the foundation upon which Ephesians is built, then we need to see dispensational truths in Romans later embellished or clarified in Ephesians and these do not exist. There are no dispensational truths in Romans which are foundational or belong in our present calling.

Paul's ministry began in Acts and concluded beyond the close of Acts, but the ministries either side of Acts 28, the great N.T. dispensational divide, display glaring dispensational differences and must not be confused by mixture.

While Paul was the one sent to the nations either side of Acts 28, this does not mean the commissions or messages were dispensationally identical. Prior to Acts 28 his commission took him out among the Gentiles, but he preached first to the nation of Israel in nearly every record, Acts

9:15, 26:20, & 17:1-2. After Acts 28 his commission was to all nations, Eph.3:1 without any advantage to Israel.

During Acts his message was full of promise and prophecy, Gentiles blessed with and waiting for the hope of Israel as we show clearly through numerous studies found on Acts28.net. After Acts 28, all believers are blessed with all spiritual blessings in the inheritance located in the heavenly places, a hope and inheritance never previously revealed. The following statements by Paul either side of Acts 28 show common elements of redemption but are obviously very different and impossible to confuse dispensationally, unless we discard our study rule of right division.

Before Acts 28

*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.

*For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.* Gal 3:18.

*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.* Gal 4:26..

*Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.* Gal 4:28.

After Acts 28

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Eph 1:7  
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:* Eph 1:3.

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:* Eph 1:11.

*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:* Eph 2:5-6.

We begin a brief focus on Romans and the dispensational truths within it which I believe disproves that letter as being a foundation for Ephesians. Romans is a simple signpost to Paul in Acts, both regarding redemption and dispensational truths and that signpost looks back not onwards to Ephesians. If we take the truths of Romans back to their origins, and we link Romans to Ephesians, then we are dragging Ephesians via Romans back to Eden, the Law, promise and prophecy which undermines the great truth regarding the Mystery, that it was previously hidden in God and unsearchable.

*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:* Eph 3:8-9.

Romans is founded in the Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets – a brief analysis.

Paul turns to Hab.2:4 in 1:16-17 where the prophet looked to the end and the vision's fulfilment, see this end time aspect in Roms.13:11-12, & 16:20. Romans is the end of the ages and the imminent return of Christ to the earth at the fulfilment of the Feast of Trumpets as per Paul in 1Cor.15 and 1Thess.4. Since Romans is set in the greater Exodus for Israel, then again, linking Romans to Ephesians is linking Ephesians to the original Exodus.

Habakkuk speaks of the just living by their faith at the end, and the wrath of God on the proud,

*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. Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.* Hab 2:3-4.

We see Paul picking up Habakkuk's theme as he compares the just living by faith and God's wrath on the hypocrites, see Roms.1:18-2:29, & Roms.9. The writer of Hebrews also turns to Habakkuk's theme in 10:19-39 and follows the identical line, namely, that the time was short and the just living by their faith and not turning back as others had.

*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 10:37-39.

Remaining faithful is a redemptive theme in all dispensations, we find it in Habakkuk, Romans, Hebrews and Paul after Acts 28 in 2Tim.3:12-17, but this is no basis to claim Romans establishes Ephesians, since by connection we have unwittingly linked Ephesians back to Hebrews & Habakkuk.

In Roms.3:21-22, Paul writes the righteousness of God without the works of the Law, that is by faith, which is witnessed by the law and the prophets and in chapter 4, Paul brings forth that witness from Abraham and David. The former promised both the greater Land and the inner portion, Gen.15, & 17, and the latter a son to be King in that inner portion, Psa.132, Lk.1:32. Justification by faith in Romans is found in the prophet, the Priest and the King of Israel, and while it is said Abraham was the father of faith, the inheritance was the world according to the promises given him by the righteousness of faith. Galatians, written early in Acts, and Romans, written later in Acts, are identical as per inheritance and hope, no change, no progression.

*For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.* Rom 4:13.

*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,* Rom 4:16.

This same theme is found in Gals.3 as we know, culminating in the plain statement that the believers of that time were Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

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

Are any of these following phrases foundational to the calling revealed to Paul after Acts 28? Heir of the world, promised to all the seed, Abraham the father of us all, if Christ's then Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. These are the dispensational features of Romans and Galatians inseparable from righteousness by faith and grace prior to Acts 28. We would agree that those phrases are not in any way foundational to our present calling, however our calling is also based on faith and grace. Here is our raised and seated condition based on faith and grace.

*Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:* Eph 2:5-8.

Faith and grace resulted in very different blessings before and after Acts 28, they are not foundational, they are common elements of two separate and distinct callings. The faith of the individual and the grace of almighty God interacting in his divine but different purposes.

Romans 5 is another nail in the Romans through Philemon coffin. Here we have the beauty of redemption as in justified by faith, peace, access by faith, and grace. There is also the death and

resurrection of Christ, reconciliation and the preservation from wrath already referenced in Habakkuk and Roms.1&2. But the dispensational features are again inseparable from the redemptive elements, the hope of the glory of God is the hope of the inheritance of the world elaborated in Roms.4, but now Paul goes right back to Eden as he compares the two Adams, and the first being a figure of the Coming One. Christ in Romans is the One prefigured by Adam, the One coming to have dominion in Paradise restored and that coming was imminent as per 1Thess.4. None of this is foundational to Ephesians or Colossians.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.* Rom 5:1-2.

*Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.* Rom 5:14.

Romans 6-7 also oppose the idea that Romans is foundational to Ephesians. Paul asks if they could sin so grace would abound and sin because they were not under the [all guilty verdict of the] Law. He teaches identification with Christ's death burial, resurrection and new life, a common theme, but the resurrection of Christ and that of the believer before Acts 28 was to his glory on the earth. Paul is writing to believers before Acts 28, and chapter 6 concludes with the warning that the end of a sinful life is death for the wages of sin is death, this is not a message to the unsaved. This is not the dispensation of the grace of God.

*Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.* Gal 6:7-8. Roms.8:4-7, 13.

Romans 7 uses figures totally inconsistent with Ephesians and Colossians but totally consistent with Paul in Acts. The following is so dispensationally opposed to the church which is his body of Ephesians that we make no comment but let the scriptures speak.

*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.* Rom 7:4.

*For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* 2Co 11:2.

*But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.* Gal 4:26.

*And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.* Rev 21:2.

Romans 8 is about being joint heirs with Christ if they suffer with him, 8:17, again, a truth common to all callings, but the glory of Romans 8 is the glory associated with creation waiting with them for that glory. This is also entirely consistent with Paul during Acts, he turns to Joel, in Roms.10:13 and Joel rejoices for the beasts of the field. In Roms.10:15 Paul references Isa.52:7 which prophet calls for the waste places to sing and break forth in joy, see 51:3. Romans 8 is not a dispensational foundation for Ephesians or Colossians. Here is the glory of Roms.8.

Romans

*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made*

*subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.* Rom 8:16-21.

Romans

*For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.* Rom 10:13. Joel 2.

Joel

*And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.* Joe 2:32.

*Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the LORD will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, ....* Joe 2:21-32a

*And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the LORD your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:* Joe 2:27-28.

Romans

*And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* Rom 10:15. Isaiah 52.

Isaiah 52.

*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the LORD shall bring again Zion. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the LORD hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.* Isa 52:7-8.

How clear and obvious can Paul be in Romans? There is not one sliver of dispensational relevance to Ephesians in Romans as have examined so far.

More to come.

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05-08-2025