

## Justification by Faith

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#### Introduction

We have studied Luke's narrative in Acts to the end of Paul and Barnabus' first missionary journey in this series. Jesus' Gentile evangelism program has been active since the conversion of Cornelius and his household. The shockwaves of God's reversal of His major move in Genesis 12:1-3 was being felt among the Jews everywhere. Gentile Christians could now call Abraham our father (Rom. 9:25, 26). Wow!

Jesus' first major mission effort in Asia Minor was very successful. However, the welcoming of the Gentiles to share in the newly found church of God in Christ made it necessary to make sure all the members knew this was, indeed, a move of God (I Thess. 2:14). Consequently, Jesus called the meeting of the elders and apostles in Acts chapter fifteen. See Part III, Lesson Four. Paul and his new teammates, Silas and Timothy delivered the Jerusalem letter to the new churches on Luke's second recorded evangelism trip (Acts 16:4). It can be noted by the change of the pronouns the writer of Acts joined Paul, Silas and Timothy in Troas. Jesus directed them by the Holy Spirit to take the gospel into Europe from Troas in Asia (16:6-10). Luke went with them to Philippi in Europe.

Please note the doctrine of justification by faith was not introduced until Luke recorded Paul' speech at a synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:13-41). This does not mean this doctrine was not actively working for the first century Christians. It had been active since mankind became a sinner; otherwise, peace could not have been possible between God and man (Rom. 5:1). The following are a few scriptures to remind us of the history and purpose for this doctrine.

#### Lesson

Acts 13:39. **Justified.**

Heb. 11: 4. Because of his faith Abel was counted as a righteous man.

Heb. 11:6. By faith Noah condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness by faith.

Gen. 15:6. Abraham believed God and He credited it to him for righteousness.

Gen. 12:1-3. Through the covenants God made with Abraham, all nations are being blessed.

Gen. 22:15. The promise of God to bless Christians from all nations was restated by an angel to Abraham after his faith was made perfect.

Gen. 17:11. Physical circumcision, a sign of the covenant, was ordained by God for Israel. They were the children of promise after Abraham was counted righteous by faith. See Rom. 9:7, 8.

The doctrine: Romans 3:21-26.

1. The quality of the sacrifice was improved to remove guilt from a sinner's conscience. II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:9, 14; 10:2.
2. God was justified in passing over sins in the past because of the sacrifice of Jesus.
3. The quality of man's faith. James 2:20-24; Gal. 5:6. Justification requires faith that is made complete by deeds done in love in response to God's commands.
4. Practical applications of the doctrine. See I John 2:29; 3:7-10.

Personal results of the new covenant doctrine of justification by faith for Christians.

1. Rom. 3:30. Justification is offered to all faithful Christians.
2. Rom. 5:1. It gives Christians peace with God.
3. Rom. 5:18. It gives Christians people a justified life after passing out of spiritual death. See John 5:24.
4. Rom. 3:31. It upholds certain laws given to Moses. See Rom. 8:4.
5. Rom. 5:21. Let's grace reign through righteousness to eternal life.

**About the chart in our next lesson:** The chart in our next lesson will lead us through the remainder of Luke's narrative in Acts. The three pages are divided into five columns. Please note carefully the heading of each column. The headings are self explanatory; however, a word about how to read the charts. The columns and the headings continue down through the second and third pages.

For instance, the first column's heading is **Characters**. This will start with the team in chapter sixteen and by reading down on the three pages, the story will carry you to Rome and the end of Acts. The design of the chart is to identify the characters in the first column. Then please read across to know where they are on the map, column 2. In column 3, you will be introduced to their opposition if there was any. In order to keep us aware of the presence of Deity in the evangelism narratives of Acts, their involvement is noted in column 4. The fifth column calls attention to the letters as they relate to Acts. **Since this doctrine was mentioned only once in Acts, there will be no question work sheet.**