

Faith Comes by Hearing the Word of God

Rom 10.13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!" 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "LORD, who has believed our report?" 17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. 18 But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: "Their sound has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world."

* **Paul now** turns our attention to the impetus for the apostles' missionary efforts, and the great need to continue them in their day and in ours.

Mat 28.18 "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Acts 17.1 Now ... they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ." 4 And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.

Titus 1.5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you.

Eph 4.11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the

head—Christ—16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

* **In God's** providence, the response to the gospel does not always match the objective truth and beauty of the gospel, nor people's objective need for the gospel.

Isa 52.7 How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, "Your God reigns!" ... 13 Behold, My Servant shall ... 15 sprinkle many nations ... 53.1 Who has believed our report? ... 3 He is ... a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ... 6 ... the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all ... 8 ... For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken ... 10 ... Yet ... the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand. 11 ... By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities ...

1Cor 1.23 we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness

* **In vs 18**, Paul provides further evidence that fallen man is not neutral and open toward the gospel. Left to himself, fallen man is antagonistic toward God's light in general, and particularly toward the bright, concentrated light of the gospel of Christ.

Rom 1.18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Psalm 19.1 The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. 2 Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. 4 Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, 5 which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. 6 Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end ...

*Rom 4.3 For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." ...
9 ... faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness ...
11 ... that he might be the father of all those who believe ...*

Gen 15.4 And behold, the word of the LORD came to [Abraham], saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your seed be." 6 And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Gen 13.16: "I will make your seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your seed also could be numbered."

* **The Hebrew** word for "number" in Gen 13.16 is different from the Hebrew word for "number" and "count" in Gen 15.5. The former means simply to count up; the latter is related to the Hebrew word for "writing" or "book," and it means to take account of something, to carefully consider it, and to declare the results or meaning. It is the same word that appears in Psalm 19.1:

"The heavens declare the glory of God"

And also in Psalm 48.12-13:

Walk about Zion, and go all around her. Count her towers; Mark well her bulwarks; Consider her palaces; That you may tell it to the generation following.

This is why the KJV translates Gen 15.5:

"Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if you are able to number them ... So shall thy seed be."

* **How would** Abraham derive meaning from the stars to put together a story? By saying their names in order, and thinking about the meanings of those names.

Isa 40.26 Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things [i.e., the stars], who brings out their host by number; He calls them all by name, by the greatness of His might and the strength of His power; Not one is missing.

Job 38.31 Can you bind the cluster of the Pleiades, or loose the belt of Orion? 32 Can you bring out Mazzaroth in its season? Or can you guide the Great Bear with its cubs?

* **From this** perspective, what God is telling Abraham to do in Gen 15.5 is to name in order the constellations along the path of the sun—the constellations that make up the tabernacle of the sun—and string together the meanings of those names, which tell the story of the Bridegroom Strongman. Then God says, "So shall your Seed (*singular*) be."

* **Can we** be dogmatic about this? No. Do you have to believe it? Absolutely not. So why am I going into it?

Heb 11.17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

Isa 11.9 The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. 10 And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, who shall stand as a banner to the people; for the Gentiles shall seek him, and this resting place shall be glorious.