



GRACE-LOVE-TRUTH COURSE.

LESSON 5B:

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ABRAHAM

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PART 5B: THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF ABRAHAM

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7. WE ARE CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

7.1 ABRAHAM WAS RIGHTEOUS BECAUSE HE BELIEVED GOD

Gal 3:6-8 So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you.

The history and life of Abraham is of great significance to all believers. He was truly righteous and dependant on God. If we grasp the truths taught by Abraham's life we will be blessed by coming into a deeper understanding of what God considers to be true righteousness and how this state comes about.



7.2 ABRAHAM IS OUR SPIRITUAL FATHER

Gen 22:17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."

Abraham is a shadow and type representing the New Covenant believer. Abraham was the founding father of a great a spiritual nation i.e. all believers who are righteous and saved through faith (Gal.3:7). This includes both Jews and Gentiles who choose salvation by grace through faith. The New Covenant is clear that all those who are “Born Again” are not only children of God but are also spiritual children of Abraham.

The key to Abraham’s prosperous life was that the great blessings, promises and righteousness were received only through his trust in God (Rom.4:1-3). He was the first example of the man of faith who was properly righteous in God’s eyes. It is vitally important for us as believers to look carefully at Abraham; what he believed, what he did , how God responded to him and how he was blessed? This will help us to understand the way God relates, saves and blesses believers in the New Covenant who are righteous by faith.

7.3 ABRAHAM WAS RIGHT WITH GOD

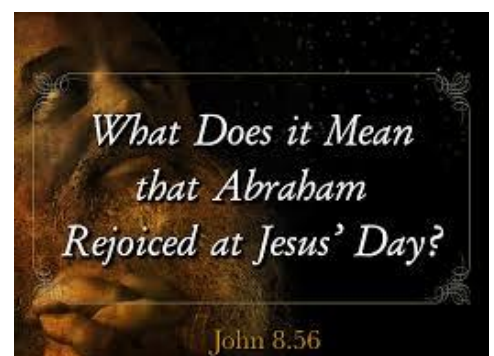
Rom.4:3-9 What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.

As previously stated, the righteousness that is acceptable to God and has nothing to do with our good or bad works, our sinlessness or sinfulness. It is based solely on our trust and belief in God’s goodness and plan of salvation (which is Jesus). Abraham understood this truth, he was tight with God and he was blessed in every way. Abraham trusted God and God revealed himself to Abraham. Abraham was given the revelation that salvation is through the gift of righteousness that comes only through grace by the faith of Jesus. Abraham did not trust in his own righteousness, good works or sinlessness as he understood they could never make him perfect enough for God. Abraham trusted solely in God’s goodness and God’s free gift of the Saviour’s righteousness that was imputed to him purely by faith.

You may well ask yourself: "How is this possible as Abraham lived before Jesus, so how did this revelation come about?" The answer is that there was a foundational event in Abraham’s life that lead him into truth, completely changed him and all history.

7.4 ABRAHAM MET THE KING OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, JESUS

Gen. 14:17-23 Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying, “Blessed be Abram by God Most High, Creator of heaven



and earth.

Abraham did not just hear about God but encountered him face to face. Abraham met with a King called Melchizedek. Although not a lot is said about this encounter it is one of the most significant events in the Old Testament. Many seemingly small and insignificant events recorded in scriptures prove to be amazingly significant spiritually. This brief but amazing encounter was the foundation of Abraham's faith and righteousness. In Genesis there is no historical explanation of who exactly King Melchizedek was, where he came from or where he actually ruled. However we know that the Old Testament always has shadows or types of Christ (Joh.5:39). The Old Testament is actually all about Jesus (Luk.24:27) and God's plan of salvation through Him – if we are prepared to look carefully with spiritual eyes we can see this truth everywhere in the Old Testament. As the saying goes, "The Old Testament is Christ concealed, the New Testament is Christ revealed". We can see these truths about Jesus in Abraham's encounter with a King who was unknown and only mentioned once in the Old Testament. Through this encounter the gospel of salvation by grace, was revealed to Abraham.

Here is something for you to reflect on.....

GRACE & LAW IN THE OLD TESTAMENT (Christ concealed in shadows & types)	
A SHADOW OF THE GRACE TO COME: GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM	RELIGIOUS LAW & A GOSPEL OF WORKS: THE COVENANT OF MOSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abram spoke with God.• Abram submitted to the King of Righteousness & Peace.• His Righteous came by faith.• He believed & trusted God.• He had faith in God's goodness.• He trusted in God's Grace.• He rested in God's provision.• All he did was blessed.• He was victorious.• His sin was not counted by God.• He was healthy & strong.• He was under God's care.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Israel refuse to speak with God.• Israel rebelled, rejected intimacy with God & His Grace.• Their Righteousness came by works.• They did not believe or trust God.• They doubted God's goodness.• They trusted a religion of law.• They continually lost their provision.• They were cursed and exiled.• They were enslave by their enemies.• Every sin was punished 7 X over.• They were always sick & dying.• They were under God's wrath.

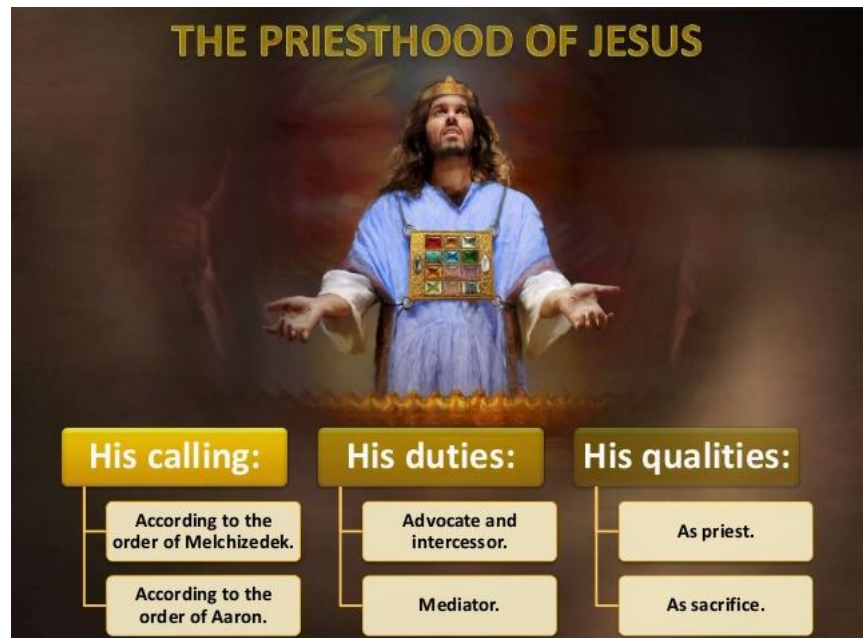
7.5 ABRAHAM'S ENCOUNTER WAS WITH JESUS

Heb.7:1-3 This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham

returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, his name means “king of righteousness”; then also, “king of Salem” means “king of peace.” Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, like the Son of God he remains a priest forever. Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder!

This Melchizedek was not just a type of Jesus but he was Jesus himself. This may be hard for us to get our heads around, but this Priest, Messiah King was Jesus in everything but name. This event is the clearest and boldest revelation of the appearance of the physical Christ found anywhere in the Old Testament.

This physical King, Melchizedek, had no beginning or end (Heb.7:3) - only Jesus exists in this way, no other.



Only Jesus can be called “The King of Righteousness” and “The King of Peace”, no other can take this role or title. This Melchizedek was a Priest of the most High God, he was not an earthly priest, he was the heavenly priest. This was an pre-incarnation appearance of Jesus, the High Priest of the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb.12:22). Jesus, who is not constrained by time, miraculously appeared to Abraham and shared the gospel with him. For Abraham, his personal encounter with his saviour was a “today, now event”. Abraham had a personal salvation encounter with Christ, even though Christ never revealed His name. Consequently Abraham’s had faith in God’s goodness and love that was still to be fully revealed in a future event, the coming of Jesus; His death and resurrection. Similarly, our faith is in God’s goodness and love founded in a past event, the same coming of Jesus! We look backwards to the cross of Jesus and have faith, while Abraham looked forward to the cross and had faith.

7.6 ABRAHAM HAD INTIMATE COMMUNION WITH HIS SAVIOUR

Gen.14:17-23 Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine.

Translated into plain language: *"The King of Righteousness and Peace shared bread and wine with Abraham"*.

So how did Jesus reveal the plan of salvation to Abraham? It was through communion (Luk.22:17-20). Although Jesus did not reveal His name to Abraham, He did reveal God's plan of salvation. The gospel was announced to Abraham before the cross (Gal.3:8). Communion is an extremely important and spiritually significant act, an act which most of us tend to under estimate (1Co.11:23-29). Jesus as Melchizedek, revealed God's salvation plan to Abraham by having communion with Abraham right there on the road. He took bread and wine and shared it with Abraham. One can imagine the event: "This is My Body and this is My Blood. The New Covenant will come. Have faith Abraham!"

Abraham was given spiritual revelation of salvation as he ate the bread and wine.... his spiritual eyes were opened. Jesus also showed Abraham the fruit of pure grace by blessing him. Because of the grace shown and the gospel revealed to him, Abraham freely submitted to this King Jesus. In those days a king would demand a tenth from his subjects as a sign of their submission. Jesus demanded nothing from Abraham but Abraham willingly submitted to the King. That's why Abraham was saved, because he saw God face to face, heard the good news and this resulted in believing faith. By the way, the Emmaus Road experience of some of the disciples was very similar to Abraham's, Jesus revealed Himself to them in the breaking of the bread: (Luk.24:30). *When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight.*



7.7 WE ARE RIGHTEOUS LIKE ABRAHAM

Gal 4:22-31 For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise. These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. For it is written: "Be glad, barren woman, you who never bore a child; shout for joy and cry aloud, you who were never in labour; because more are the children of the desolate woman than of her who has a husband." Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of

promise. At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son." Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

The importance of Abraham's life is that we are righteous the same way he was. The righteousness of a believer is by faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross.

Interestingly Abraham was married to Sarah who the above scriptures say symbolizes freedom and the New Covenant of grace (Gal 4:24). Their son came through a promise of God and he was called Isaac which means laughter. Abraham's family is very symbolic and prophetic; freedom, righteousness, grace and laughter all go together in God's family.



7.8 ISRAELS ERROR OF SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Rom. 9:31-33 Israel, who pursued a law of righteousness, has not attained it Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works.

Even though Abraham was the physical father of all Jews, the Jews forgot the faith covenant between Abraham and God. They chose firstly to turn to the god's of Egypt and then to self-righteousness through attempting to keep the Law of Moses. One of the errors revealed throughout the Old Testament is that many of God's people thought that being good and avoiding sin would make them right with God. They believed that right standing with God could come about through their own righteousness and works. This self righteousness was based on the fallen notion that God accepts people based on their good and bad deeds – these are actually called dead works (KJV.Heb 6:1). God hates self-righteousness because the spirit behind it is one of pride and independence from God. Israel fell into this trap and suffered the terrible consequences of living by their own righteousness and the Law. Israel is a lesson for us to turn away from self righteousness, dead works and law keeping and to put our trust solely in God.

8. JOB AND THE SUFFERING OF THE SELF RIGHTEOUS

Job. 32:2 These three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying

himself rather than God.

In contrast to Abraham who was righteous by faith, the Scriptures tell of another good man who lived in the time before the Law of Moses had been given, probably in the land of Arabia (today's seat of Islam). However unlike Abraham this man relied on his own righteousness. This man was called Job. His name means hated! Ever wonder why? We all know Job was a upright and perfect man (Job.1:1) who suffered greatly because God allowed Satan to test



him (Job.1:8). Why would God do that? It's scary and not good news when interpreted in the traditional way! Most people secretly fear something like Job happening to them at some time. However if we start to look at Job in a correct way and ask what he represents we will see that that the story of Job is actually good news for those who trust in God for their righteousness. The revelation from the book of Job is not that God afflicts, or that God gives and takes away, willy nilly, but that God hates self-righteousness and, as in Job's case, always allows it to be tested by Satan, the Accuser. Job was the most righteous man on the earth in his day but his righteousness was not based on faith but works. Job, in a sense, is the exact opposite of Abraham. Unlike Abraham, Job had heard about God but never saw Him (Job 42:5), Job's relationship with God was distant, fear based (Job1:9)(3:25) and works driven (Job7:1). Job was highly sin conscious and had even set up his own religious sacrificial system to appease God (Job 1:5) who he believed was out to punish him for his sins (Job 10:13). He lived in fear of God while Abraham live by faith in God. Sadly, a close study of Job reveals that he suffered because ultimately he trusted in his own righteousness, he could not see his lack of true righteousness and the need for a saviour. Like so many people, he muddled up goodness with righteousness (Job.12:12:4). Job had a defence against God's afflictions (13:18-23) based on his good works and goodness (29:7-17) which he thought had produced a righteousness that was acceptable to God (27:6). He boasted of his good works and listed them out in his defence (31:1-33). This show his complete lack of revelation of how to be saved, and yet this is exactly what so many people do, even today. Although Job had a vision that he could be saved (19:25) he , unlike Abraham, had not met God, nor Jesus, and did not understand that salvation is by faith. Eventually it was a young man Elihu who spoke by the Spirit (33:4) and pointed out to Job that the issue was that he was justifying himself instead of relying on God (32:2-2). The Lord himself rebukes Job for this sin of self-justification, self-righteousness (40:8) and pride in his own goodness. In the end, thank God, Job concedes that he was deceived and misguided (42:3) and repents. When Job repented and put

his trust in God, he was restored and blessed. The blessed later period of Job's life represents that of a New Covenant believer, the early part represents that of a unsaved, self righteous men who trust in their own religion of good works instead of in God.



The threefold lesson of Job is firstly; as New Covenant believers under grace we are righteous in Christ and therefore God will never afflict us like Job. Secondly;

trusting in one's own righteousness and good works is deadly to both us and those around us.

Thirdly; we are sons of Abraham not sons of Job. Despite most Christians identifying with Job more than Abraham, the simple truth is that we are not Job nor are we like him, so we don't need to live in the fear that what happened to Job will happen to us - unless of course we choose to be proud, self-righteous and unrepentant.

The whole purpose of God gift of righteousness - to free us and bless us so that in his Name we can be a blessing to others.

1Co 1:30 It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God-- that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

We have established that we are the righteousness of Christ and therefore in grace we can always point to Jesus as being both our holiness and righteousness. We can live in the confidence that we are worthy to be blessed and to receive all the empowering of the Holy Spirit to minister in Jesus name. And most wonderful of all, we are Abba's beloved children (We will explore this in greater depth in the next part.

9. GROUP EXERSISE

Discuss the difference between self righteousness and true righteousness. List some of the characteristics of each.

Group exercise and questions

1. What is God dependant righteousness?
2. What is self righteousness?
3. What is justification?
4. List five characteristics of self righteousness.
5. Discuss the link between grace and righteousness.
6. What is spiritual maturity?
7. Discuss good works in the context of righteousness.
8. What are the issues within us that true righteousness overcomes?
9. How did Job defend himself?
10. How did Abraham become righteous?