

did not believe & unbelief

Though a definite distinction is to be made between 'not believe' and 'unbelief', both topics are dealt with here, in same chapter, because of the link between them seen throughout the scriptures, as will be demonstrated.

Romans 3:1-3 What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

- What advantage then hath the Jew?
- what profit is there of circumcision?
- For what if some did not believe?
- shall their unbelief
- make the faith of God without effect?

Within the context of Paul's Romans' argument, 'unbelief' doesn't simply 'not believe', but a condition one finds themselves in for not being faithful to what was told them. The first step to 'unbelief', is to 'not believe'. Not believing leads to a state of 'unbelief' resulting in disobedience, which leads to certain consequences, in a 'by faith' relationship.

did not believe

In the Beginning

This principle of unbelief, leading to disobedience, is certainly driven home in considering the fall of man as represented by Adam in the Garden of Eden. The fall of Adam wasn't in a failure to believe in the existence of God (Hebrews 11:6... must believe that He is), but in disobeying God, evidenced by unbelief in what was warned by God.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- for he that cometh to God must believe that he is

Let it be clear that it was Eve who was deceived and not Adam, but it was Adam's choice to disobey.

1 Timothy 2:13-14 For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

- Adam was not deceived
- but the woman being deceived was in the transgression

The fall of man went down as follows:

Genesis 2:16-17 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

- LORD God commanded the man, saying
- Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat
- But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil
- thou shalt not eat of it

Genesis 3:1-6 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

- Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field
- And he said unto the woman
- Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
- For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil
- she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her
- and he did eat

Genesis 3:11 And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

- Hast thou eaten of the tree
- whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?

The diligent faithful component of 'believing', within a 'by faith' relationship, was replaced with 'unbelief' resulting in far reaching consequences. The LORD God addressed all three responsible in directing man away from the relationship that God intended for man to have with their creator.

Genesis 3:14-15 And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: And I will put

enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

- And the LORD God said unto the serpent
- I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel

Genesis 3:16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

- Unto the woman he said
- I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children
- and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee

Genesis 3:17-19 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

- And unto Adam he said
- Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife
- cursed is the ground for thy sake
- for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return

The far most reaching consequence of Adam's choice was the inheritance of Adam's sin nature resulting in spiritual separation as well as physical death for all... "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:" **Romans 5:12**

Adam most certainly 'hearkened' to a voice, but was obedient to the wrong voice! Adam disobeyed the LORD!

Good and Evil

There is a critical clue given in the serpent's discourse, with Eve, that tells us what exactly determined diligent faithfulness to a faithful God of reward, after the event of the fall. This is a very important point in understanding justification and righteousness under the OT in a 'by faith' relationship.

Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

- then your eyes shall be opened
- ye shall be as gods
- knowing good and evil

Genesis 3:22 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

- And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us
- to know good and evil

After the fall of man, in the Garden of Eden, man's standing before God fell under one of two categories:

1. Good (just/righteous)
2. Evil (wicked)

The next time the word evil shows up in Genesis is approximately 1,600 years later in describing the over-all condition of man in the earth. Though I am of the theological camp that believes the sons of God, referenced in Genesis 6, are fallen angels that left their first estate, regardless of the effect that had on man, my focus here is man's state before God.

Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

- GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth
- every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually

From a faithful God's perspective, the wicked outnumbered the righteousness a Million to one and it was a far cry from His creation once declared as good.

Genesis 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...

- God saw every thing that he had made
- it was very good

Genesis 6:6-7 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.

- it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth

Condemned or Not Condemned

Believing or Not Believing

So that the reader understands where we're headed with this, consider a contrast that John made, from his perspective, after Christ's ministry, death and resurrection.

John 3:17-18 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

- God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world
- but that the world through him might be saved
- He that believeth on him is not condemned
- but he that believeth not is condemned already

Man's standing before God here fell under a different set of conditions:

1. Condemned
2. Not condemned (saved)

The obvious distinction is between those who have believed on God's Son and those who haven't believed. The question being answered and demonstrated, in the Old Testament, is what determined the wicked from the just, under a 'by faith' relationship to God?

Today, mankind falls under one of two categories, the condemned or those not condemned. Or, in other words, non-believers or the believer.

Knowing Good and Evil

Obedience or Disobedience

Here, we must be reminded again of the words spoken to Eve about having eyes opened knowing 'good' and 'evil'. It was obvious that from that point on, there was understanding of what God expected and though probably a gradual drift away, from God at first, thus there was a definite shift. Notice carefully words that discern between the two brothers, Cain and Abel.

1 John 3:12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

- Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one

- And wherefore slew he him?
- Because his own works were evil
- and his brother's righteous

The righteous works, of a diligent faithful believer, towards a faithful God, got a righteous man killed. Just as Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden, because of disbelief leading to disobedience, so disbelief on behalf of a man whose own works were evil, also got him expelled from the presence of the LORD.

Genesis 3:24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

- So he drove out the man
- and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way
- to keep the way of the tree of life

Genesis 4:14 Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me.
Genesis 4:16 And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.

- thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid
- And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD

The World Swimming in Evil

One Righteous Versus the Wicked

Just six chapters into the first book of the Bible we find only one man standing in the way of God wiping out an entire race of mankind!

Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

- GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth
- every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually

Genesis 6:11-13 The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

- And God looked upon the earth
- it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth
- The end of all flesh is come before me
- I will destroy them with the earth

Genesis 6:8 But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

- But Noah found grace

The obvious question now is... why did only Noah find grace in the eyes of the LORD?

Whereas the emphasis of this chapter is on 'not believing' and the result of 'unbelief', Noah being justified 'by faith', is covered in much more detail under the chapter dedicated to justification "by faith". However, here we need to tie together two words, relating to Noah, to give further distinction between him and the rest of mankind about to be destroyed; the word 'just' in Genesis 6:9, with the word 'righteous' in 7:1.

Genesis 6:9 These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.

- Noah was a just man
- and perfect in his generations
- and Noah walked with God.

Genesis 7:1 And the LORD said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.

- for thee
- have I seen righteous before me
- in this generation

Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations, walking with God. Noah was seen as **righteous** before God. The root word of 'righteous', is 'right'. Noah was being what was considered 'good' versus 'evil'. Noah was a **just** man, diligently faithful to a faithful God of reward!

Man fell into one of two categories... good or evil; from God's perspective!

The result of not believing, in the world at the time of Noah, is clearly reflected on by Peter.

2 Peter 3:6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

- the world that then was
- being overflowed with water

- perished

Because of unbelief leading to disobedience, Adam was exiled from the Garden, Cain cast forth from the presence of the LORD and the earth perished.

unbelief

Unbelief of a Nation

Not Believing the LORD

Returning back now to the opening text, we will see the result that unbelief had on the nation of Israel, while trying to hold up to their end of the bargain in agreeing to the terms of the Mosaic Covenant.

Exodus 19:9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

- I come unto thee in a thick cloud
- that the people may hear when I speak with thee
- and believe thee for ever
- And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD

Before moving on, here is a comparison to be made to the **NIV** (New International Version). The primary purpose, for in doing so here, is to demonstrate the necessity of leaving words alone, so a particular path can be followed without getting side-tracked.

Romans 3:3 (KJB) For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

- what if some did not believe
- shall their unbelief
- make the faith of God without effect?

Romans 3:3 (NIV) What if some did not have faith? Will their lack of faith nullify God's faithfulness?

- What if some did not have faith
- their lack of faith
- nullify God's faithfulness

There are two issues:

1. The KJB's deliberate usage of the terms 'did not believe' and 'unbelief', gives connotation of disobedience which is held in direct contrast to God's expectation recorded in the book of Hebrews, to the Hebrews, Abraham's descendants.

Hebrews 3:12 (KJB) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

Hebrews 11:6 (KJB) But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

- But without faith it is impossible to please him
- for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him

The words 'faith' and 'believe', are just as deliberate in Hebrews 11:6, because the contrasts of the form 'believe' reveal Israel's history of blessing when seeking God, and cursing when in 'unbelief' and disobedience. Obviously, same principal is seen applied in the lives of OT individuals; i.e. David. The expression 'lack of faith' (NIV), does not necessarily imply disobedience and what comes to mind is what was written to the church at Laodicea, by John, a member of the circumcision.

Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

2. The NIV, though reflecting the 'faith of God', to be God's faithfulness, doesn't echo contrasting terminology regarding the 'faith of Christ' (Rom 3:22), thus destroying a critical comparison of points in Paul's Roman's argument. This point is further developed under the chapter, "faith of Jesus Christ".

The Object of Israel's Obedience

Object Versus Subject of Israel's Obedience

As important as it is, to this discussion, in understanding that God was the subject of Israel's obedience, is just how critical it is to understand the object of that obedience.

Exodus 19:5-8 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

- if ye will obey my voice indeed
- and keep my covenant
- then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people
- And all the people answered together, and said,
- All that the LORD hath spoken we will do
- Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD

...if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant... There are many different words and terms used equated directly and indirectly to God's covenant made with Israel: book, commandment, commandments, covenant, judgments, law, laws, oracles, ordinances, precepts, statutes, words, etc. Many times, the pronoun 'my' precedes these making it very personal, i.e., my covenant.

As the LORD (name used in denoting the Covenant relationship with Israel) was the subject of Israel's obedience, so the Mosaic Covenant commandments were the object of that obedience. The commandments were the fulcrum for blessing: if, then, keep, shall be, turn not, shall not, to be, observe to do, for then, mayest, shalt, shalt not. Israel's priesthood and rise above the nations was solely based on their faithful obedience to the Law of Moses!

Israel's disobedience (unbelief) brought the opposite effect. In Deuteronomy 27, after being given instructions to keep all commandments, the remainder of the chapter was given to warning of curses (12 times the word 'cursed' is used), followed with a stamp of approval by the people... and all the people shall say, Amen. These instructions were given by Moses just prior to Israel's crossing over Jordan soon to be under the command of another leader, Joshua.

Deuteronomy 27:1-3 And Moses with the elders of Israel commanded the people, saying, Keep all the commandments which I command you this day. And it shall be on the day when ye shall pass over Jordan unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaister them with plaister: And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law, when thou art passed over, that thou mayest go in unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, a land that floweth with milk and honey; as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee.

- Keep all the commandments which I command you this day

It must have been quite a scene as to how the message of blessing and cursing was conveyed to the nation, in entering the Promised Land, as they passed by two mounts. From one mount, shouts of blessings of reward in obedience and on the other mount, warnings of curses if unbelief would lead to disobedience.

Deuteronomy 27:11-14 And Moses charged the people the same day, saying, These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan; Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin: And these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse; Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel with a loud voice,

- These shall stand upon mount Gerizim to bless the people
- these shall stand upon mount Ebal to curse

Deuteronomy 27:15-26 Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and putteth it in a secret place. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen. Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife; because he uncovereth his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that lieth with his mother in law. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen. Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

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- Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.
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- Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way. And all the people shall say, Amen.
- Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow. And all the people shall say, Amen.
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- Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly. And all the people shall say, Amen.
- Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person. And all the people shall say, Amen.
- Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them. And all the people shall say, Amen.

It must be stressed again, that there is GREAT NEED to discern between the Abrahamic Covenant, that covenanted for a seed and land, from that of the Mosaic Covenant, that covenanted for righteousness for that seed to REMAIN in that covenanted land!

Leviticus 26:1-18 Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God. 2 Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the LORD. 3 If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; 4 Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. 5 And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. 6 And I will give peace in the land, and ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land. 7 And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. 8 And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. 9 For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you. 10 And ye shall eat old store, and bring forth the old because of the new. 11 And I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. 12 And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people. 13 I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, that ye should not be their bondmen; and I have broken the bands of your yoke, and made you go upright. 14 But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; 15 And if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: 16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. 18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

The Downhill Slide of Israel's Unbelief

Israel's history, after entering the Promised Land, was an up and down relationship with the LORD during the Judges period and even more disastrous under the divided kingdom; Israel and Judah.

Numbers 14:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

- How long will this people provoke me?
- and how long will it be ere they believe me

2 Kings 17:14 Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God.

- they would not hear, but hardened their necks
- like to the neck of their fathers
- that did not believe in the LORD their God

Isaiah 1:1-4 The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. 2 Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. 3 The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider. 4 Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward.

- I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me
- Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters
- they have forsaken the LORD, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward

Jeremiah 4:22 For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

- they have none understanding
- they are wise to do evil
- but to do good they have no knowledge

Israel's Unbelief Throughout Gospels & Act's Period

Unbelief was still the attitude of the religious leaders of Israel during the ministry of John the Baptist, when calling Israel to repentance and thus in fulfillment of prophecy to which the Lord Jesus spoke parables against them.

Matthew 3:5-12 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, 6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. 7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: 12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

- But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
- Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: 9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father
- And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire

Matthew 13:13-15 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. 14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

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After the ministries of John the Baptist and earthly ministry of Jesus and his disciples, the return of Christ, under the kingdom gospel proclaimed by the Twelve Apostles, was dependent on Israel's repentance. She did not heed that call, as a nation and remained in unbelief.

Acts 3:19-20 Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; 20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you:

- Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord
- And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you

Gentile's mercy through Israel's unbelief

Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, not only brought hope to the Gentiles during the Act's period, but also grace to a remnant of Jews though the nation as a whole rejected.

Acts 13:38-42 Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: 39 And by him all that believe are

justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. 40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; 41 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. 42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.

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Acts 28:23-29 And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not. 25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, 26 Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: 27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. 28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it. 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

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Romans 11:28-32 As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes. 29 For the gifts and

calling of God are without repentance. 30 For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: 31 Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

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Regardless of Israel's response, God remained faithful! In other words, during covenant relationship, when there was a separation between God and Israel, it was always Israel that stepped away, not God. When Israel was in a state of 'belief', she was obedient. When Israel was in a state of 'unbelief', she was disobedient. Belief or unbelief, God's character didn't change. The expression 'faith of God', is equated to God's trustworthiness and unchangeable character. As with the father, of the prodigal son, God waited with open arms to receive Israel back when she repented.

Romans 3:3 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

As Paul turns from the past to the present, his focus turns from the 'faith of God' to the 'faith of Jesus Christ' (Ro 3:22; Ga 2:16; Ga 3:22).