

## ***The Word of the Gospel Opens the Eyes of Faith and Fixes Them on Christ Jesus***



**Background:** The lessons this week point to the fact that whether we are Jews or Gentiles, there is only one way to be justified righteous by God—The way of Faith. Abraham lived in a country, Mesopotamia, where God was not known. Yet it was here that God called Abram, to leave his country, relatives, and go to a “land I will show you.” He did not argue with God or ask for documentation, but simply went as God asked him. Throughout his life, it was Abraham’s trust in the Lord that was counted to him as righteousness. God showed his seal of righteousness by having Abraham circumcised, but it was not the circumcision that brought

**Nicodemus visiting Jesus** *Henry Ossawa Tanner 1899* Abraham grace but his trust in the Lord which happened well ahead of any circumcision. Thus as Christ told Nicodemus, or Paul told his Jewish converts, it is our trust in the Lord that saves us. And as Christ said to Nicodemus, it is through the gift of the Holy Spirit that we are able to come and accept Christ as our Lord and Savior. So it is wonderful that this “Good News” will cause us to do Good Works, but it is the faith God gave us, not the works that follow that made us “right with God”.

**The Lessons: Genesis 12:1–9, Romans 4:1–8, 13–17, & John 3:1–17** The Lord called Abram (Abraham) to leave his home and go to a land that God would show him. He also promised to make of Abram “a great nation,” to bless him and make his name great as a blessing to “all the families of the earth” (Gen. 12:2–3). “Abram went, as the LORD had told him” (Gen. 12:4), and in Canaan “he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD” (Gen. 12:8). He “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness” (Rom. 4:3). Here the grace of God is manifested, that He “justifies the ungodly” (Rom. 4:5), not by works of the Law, but through faith in His promises. He removes all of our sins and lawless deeds through Jesus Christ, the offspring of Abraham in whom all the Lord’s promises are realized. This forgiveness of sins is the Word of the Gospel, the voice of the Holy Spirit, which “gives life to the dead” (Rom. 4:17). It opens the eyes of faith to behold Christ Jesus, the Son of Man lifted up on the cross, “that whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14–15).