

Justification by Faith III

Fred R. Coulter

Why is the Bible so confusing, so difficult to understand in certain places. In studying the writings of the Apostle Paul, even Peter made the comment that Paul wrote ‘things which were sometimes difficult and hard to be understood.’

In going through *Justification by Faith*, there are several difficulties that we need to be aware of concerning the Word of God, concerning the Bible that you may have. Most people have a *King James Bible*, and in the main the *KJV* is generally acceptable and generally good enough, and generally clear enough so that you can understand the meaning of it. However the *King James Bible* in the critical places in Galatians that we are going to cover, it is very hard to understand; it is very difficult to understand, and it causes a great deal of confusion.

{recommended: *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* used in this transcription}

It causes the confusion because if you’re going to want to please God and do what is right, we know we have to keep the commandments of God. We absolutely know that and understand that! However, we also need to realize that what is called *justification through Jesus Christ by faith* is a different thing than commandment-keeping or *works of law*.

So, if you can just bear with us, just follow through with me, I’m going to try to make this clearer and more easy for you to understand. However, I’m not going to be reading from the *KJV*. In this particular section in Galatians, the second chapter, it is most difficult because of the way that the *King James* translators have translated this section of the book of Galatians. It makes it appear that the Laws of God are not to be kept, if you follow Christ. This absolutely is not true!

We know that Paul wrote in Rom. 2:13 that not the *hearers* of the Law are just before God, but ‘the *doers* of the Law shall be justified.’ We’re going to cover several things in this section on *Justification by Faith*, which I hope are going to clear up some of these difficulties for you.

Let’s review where left off in part two of *Justification by Faith*, and review the situation where Paul is talking about *works of law*. When you read it in the *KJV* it says, “...**the** works of **the** law...” It really is not that in the original Greek.

Let also mention something that is very important to understand: While it is commendable that we have such things as *Strong’s Concordance*, *Young’s Concordance*—which are very good; they

can help out an awful lot—please understand that it is a very limited tool when it comes to understanding the original language in either the Greek or the Hebrew, because you need to understand the *way* that the language is used. The *Strong’s Concordance* only gives you the root word with all the multiple definitions of the root word, which may or may not be of some help to you in studying the Bible.

Now, it is helpful in certain aspects of it, so that you can learn some things. But for establishing doctrine or trying to understand difficult Scriptures, you must have at least a working knowledge of the language. If you have a working knowledge of the language, then you will be able to understand where the pitfalls are—the obvious ones—in the *King James* translation of the Bible.

I’m going to be reading the Greek Interlinear by Zondervan. {note to reader: Scriptures in transcription are from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order*}. I have a working knowledge of Greek and it gives the English between the lines. It also has a column with the *King James*.

The problem that Paul was having with Peter and those at Galatia, was that they were going back into law-keeping for justification, because that’s what it was under the Old Covenant. They had law-keeping with justification to the temple; never to God the Father in heaven above. Please understand that! Under the Old Covenant they never had justification to God the Father in heaven above, because that is not accomplished through law.

Law can only bring you so far. The justification or the righteousness that is in Christ is a different kind of justification, a different kind of righteousness, which is only done through Jesus Christ. That is why it cannot be done by law.

The Jews, as we also know, Jesus corrected very severely for all their traditions: their dos and their don’ts and the washing of hand and pots and pan and everything else that they had. He said, ‘Full well you reject the commandments of God that you may keep *your traditions*.’

One other thing about tradition that you need to know and understand: Tradition was counted by the Jews—classified and equal to, and in some cases—even better than the Law of Moses.

When they had *their* laws, everything that they did was to justify them in the flesh. Another problem that they had in the New Testament was that their traditions said, ‘We Jews, since we are the chosen ones of God, must separate ourselves of

those of other nations—whom the Jews called Gentiles—because we cannot associate with them because in associating with them we become unclean to God.’

You will never find that in the Bible. You will never find the Bible saying that those who are following God should separate themselves from other people. Even in the Old Testament it says there will be *one law*: for the stranger and for the Israelite. There shall be no partiality. That was a *Jewish tradition* that made them very much anathema. This wall, the barrier, that they built, which was torn down in Christ.

So, when Paul came to Antioch and Peter was there, they were keeping apparently a Feast of Tabernacles, Peter and some of the other Jews separated themselves from following Judaism. The problem here is not whether to keep the Laws of God or not, the problem is *how these laws were applied* and in particular those laws of justification that came from Judaism.

Galatians 2:14: “...I said to Peter in the presence of them all, ‘If you, being a Jew, are living like the Gentiles... [nation-like] ...and not according to Judaism, why do you compel the Gentiles to Judaize?’” That was the key thing.

- Was there any Law of God saying to separate yourself from other people which you’re eating? *No!*
- If they did separate from other people, did that make them better than anyone else? *No!*
- If you wash your hands with soap and water, does that change your heart and mind? *No!*
- If you go stand in another part of the room, does that change your heart and mind? *No!*

You need to understand something about a *work of law*: It is something that is done outside of you. A work of law is a contrivance—especially by the Jews here in Judaizing—that set them apart, to make them feel better. Did it make them more righteous? *No, it didn’t!* As a matter of fact, spiritually it was a sin!

Verse 15: “We who are Jews by nature—and not sinners of *the* Gentiles—knowing that **a man is not justified by works of law...**” (vs 15-16). That’s very important to understand, because the *KJV* says: *the works of the law*—‘the’ is not in the Greek or original. It is: “...**a man is not justified by works of law...**” Why?

- Why can you not be justified by *works of law*?
- What is the basis of law?
 - ✓ Law was designed to tell us what sin is!

- ✓ Law was designed to point out where you go wrong!
- ✓ Law was designed to be required by all human beings to do!

All of your present law-keeping does not undo or forgive or blot away all of your past law-breaking. That is why by *works of law* no one is going to be justified. The reason being is we are talking about *justification to God the Father in heaven above*, and that cannot be accomplished by something that you do as a law. *That can be accomplished by a change of heart, mind and attitude!*

“...but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ... [literally Jesus’ own faith] ...we also have **believed in Christ Jesus...**” (v 16).

- Do you believe in Christ Jesus?
- Do you really, literally, **believe**
 - ✓ what He did?
 - ✓ who He was?
 - ✓ what He represented?
 - ✓ what He did for mankind?
 - ✓ what He has done for you?
- Do you **believe** that?

It’s very interesting that there are some people who think that the works that they have to have are all kinds of laws that they need to do. Granted, Paul said, ‘What? Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid!’ That is not saying that we can break the commandments or laws of God. *NO!* It’s an entirely different thing when you believe.

John 6—this is when Jesus fed the 5,000 and He fled away from them because they wanted to make Him king, because they were going to have all this free food, they supposed. When they came and found Jesus:

John 6:26: “Jesus answered them and said, ‘Truly, truly I say to you, you do not seek Me because you saw *the* miracles, but because you ate the bread and were satisfied. Do not labor *for* the food that perishes, but *for* the food that endures unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give to you; for Him has God the Father sealed.’ Therefore, they said to Him, ‘**What shall we do, in order that we ourselves may do the works of God?**’” (vs 26-28). Very interesting statement. What did Jesus tell them? This ties right in with what we’re going through in Gal. 2.

Verse 29: “Jesus answered and said to them, ‘**This is the work of God: that you believe in Him Whom He has sent.**’” He’s saying that you *must believe* in Jesus Christ. You cannot have a ‘religion’ over here claiming the Laws of God—as the Jews supposedly claim—and have contact with God, because you reject Christ. Christ is *the Way, the Life*

and the Truth—*there's no other way!*

The justification that we are talking about has to do with *belief*. That is called *justification by faith*. If you *believe* then you have something more powerful than a law that says *to do* or not to do. Belief means that it comes from the *inside!* Belief means that it is something that you are involved in, which then is greater than any law. Why is that greater than any law? *Because it gives you the spiritual power and capacity*—with the power of God's Holy Spirit—to *have that faith, understanding and total yieldedness to God the Father*—through Jesus Christ! I hope it will become clear to you.

Galatians 2:16: “Knowing that a **man is not justified by works of law**, but through *the* faith of Jesus Christ...”

I know that for some people this may be very hard to grasp. Let's again use the example of the Jews, then we will use examples of the Catholics or Protestants.

If a Jew keeps the Sabbath—God says to keep the Sabbath. God says, ‘Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy. Six days shall you labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord, Holy unto the Lord. In it you shall not do any work; you, nor your son, daughter, man servant, maid servant, the cattle that is within your gate. For in six days God made heaven and earth and the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day and sanctified the seventh day, therefore, you shall keep the Sabbath.’

What if someone over here says, ‘I'm going to keep the Sabbath, but I reject Christ. I don't want anything to do with Him. I think He is of Satan the devil. I think He is a blasphemer. I think He is a false messiah. But I'm keeping the Sabbath.’ Does keeping the Sabbath do that man any good whatsoever? *NO!* He doesn't *believe* in Christ!

The Catholics have said that grace can only come through works. Therefore, you must have the works that the Catholic Church says you must do or you don't have grace.

- Does grace come by works?
- or
- Does grace come by belief?
 - Does grace come by faith?

Maybe you'll understand why it said there in James 2 where James says, ‘You show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith *by* my works.’ What he is doing is motivated from within with God's Spirit to do what is right.

Let's take this one step further: What then if you believe in Christ and you follow what Christ says: ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments’ and

you keep the Sabbath. Do you have benefit in keeping the Sabbath? *Yes!* You have benefit in keeping the Sabbath, however, *justification must take place first through Christ*. Then commandment-keeping of the commandments of God do benefit you. They really do!

Let's see another example of commandment-keeping so that you will understand that it doesn't come by law-keeping.

Matthew 19:16: “Now at that time, one came to Him *and* said, ‘Good Master, **what good thing shall I do...**’” Isn't that what everyone wants, God doesn't want something you can do. God wants *you!* God doesn't want you over here mechanically keeping a law because it's written down. God wants you to love Him. So therefore, as a consequence of that love and faith, then you keep the Law in the right spirit and attitude.

Have you ever kept a law that you didn't want to keep? What was your attitude? (grumble grumble) That's why with Christ it can't be that way.

“...‘Good Master, **what good thing shall I do** that I may have eternal life?’ And He said to him, ‘Why do you call Me good? No one *is* good except one—God. But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.’” (vs 16-17). Do we have a conflict here with what we've been saying? *No!* We don't have a conflict! The young man was depending on his commandment-keeping to save him. Jesus said to enter into life, keep the commandments. That is a condition!

Verse 18: “Then he said to Him, ‘Which?’ And Jesus said, ‘You shall not commit murder; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; honor your father and your mother; and, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.’.... [And the young man thought he had it made; he was ready to get eternal life.] ...The young man said to Him, ‘I have kept all these things from my youth. What do I yet lack?’” (vs 18-20). What did Jesus say? Did He say, ‘Bless you, sonny, you're a good boy’? *NO!*

Verse 21: “Jesus said to him, ‘If you desire to be perfect... [completely sincere, totally dedicated] ...go *and* sell your property, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come *and* follow Me.’” Notice how the emphasis is on *following Christ*.

Verse 22: “But after hearing this word, the young man went away grieving, because he had many possessions.” God doesn't want an action that you can do. God wants *you!* That's why He said to go sell everything that you have; don't depend

anymore on your material riches over here. His commandment-keeping was fine, He didn't condemn him for it. But it has to be beyond commandment-keeping. Commandment-keeping is part of it: 'If you will enter into life, keep the commandments'—that's very clear.

Galatians 2:16 "...we also have believed in Christ Jesus in order that we might be justified by *the* faith of Christ, and not by works of law; **because by works of law shall no flesh be justified**.... [Law only tells us what to do. It doesn't justify!] ...Now then, if we are seeking to be justified in Christ, *and* we ourselves are found to be sinners, *is* Christ then *the* minister of sin? MAY IT NEVER BE! For if I build again those things that I destroyed, I am making myself a transgressor. For I, through law, died to law... [because 'the wages of sin is death'] ...in order **that I may live to God**" (vs 16-19).

Do you live to God? *or* Do you have a 'religion' over here that you practice whenever you *feel* religious. Total difference.

Verse 20: "I have been crucified with Christ... [conjoined in that burial at baptism] ...yet, I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I... [He is not motivated for himself] ...but **Christ lives in me**...." That's what *justification by faith* accomplishes: Christ *in you* by the power of God's Holy Spirit. That cannot be accomplished by any law.

"...For *the life* that I am now living in *the* flesh, **I live by faith—that very faith of the Son of God**... [That God put *in* Paul by the power of His Holy Spirit; Paul is living *by that faith* with Christ *in* him.] ...Who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *is* through *works of law*, then Christ died in vain" (vs 20-21).

Here's where the confusion comes in, Psalm 119:172: "...all Your commandments are righteousness." So, *if*—through law—righteousness does not come, what is it talking about? Is this some sort of conflict? *No, there isn't any conflict!* There are two kinds of righteousness:

1. *of the Law*—just the keeping of the commandments
2. *justification*—that can only come through Jesus Christ

The reason being is that God determined it that way. There was never a law that could give life. The law only causes death. Even if a person kept the laws as best they could all through their life—what happens? *As in Adam, we all die! The wages of sin is death!*

The righteousness that we are talking about here is not righteousness that can be from law-keeping. This is a righteousness put in right standing

before God the Father in heaven above through Jesus Christ.

How is that accomplished? This becomes the very most important thing for us to understand, for us to realize, before we go on any further in the book of Galatians. This righteousness that it's talking about here is putting you in right standing with God the Father in heaven above and is on a much higher plane than commandment-keeping. The righteousness of the Law—which is fine—is okay, but that does not put you in right standing with God the Father in heaven above through the Holy Spirit. There's something else that has to take place for this justification.

Let's see how this righteousness comes, which is called *justification*. The terms *justification* and *righteousness* in this particular sense that we are talking about are nearly synonymous. The Greek word is the same—'dikaios'—which means *to justify*.

Romans 5:8: "But God commends His own love to us because, when we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood..." (vs 8-9). Can any law take the place of the blood of Christ? *NO! No law can take the place of the blood of Christ! You are justified by His blood*; that is step #1.

- What if Christ just died and wasn't resurrected?
- What if He died and shed His blood?
- Would a person be justified?

Let's see something very clearly, that we need to understand concerning justification through Christ. It has to be through His blood, because He was our sacrifice. He *is* our sacrifice. 1-John 2 says 'a perpetual, continual atoning mercy seat through Jesus Christ.'

What if Christ died and wasn't resurrected? There are a lot of people who believe that Jesus was a prophet. There are a lot of people who believe that He lived. But they don't believe that He was the Son of God. They don't believe that He was resurrected from the dead. As a matter of fact, the Jews paid the soldiers to say that His disciples came and stole the body away, and they believe that unto this day. Yes, that was even a prophecy, because unto this very day many of the Jews believe that.

- What if that were so?
- What if Jesus died and wasn't resurrected?

1-Corinthians 15:12: "But if Christ is being preached that He rose from *the* dead, how *is it that* some among you are saying that there is no resurrection of *the* dead?... [A modern heresy going on, even back then.] ...For **if there is no resurrection from the dead, neither has Christ been raised**" (vs 12-13).

If Christ was not raised *you're not justified*, because it takes the blood of Christ and the resurrection of Christ, and His acceptance of God the Father to bring that justification so *you* are put in righteousness—or right standing—with God; which is actually God imputing to you, or crediting to you—though you don't deserve it—the very righteousness of Christ.

Verse 14: “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching *is* in vain, and your faith *is* also in vain. And we are also found *to be* false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that He raised Christ, Whom He did not raise, if indeed *the* dead are not raised. For if *the* dead are not raised, neither has Christ been raised. But if Christ has not been raised, your faith *is* vain; **you are still in your sins**” (vs 14-17). You have no justification.

But Romans said that ‘while we were yet sinners Christ died for us, and being much more justified *by His blood!*’ There is no law that’s going to be substituting for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ—period! Hands down! Understood!

Even Job had to learn that lesson. Maybe you can go back and understand why Job was so corrected, even though in the letter of the Law he was a perfect man. That didn't change his heart and mind and attitude. That did not bring him belief in God, belief in Christ. He was trusting in himself. So much so that Job said, ‘This is so unfair. I wish that there were someone to referee between me and God.’ That’s a pretty stiff case of self-righteousness.

- *Works of law* cannot substitute for the blood of Jesus Christ.
- *Works of law* cannot substitute for the resurrection of Jesus Christ so that we are justified.

Verse 17: “But if Christ has not been raised, your faith *is* vain; you are still in your sins, and those who have fallen asleep in Christ have then perished” (vs 17-18).

Romans 4:25: “Who [Christ] was delivered for our offenses and **was raised**... [from the dead] ...**for our justification**.” Please understand, justification comes by:

1. the blood of Christ
2. the resurrection of Christ
3. Christ going to the Father

We also understand that every sacrifice of animals that was given under the Old Covenant, when the blood was drawn from that animal, the sacrifice was not complete until that was taken into the Holy of Holies; until it was taken into and accepted by God.

In the same analogy or parallel, if you have an animal sacrifice and slit its throat, and you just let the blood fall on the ground and do nothing else with the sacrifice, that sacrifice, even as a work of law, was of no effect; likewise with the sacrifice of Christ. ‘It’s impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to forgive sin’ (Heb.). But this man died **once for all** and **by His blood and sacrifice** has our sins been cleansed.

This becomes very interesting when you put it all together; and this ties this together about righteousness, the true righteousness which is *put in right standing with God the Father in heaven above!*

John 16:8^[transcriber's correction]: “And when that one [the Holy Spirit] has come, it will convict the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment: **Concerning sin**, because **they do not believe in Me**” (vs 8-9). What is this telling us? *If you don't believe in Christ, you are yet in your sins!* That lack of belief, in itself, **is a sin!** That’s what Jesus said right here.

III. Acceptance by the Father

Verse 10: “**Concerning righteousness, because I am going to the Father** and you no longer will see Me.” There’s the third step, Jesus had to go to the Father. He had to appear before God the Father to put away all the sins of those who repent.

Is that clear? The righteousness that we are talking about in the New Testament, through Jesus Christ, **can only come through Him.**

- It cannot come by any other means.
- It cannot come by knowledge.
- It cannot come by prophecy.
- It cannot come by law.
- **It can only come by belief!**

If you are keeping the commandments of God and not believing in Christ, your commandment-keeping does not put you in right standing with God.

Let’s see how this works in another case, and here’s how this righteousness begins; you have to have a start somewhere. We’re going to see that in this case the Pharisee was not sinning, but his law-keeping did not justify him because his heart was not right.

Luke 18:10: “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one *was* a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector. I fast twice in the week, *and* I give a tithe *of* everything that I gain.’” (vs 10-12). Let’s analyze something here. Let’s go back and think about this for a minute.

- Is it what God wants you to do to not be an extortioner? *God doesn't want you to be an extortioner!*
- Does God want you to be unjust? *No, He requires that you be just!*
- Does God want you committing adultery? *No, God does not want you committing adultery!*

Then he compared himself with the other person and said, 'Boy, I'm better because "...I fast twice in the week..." Is it good to fast? *Nothing wrong with fasting!* "...I give a tithe of everything that I gain [possess]." Is there anything wrong with tithing? *No, there's not a thing wrong with tithing!* But what did it do for the Pharisee? Did it change his heart, mind and attitude? *No! He had hatred in his heart!*

Law-keeping in this sense—without God, without Christ, without the Holy Spirit—led to contemptuousness toward other people.

Verse 13: "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' I tell you, this man went down to his house **justified, rather than the other....**" (vs 13-14).

Why? *Because justification begins with repentance!* That's why law-keeping begins with understanding the law. Repentance means that you recognize your sinful helpless self! Then only God can help you; only God can make you right. When you are put in right standing with God, then you want to keep His commandments. It's a whole different motivation. Christ becomes paramount instead of law.

(go to the next track)

Where law is paramount and Christ isn't mentioned, they're falling into the problem and difficulty that they had in Galatia. They were depending on the law and the law brings death and fear and all the things in between, because no one can do it. No one can keep it in the way that Christ did.

What you have to do is believe in Christ. What you have to do is understand about the sacrifice of Christ. You have to have that applied to you. That's why when we go to Acts 2, here is how it is when you begin on that road of that kind of justification.

This is Peter speaking and he's giving the sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Acts 2:36: "Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom

you crucified, both Lord and Christ." You have to be crucified with Christ! You have to be buried with Him through watery baptism into that grave to be conjoined unto His death.

Peter is saying that *you* have crucified Christ. Let's take it personally. *My sins*, for my part, killed Christ. *Your sin*, for your part, killed Christ!

- What can justify that?
- What can make that right?
- Can a law?
- Can law-keeping make that right?
- ***NO! It has to begin with repentance!***

Verse 37: "Now after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart..." That's what the justification through Christ must do:

- it must start in your heart
- it must start with your realizing that you need the mercy of God
- you need the forgiveness that comes through Christ

Here they were "...cut to the heart and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?'" (v 37). Just picture yourself this way:

What if unknowingly you got into circumstances where you killed someone? You didn't know that you did. How would you feel? Let's make it an even more gruesome example so you will get the magnitude of it. What if you lived in an area where you were afraid of burglars coming into your house and robbing you? You had a gun and what if one night you were awakened and you heard someone downstairs and you thought for sure this was someone robbing your valuables. You quietly got up and you got your trusty little gun and you pulled back the lever to cock it and you walked down the stairs real quietly and you saw this outline of someone. You all of a sudden got startled and shot them.

BAM! and your wife was screaming upstairs, 'What going on?' and came running downstairs and turned on the lights and you killed your own son!

- How would you feel?
- What would you do?
- How would you make that right?

There isn't any law-keeping you can do to make that right—none whatsoever! It's the same way with Jesus Christ. You have killed Christ! Your sins literally drove that spear into His side, drove the nails into His hands and feet, and ***only God the Father can make you right through the justification which comes from God and that must be through repentance!***

Verse 38: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

- That, my brethren, *is justification!*
- That, my brethren, *is the righteousness* that is in Christ Jesus—which cannot come by law!

I hope that is clear! Some people, just like Paul said, are going to say that we are saying, ‘Let’s be sinning so that grace may abound.’ Even Paul had to say, ‘God forbid!’

Once you come to this understanding, once you have repented, once you have accepted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior and Lord and Master, and Ruling King in heaven above, are you then going to look to something else to bring you salvation? *or* Must you always look to Christ? **You must always look to Christ!**

Galatians 2:20: “I have been crucified with Christ, yet, I live. *Indeed*, it is no longer I; but **Christ lives in me....**”

- Does Christ live in you?
- Does Christ motivate you?
- Isn’t it much greater to have Christ in you than to have the Law written over here on a plaque?

It’s fine, nothing wrong with it, but the Law was never meant to do what Christ can do.

- Does Christ live in you? *That’s something you have to answer and find out!*

“...For *the life* that I am now living in *the flesh*, **I live by faith—that very faith of the Son of God, Who loved me...**” (v 20). Remember that God loves you. Remember, ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever may believe on Him may receive eternal life.’

- Do you *believe*?
- Do you *understand* what kind of belief that that takes?

That belief you can’t work up! It isn’t like one of these ‘energizer bunnies’ that you windup and crank it up from within. It’s not *your* faith; *it’s Christ’s faith in you!*

“...For *the life* that I am now living in *the flesh*, I live by faith—that *very faith* of the Son of God, Who loved me **and gave Himself for me**” (v 20). Relinquished everything that He had as God, before He became human, for you!

Verse 21: “I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness *is* through *works of law*, then Christ died in vain.” Do you understand it? *I hope*

so!

In the light of this, Paul says, Galatians 3:1: “O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you... [deceived, misled] ...*into* not obeying the Truth...”

What is Truth? ‘*Your Word is Truth!*’ Jesus said to ‘sanctify them through Your Word.’ Paul said here: “...who has bewitched you *into* not obeying the Truth...”

- Are we to obey the Laws of God?
- Are we to keep the commandments of God?
- *Certainly! God expects that!*

As a matter of fact, God expects that of every human on earth. That’s a requirement of just being a human being.

Our requirement is greater than that! Our requirement is to *believe* in Christ Jesus. What is part of obeying the Truth beyond keeping the commandments and laws of God? *Believing on Jesus!* The Greek is *into*, so deep, so profound, so moving it is *into*, because it’s with the very power and Spirit of God and Christ is *in* us.

As Paul said, ‘The just shall live by faith!’ These things are revealed from faith to faith: the faith of God to you and your faith and belief, as a result of that, back to God. That’s what Paul was saying here.

“...before whose eyes Jesus Christ, crucified, was set forth in a written public proclamation? This only I desire to learn from you: did you receive the Spirit of God by works of law, or by **the hearing of faith?**” (vs 1-2). That’s an incorrect translation in the *King James*: ‘*the works of the law.*’ Is it by *works of law* that you received the Spirit? *No! You receive the Spirit by repentance!* Isn’t that what Peter said, ‘Repent and be baptized and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ Fantastic and marvelous thing, a great and wonderful thing. That’s what it really is; it’s fantastic!

“...did you receive the Spirit of God by works of law, or by **the hearing of faith?** Are you so foolish? Having begun in *the Spirit*, are you now being perfected in *the flesh?*” (vs 2-3). That’s how many people start out. They believe in Jesus Christ, they’re baptized, they accept the sacrifice, they start keeping the commandments of God, and pretty soon Christ is way off over here and everything is do this, do that, do the other thing, and don’t do this, don’t do that, don’t do the other thing. And you can’t be a Christian unless you are right here in this one place, and this is the only thing.

NO! NO! NO! Back up! **Where is Christ in all of that?** That’s what you have to ask: Where is Christ in your life? That’s what Paul was saying.

You started out in the spirit, now are you going to be perfected by the fleshly things of law-keeping that you can do?

Verse 4: “Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it *has been in vain*? Therefore, *consider this*: He Who is supplying the Spirit to you, and Who is working deeds of power among you, *is He doing it by works of law or by the hearing of faith?*” (vs 4-5). Is it that you believe in God that way? That’s what he’s asking!

Then he begins to cover a broad area beginning with Abraham. We get the overall principle of everything that is involved.

Verse 6: “*It is exactly as it is written*: ‘Abraham believed God, and it was **reckoned to him for righteousness.**’” It’s the same thing with you. Can you be perfect? *No, you can’t be!* Can I be perfect? *No, I can’t be!* Why? *Because flesh is never perfect! Human beings are never perfect!* God did not make human beings perfect.

Isn’t it kind of foolish for us to pretend that we’re perfect? Isn’t it kind of foolish to pretend or try and make ourselves perfect by thinking that there is something we can do from ourselves to give us life? *Nonsense! It won’t work!*

Same way with Abraham. Abraham *believed!* That “...was reckoned to him for righteousness.” God said that belief and faith puts you in right standing ‘with Me, because I accept that.’ Who gave Abraham the belief and faith in the first place? *God did!* It was “...reckoned to him for righteousness.” Same way with you: God views you as He views Jesus Christ, in that very righteousness of Christ, which is the justification that we are talking about.

Verse 7: “Because of this, *you should* understand that those who *are* of faith are the *true* sons of Abraham. Now, *in* the Scriptures, God, seeing in advance that He would justify the Gentiles [nations] by faith, preached the Gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, ‘In you shall all the nations be blessed.’.... [Remember, this was done before the ritual of circumcision was required.] *...It is* for this reason that those who are of faith are being blessed with the believing Abraham” (vs 7-9).

- Is that how you believe God?
- Do you believe what God says?

Abraham was really in quite a predicament—wasn’t he? This is quoted in the book of Genesis. God came to Abraham and said, ‘I want you to look at all the stars in heaven.’ It’s not like us today. We live in these dirty, rotten, wretched cities and we have smog, fog, exhaust and dirt. You go out a look up at the sky and it’s all that you can do to tell that it’s

blue.

Back then he didn’t have any of that. Abraham stepped out there at night and no streetlights to inhibit looking at that stars. It’s like being in certain places on earth, the stars look like they almost come right down on top of you.

He stood out there and God said to Abraham, ‘Look at all these stars, Abraham, count them if you can. I tell you, so shall your seed be.’ Abraham didn’t have a son. Abraham had been waiting pretty close to 20 years at that point to have a son. He was old. Sarah was old.

But what did it say of Abraham? *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness!* Could you do that? Here you are a 90-year-old man and your wife is 80, you’ve got another 10 years before you’re going to have the son. Took you out at night and stood you on top of a hill and said, ‘Look at all those stars up there, so shall your seed be.’

There’s no account there where Abraham says, ‘Oh, God, how can that be, I’m just an old man.’ He *believed* God! That’s why it was counted to him for righteousness. That is what is so fantastic.

- Do you believe in Christ?
- Do you believe in that seed of God that came through Abraham: *Jesus Christ?*

You need to get that in mind so you’ll understand more, v 10: “For as many as are *relying on **works of law are under a curse.***... [Remember, that’s setting aside Christ. Why are people under a curse who have *works of law?*] ...because it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things that have been written in the book of the Law to do them.’”

The law is the law and if you don’t do every little bit of it, you are under a curse. In other words, ‘the wages of sin is death’ (Rom 6:23).

Verse 11: “Therefore, *it is* evident that no one is being justified before God by *means of* law; because *it is written*, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” If you have been justified by ⁽¹⁾the blood of Christ, if you believe in ⁽²⁾His resurrection, if you know that He went to present Himself ⁽³⁾before God the Father—to present His sacrifice of Himself to put away sin once for all—if you believe that and live by that then you are living by faith.

Verse 12: “Now then, the Law is not based on faith... [because the Law says, or the law doesn’t say. If the Law doesn’t say, then make another law so the law says.] ...but, ‘The man who practices these things shall live in them.’ Christ has redeemed us **from the curse of the Law...**” (vs 12 13).

Protestants seem to believe that this means

Christ has ransomed us from requirements to keep the Laws of God. But Jesus said, ‘think not that I have come to destroy the Law or Prophets; I’ve not come to destroy but to fulfill. I say to you not one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be fulfilled.’ That hasn’t been done yet, so it’s still all in force—right?

He came to redeem us not from the Law, but from the curse! What is the curse? *The wages of sin is death! Sin cuts us off from God!* Christ came to bring us back to God; buy us back; redeem us from the curse of the Law which is *in our sins we’re already dead*. That’s what He’s redeeming us from. Not from the obligation to keep the commandments of God whatsoever.

- He’s redeeming us *from our sins!*
- He’s redeeming us *from our nature!*
- He’s redeeming us from *the way that we have been living!*

“...having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed *is* everyone who hangs on a tree’)... [referring to His crucifixion] ...in order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, *and* that we might receive **the promise of the Spirit through faith**” (vs 13-14). Paul is giving a very full and complete explanation, and this becomes pretty heavy, a little difficult to understand. I did not understand this for many years, even being a minister, I did not fully comprehend or understand this.

We’ll come to a verse here that really caused me to ponder, and then I began to realize and understand the difference between the righteousness that is in law, and the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus. There are two different kinds of righteousness. The righteousness, or justification, in Jesus Christ puts us in right standing with God the Father in heaven above. The righteousness of the Law only puts us in right standing with the temple on earth.

Verse 15: “Brethren, (I am speaking from a human perspective) even when a man’s covenant has been ratified, no one nullifies *it*, or adds a codicil to it.”

Example: What if you bought a car. You signed a contract that your payments would be \$150/month. That contract that you have signed is a covenant, becomes part of the law of the land. Can that company come back in six months and say, ‘We’ve changed our mind. Even though this contract says that you have four years to pay for this car at \$150/month, we are going to demand of you \$450/month because we think that’s what we deserve.’

Do you have to pay the \$450/month? *NO!* That’s an add-on—*isn’t it?* Can they add on to it? *No, they cannot add onto it!* They cannot change it once that it is confirm and signed. They can’t change it. The law is that that contract is within law, you must follow it, you must pay \$150/month. That’s what you are required. Now, if you voluntarily want to pay more, that’s up to you.

On the other hand, let’s look at it the other way: What if you looked at that contract and say, ‘Well, \$150/month; I think I’m only going to give them \$75/month.’ You start sending them \$75/month and you get the bills that say that you’re short \$75 and now you have to pay plus a late payment, the second and third month comes and a letter comes. You just ignore these because ‘I only want to pay \$75/month. One day you come home and your car is gone! You get on the phone and try and find out where your car is and lo and behold you found out they repossessed it!

You call them up and say, ‘What did you take my car for?’ *You did not keep the law of this contract!* ‘I gave you \$75/month.’ *No, the law calls for \$150!* ‘I didn’t want to pay it.’ *Then you don’t get the car!*

Law is cut and dried! You can’t add to it or change it. It’s the same way here with the promises given to Abraham. Once the promise was given, it says, ‘by two immutable things God could not swear by any greater than Himself’ so He swore by Himself—right? And it’s impossible for God to lie! Let’s get that in mind and please understand this.

Verse 15: “Brethren, (I am speaking from a human perspective) even when a man’s covenant has been ratified, no one nullifies *it*, or adds a codicil to it. Now, to Abraham...” (vs 15-16). We’re talking about a promise between God and Abraham. Isn’t that much more important than your contract with your car? *Yea! Absolutely!*

“...and to his Seed were the promises spoken. He does not say, ‘and to *your* seeds,’ as of many; but as of one, ‘and to your Seed,’ which is Christ. Now this I say, *that the* covenant ratified beforehand by God to Christ **cannot be annulled by the Law**, which was *given* four hundred and thirty years later, so as to make the promise of no effect” (vs 16-17).

That’s what the Jews were saying, ‘We don’t accept Christ; we don’t believe in Him; we believe in the Law and we will accept nothing else but the Law.’ Paul is saying that God ‘promised this righteousness 430 years **before** the Law was given to Israel.’ So, we have the promise given to Abraham; 430 years later we have the Law given to Israel.

Did that change what God had promised to Abraham? *No! Because that promise to Abraham was one promise, one covenant!* Go back and read that there were more promises and more covenants given to Abraham:

- There was the promise and covenant given *concerning Christ*.
- There was the promise and covenant given *concerning the nation of Israel*, which was to come.
- There was the promise and covenant of the *physical land* that was to be given to the descendants of Abraham.
- There was the promise and covenant of *eternal life*.

All of those are different and separate promises and covenants. Neither one interferes with the other. So, the Law that was given to Israel 430 years after the promise given to Abraham doesn't do away with the promise given to Abraham. That's what Paul is saying.

Verse 18: "For if the inheritance *is* by law... [of eternal life and the Kingdom of God] ...*it is* no longer by promise...." Just like the contract that was made. If it's in the contract and the contract says so, that's all that can be done. That's one of the reasons why Christ came and died; to literally break that marriage covenant that He had with Israel. When Christ died, He was symbolically dying as the Husband of Israel. We know that marriage is binding until death.

So, when Christ died, that fulfilled and ended all of the promises that were given concerning the promises through law. Now the promise is through spirit, through the resurrected Christ. We now are going to serve in newness of spirit, newness of attitude, newness of way that God wants us to live. The inheritance and blessing and promise did not come through law.

"...But God granted *it* to Abraham by promise. **Why then the law?**.... [very good question] ...It was placed alongside *the promises* for the purpose of *defining* transgressions, until the Seed should come to whom *the* promise was made..." (vs 18-19). People look at that and that seems to be the hardest thing to understand.

Some people say that this means that the sacrifices were added to the Law given to Israel—a law added to a law. NO! That is not correct. What are we talking about here in the whole thing?

1. the promises of God
2. the covenant given to Israel given 430 years later

The apparent full meaning of Galatians 3:19:

Why then the Law? That is the purpose of the Law, which is the Old Covenant in relationship to the original covenant and promise given to Abraham. It was appointed.

The Old Covenant given to Israel was ordained in addition to and placed alongside of the promise given to Abraham for the sake of transgressions, that is to point out clearly what sin is until the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made.

We are talking about the promises given to Abraham. We're talking about the Law given 430 years later. Just like any other contract.

- Is a promise a contract? *Yes, it is!*
- Did God contract with Abraham and Abraham contract with God? *Yes!*
- Can that contract be set aside? *No!*
- Can you add to it? *No!*

But you have the other promise of the Law, which was given to Abraham, for Israel. That was placed alongside of; didn't replace the promise. It was in addition. It was a separate thing that was given "...until the Seed should come to Whom *the* promise was made..."

I hope that this hasn't been too heavy or too difficult for you.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter (except where noted)

Scriptural Referenced:

- 1) Galatians 2:14-16
- 2) John 6:26-29
- 3) Galatians 2:16
- 4) Matthew 19:16-22
- 5) Galatians 2:16-21
- 6) Psalm 119:172
- 7) Romans 5:8-9
- 8) 1 Corinthians 15:12-18
- 9) Romans 4:25
- 10) John 16:8-10
- 11) Luke 18:10-14
- 12) Acts 2:36-38
- 13) Galatians 2:20-21
- 14) Galatians 3:1-19

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 2:13
- 1 John 2
- Romans 6:23

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