

Man Is Not Justified by Faith Alone

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(*Rom. 3:20; 4:2; Gal. 2:16; 3:11-12*)

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(*Jas. 2:21; Rom. 2:13*)

There is nothing any sinner can do to be justified for the transgressions they have committed against Almighty God by breaking His law and commandments (*Rom. 7:7; 1Jn. 3:4*). Until an individual repents of sin, he/she remains separated from God (*Isa. 59:2*). However, through Christ's sacrifice anyone can be forgiven and reconciled to God, but this forgiveness is based on specific conditions. These include repentance, baptism, the laying on of hands, and starting a new life of obedience to every word of God (*Mt. 4:4; cf. Rom. 6:4*; see studies: Baptism).

Then Peter said to them (repentant sinners), **'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins;** and you shall receive the gift of the holy spirit (*Ac. 2:38*; Ed. notes in parentheses; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted).

Afterward Jesus found him (who had been cured by Christ) in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. **Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you'** (*Jn. 5:14*; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

So he (Christ) said to him (rich young ruler), 'Why do you call me good? No one is good (in the ultimate sense) but One, that is, God (Almighty). But **if you want to enter into life** (everlasting), **keep the commandments** (of

God) (*Mt. 19:17*; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

What shall we say then? **Shall we** (who have repented of living a sinful life) **continue in sin that grace** (forgiveness) **may abound?** **²Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin** (symbolically at baptism) **live any longer in it?** (*Rom. 6:1-2*; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So repentant sinners are justified by Christ's blood that was shed on their behalf, and this single act of love provided the means through which all sins can be forgiven. Following repentance and baptism, every individual is free from their previous sins and can begin living a new life of obedience to God's word.

Therefore we (sinners) were buried with him (Christ) through baptism into death (pictured symbolically by a total immersion in water at baptism; cf. *Rom. 6:3*), that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory (power) of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life** (i.e. in accordance with God's word; cf. *Mt. 4:4*) (*Rom. 6:4*; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).

All those who do not believe their sins have separated them from Almighty God, or that Christ's shed blood cannot reconcile them to God, are still in their sins and are excluded from everlasting life until they repent.


Therefore I (Christ) said to you (sinners) that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am he (who came to fulfill what the law of animal sacrifice could not; cf. *Mt. 5:17*), you will die in your sins (*Jn. 8:24*; cf. *8:21*; Ed. notes in parentheses).

On the other hand, those who believe they have sinned and are separated from God, can be reconciled if they repent and believe they will

receive the help of God's Holy Spirit, following baptism, to assist them in overcoming future temptations to sin. This is the faith, or trust, that is required for anyone to be justified (forgiven) of past sins.

Therefore by the deeds of the law (associated with animal sacrifices, which were a temporary substitute until Christ's sacrifice) no flesh will be justified in His (Almighty God's) sight, for by the law is the knowledge (and reminder; cf. Heb. 10:3) of sin (Rom. 3:20; Ed. notes in parentheses).

The next scripture confirms that the law being referred to in Romans 3:20 is the temple system, which included animal sacrifices, washings, offerings, circumcision, etc.



SINCE THERE IS ONE GOD WHO WILL
JUSTIFY THE CIRCUMCISED BY FAITH
AND THE UNCIRCUMCISED THROUGH
FAITH.

Romans 3:30

Knowing that a man is not justified (declared righteous) by the works of the law (in context Paul was addressing circumcision; cf. Gal. 2:3-4) but by faith in Jesus Christ (i.e. his shed blood; cf. Heb. 9:22; Rom. 3:24), even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law (temple system including various sacrifices, offerings, and ordinances); for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified (Gal. 2:16; Ed. notes in parentheses).

So, trusting that animal sacrifices and other temple ordinances would justify a "sinner," was a major point of contention in the early church of God. A number of converts to Christianity, who came from Judaism, taught that new members still had to be circumcised and observe

other ordinances. The Apostle Paul refuted these arguments and stated that faith in the temple system was no longer sufficient. Instead, it was a shadow, or temporary method, of dealing with sin (Heb. 8:5; 10:1). Therefore, faith in the temple system would not be enough to justify anyone wishing to be forgiven of their sins.

But that no one is justified (declared righteous) by the law (associated with the temple system) in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live in faith' (trust that Christ's shed blood covered their past sins and not the blood of animals) ¹²Yet the law (of animal sacrifice) is not of faith (no need to trust in Christ's sacrifice), but (instead) 'The man who does them (animal sacrifices) shall live by them' (with no hope of everlasting life). ¹³(In contrast) Christ has redeemed us (sinners) from the curse of the law (everlasting death penalty; cf. Rom. 6:23), having become a curse for us (taking upon himself the death penalty for all sinners) ... (Gal. 3:11-13a; Ed. notes in parentheses).


Paul went on to say that circumcision is no longer the means through which an individual can remain in fellowship with God. Instead, it is through faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that anyone can maintain their relationship with God.

Since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith (Rom. 3:30).

For if Abraham was justified by works (i.e. circumcision or animal sacrifices), he has something of which to boast (cf. Lk. 3:8-9), but not before God (who would not be impressed). ³For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed (trusted in) God, and it was accounted (imputed, credited, reckoned) to him for righteousness' (Rom. 4:2-3; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Because Abraham trusted and obeyed God, he acted on the command to sacrifice his son Isaac, which would have been excruciatingly difficult. This was the "test" of Abraham's faith that Paul was referring to in Romans 4:3. Therefore, it is only by obeying God's word, no matter how difficult it may be, that one's faith can be confirmed or measured. When anyone rejects God's law and commandments, they have removed the yardstick that determines their faith, or trust, in God to redeem them from any and all evils.

... 'God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has fed me (Jacob) all my life long to this day, ¹⁶(and) **the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil ...**' (Gen. 48:15b16a; Ed. notes in parentheses; emphasis added).



FOR NOT THE HEARERS OF THE LAW
ARE JUST IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, BUT
THE DOERS OF THE LAW WILL BE
JUSTIFIED.
Romans 2:13

As the majority of Christianity refuses to acknowledge the validity of God's law and commands, they have removed the primary means of testing their faith. For example, if a Christian observes pagan holidays like Christmas, New Year's Day, Easter, etc., they do not need to rely on God to redeem them because when they ask for time off work it is unlikely they will lose their job by refusing to turn up. However, if they want to obey God and observe His Holy Days, there is a much higher risk they will lose their job, one way or another (see studies: God's Holy Days). This is what James was referring to when he mentioned that "talking" about faith is all well and good, but it does not prove one's faith. A person's faith is known by how much they trust and obey every

word of God (Mt. 4:4), no matter what the consequences might be (cf. Dan. 3:8-23).

Was not Abraham our father justified by works (of obedience to God's command) when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? ²³Do you see that faith was working together with his works (he acted on God's commands), and by (his) works (of obedience) faith was made perfect (complete)? (Jas. 2:21-22; Ed. notes in parentheses).

You see then that a man is justified by works (of obedience), and not by (talk of) faith alone (Jas. 2:24; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Many religious people will entertain the idea that God's law and commandments make sense, but belief that they need to obey them is another matter. Paul addressed this issue as well.

For not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified (Rom. 2:13).

In conclusion, sinners are justified by Christ's shed blood on their behalf, but they must believe they are guilty of sin and then trust that Christ's sacrifice will cover their sins. This is the beginning of one's faith in God and His word. Next, following repentance and baptism, a true believer must continue to obey God's word in order to grow in the grace (SGD 5485; goodwill, favor, loving kindness, mercy) and knowledge of our Lord (master; cf. Jn. 13:14) and savior Jesus Christ (cf. 2Pet. 3:18a). Without obedience to God's word, there would be no way of determining whether an individual trusted (had faith in) God.

The argument that man is justified by faith alone is misleading because scriptures dealing with this subject are comparing the "faith" that some early church members had in the temple system

rather than in Christ's shed blood to cover their sins. So, there is no contradiction between any of the scriptures used in this study.

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