

The False Antithesis of Faith Versus Works

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Introduction

Jesus Christ warned us to not be deceived, “**Take heed that no man deceive you.** For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall **deceive many**” (Mat 24:5). Jesus is our Savior and what He said about salvation is the truth while anyone saying something different is wrong. We must be very careful to not allow ourselves to be deceived.

By a corrupt theological system and skewed Bible translations, many have been deceived into embracing the message of salvation by *sola fide* or faith alone. For about 500 years it has been an extremely successful false narrative from our enemy imposed upon the New Covenant to delude many and lead them to destruction. Its effectiveness has been bolstered by another false narrative forced upon the Old Covenant, that justification under the law was about trying to merit righteousness by keeping the commandments perfectly without ever sinning. Being sold the bill of goods that God’s people just couldn’t keep His commandments, the message of salvation became that God’s people today only need to believe some facts are true. In short, it’s a false antithesis of faith versus works intended to hinder us from keeping God’s commandments so that we won’t be saved.

Jesus Christ stated that we must live according to the righteous standard He taught in His Sermon on the Mount or we won’t enter His Kingdom, “For I say unto you, That except **your righteousness** shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, **ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven**” (Mat 5:20). And He ended His Sermon with only two options—either doing or not doing what He said: “Therefore whosoever **heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them** ... And every one that **heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not**” (Mat 7:24, 26). According to our Savior Jesus Christ, salvation isn’t about believing but about obeying.

He also stated several times: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (Jhn 14:15); “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me” (Jhn 14:21); “If a man love me, he will keep my words” (Jhn 14:23); “Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you” (Jhn 15:14); “Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you” (Mat 28:20). Our Savior said that we must keep His commandments. Let us take heed and be sober about being deceived by those that say something different.

The righteous requirements of the law

Jesus Christ said at the beginning of His Sermon on the Mount that His teaching doesn’t overturn what was stated in the law and by prophets but fulfills it, “**Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets:** I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” (Mat 5:17-18). He later encapsulated His teaching on the law in one commandment, “Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to

you, do ye even so to them: **for this is the law and the prophets**" (Mat 7:12). He didn't invalidate or nullify the law but even restated and reinforced its two greatest commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. **On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.**" (Mat 22:37-40).

Toward the beginning of His Sermon He said, "That except **your righteousness** shall exceed *the righteousness* of **the scribes and Pharisees**, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mat 5:20). He then stated what the scribes and Pharisees had been teaching about the law, "Ye have heard that **it was said by them** of old time" (v. 21), followed by what He was now saying, "But I say unto you" (v. 22). And this is the repeated pattern throughout the rest of the chapter—what they said and what He was saying (vs. 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44). Christ's law isn't a new code of ethics superseding the Old Covenant law but the proper interpretation—as opposed to what the scribes and Pharisees taught—of its moral righteous requirements. Righteousness under the New Covenant is the same as under the Old Covenant—we must live according to the same moral standard. Christ didn't absolve us from any of the moral righteousness embodied in the Old Covenant law. It was the scribes and Pharisees that were trying to do that.

The proper perspective of the law

Probably the biggest hindrance with our understanding of how the Old Covenant and New Covenant relate to each other is our backwards perspective of the two. Since the Old came first chronologically, we think in terms of the Old having the preeminence and that the New must be understood in conformity to it. But the New was the end goal and purpose from the very beginning. Prior to either covenant, God had already shown both prophetically in an allegory of Abraham's two sons by two different women, "Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman ... Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants" (Gal 4:22, 24). Although Ishmael came first, Isaac was God's purpose all along.

That Christ's law under the New Covenant has always been God's will and purpose is witnessed by Moses and the prophets: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deu 18:15); "These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me" (Luk 24:44); "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (Jhn 5:46); "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you" (Act 3:22); "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins" (Act 10:43); "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Rom 3:21); "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law" (Rom 3:31); "For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth" (Rom 10:4).

Christ's sacrifice of Himself and current High Priestly ministry at the right hand of God wasn't patterned after the Old Covenant Levitical priesthood with its animal sacrifices but the other way around: "And look that thou make *them* **after their pattern, which was shewed thee in the mount**" (Exo 25:40); "And thou shalt rear up the tabernacle **according to the fashion thereof which was shewed thee in the mount**" (Exo 26:30); "And this work of the candlestick *was* of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, *was* beaten

work: **according unto the pattern which the LORD had shewed Moses**, so he made the candlestick” (Num 8:4); “Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it **according to the fashion that he had seen**” (Act 7:44); “For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: **Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things**, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou **make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount**” (Heb 8:4-5), “*It was* therefore necessary that **the patterns of things in the heavens** should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these” (Heb 9:23).

The law of the Old Covenant didn’t establish morality but codified it. It didn’t become morally evil to murder when Moses commanded “Thou shalt not kill” (Exo 20:13). It has been evil since the beginning, “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” (1Jo 3:12). It’s not so much an issue of the New enforcing the morality of the Old because both the Old and the New enforce the morality that has always been binding.

When Jesus taught, “**Ye have heard that it was said** by them of old time, **Thou shalt not kill**; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: **But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause** shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Mat 5:21-22), He was defining the intent of the Sixth Commandment that has always been true since the beginning—hatred in the heart is murder, “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer” (1Jo 3:15).

Mankind’s morality comes from having been made in the image of God, “And God said, **Let us make man in our image, after our likeness**: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him**; male and female created he them.” (Gen 1:27). It’s morally evil for us to lie because “God, that cannot lie” (Tit 1:2), and we’re made after His image. Our morality issues from Him, not from what was carved on stone tablets.

The Ten Commandments or Decalogue of the Old Covenant didn’t establish morality but codified it. But we no longer live under the Old Covenant and its laws including the Ten Commandments. We live under Christ’s law of the New Covenant which upholds and enforces all the same morality that the Old Covenant laws upheld and enforced.

The dead actions of the law

The Greek *ergon* means “actions,” any kind of actions defined by the context in which it’s used. Referring to the high priestly duties on Yom Kippur or Day of Atonement, the writer of Hebrews calls them *nekros ergon* or “dead actions” because they were ritualistic actions that never atoned for sins: “But into the second **went the high priest alone once every year**” (Heb 9:7), “*Which stood* only in **meats and drinks**, and **divers washings [baptismos 909]**” (v. 10), “For if **the blood of bulls and of goats**, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from **dead [nekros 3498] works [ergon 2041]** to serve the living God?” (vs. 13-14).

The high priest's dead actions are what the writer of Hebrews meant earlier, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from **dead [nekros 3498] works [ergon 2041]**, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of **baptisms [baptismos 909]**, and of **laying on of hands**, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Heb 6:1-2). Washing himself and laying his hands on the scapegoat were just two of the high priestly dead actions on Yom Kippur, "therefore shall he **wash his flesh in water**" (Lev 16:4), "And Aaron shall **lay both his hands** upon the head of the live goat" (v. 21), "And he shall **wash his flesh with water** in the holy place" (v. 24).

Dead actions prescribed by the law include such things as "baptisms [*washings*], and of laying on of hands" (Heb 6:2), "meats and drinks, and divers washings" (Heb 9:10), "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer" (Heb 9:13). They're also comprised of dietary requirements and observance of holy days including all of the various Sabbaths, "Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him" (Rom 14:3), "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind" (Rom 14:5), "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*" (Col 2:16).

The liberty by which Christ set us free

Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, **do ye not hear the law?** For it is written, that **Abraham had two sons**, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman. But he *who was* of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman *was* by promise. **Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants;** the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to **Jerusalem which now is**, and is in bondage with her children. But **Jerusalem which is above is free**, which is the mother of us all. (Galatians 4:21-26)

Paul revealed to the Galatians the allegory God had hid in a mystery within the life of Abraham. His two sons Ishmael and Isaac symbolized prophetically what would come later in the two covenants—the Old Covenant under Moses and the New Covenant under Jesus Christ. The Old with all of its bondages of dead works—sacrificing animals, washing in water, eating a kosher diet, keeping the feast days, keeping the Sabbaths—centered in Jerusalem with the temple sacrifices and most holy place. But Jesus freed God's people from the requirement of traveling to Jerusalem three times a year for the feasts, "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, **nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father**" (Jhn 4:21).

The Jerusalem currently in heaven will one day come down to the renewed earth, "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb 12:22), "And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev 21:2). Since "the Jerusalem which is above is free," God's people whose home is that city are free from the dead actions of the law.

"Stand fast therefore in **the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free**, and be not entangled again with **the yoke of bondage**. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I **testify again** to every man that is circumcised, that **he is a debtor to do the whole law.**" (Gal 5:1-3). Christ freed us from the bondages of dead actions under the law. When Paul said "I testify again ... he is a debtor to do the whole law," he was referring back to earlier when he testified of Moses' own words about the law,

“The man that doeth them shall live in them” (Gal 3:12), “Ye shall do my **judgments [mishpat 4941]**, and keep mine **ordinances [chuqqah 2708]**, to walk therein: I *am* the LORD your God. Ye shall therefore keep my **statutes [chuqqah 2708]**, and my **judgments [mishpat 4941]**: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I *am* the LORD” (Lev 18:5).

Ordinances and statutes under the law consisted of such dead actions as the Passover, consecration of priests, abstinence from ingesting fat and blood, and the Day of Atonement: “And this day shall be unto you for a memorial; and ye shall keep it a feast to the LORD throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an **ordinance [chuqqah 2708]** for ever” (Exo 12:14); “And thou shalt gird them with girdles, Aaron and his sons, and put the bonnets on them: and the priest’s office shall be theirs for a perpetual **statute [chuqqah 2708]**: and thou shalt consecrate Aaron and his sons” (Exo 29:9); “*It shall be* a perpetual **statute [chuqqah 2708]** for your generations throughout all your dwellings, that ye eat neither fat nor blood” (Lev 3:17); “And this shall be an everlasting **statute [chuqqah 2708]** unto you, to make an atonement for the children of Israel for all their sins once a year” (Lev 16:34).

Many of the judgments were stated in Exodus 21 after the giving of the Ten Commandments, “Now these *are* the **judgments [mishpat 4941]** which thou shalt set before them” (Exo 21:1). The judgments included the treatment and handling of: Hebrew servants (vs. 2-6), giving of a daughter in marriage (vs. 7-11), murder and manslaughter (vs. 12-15), kidnapping (v. 16), cursing father or mother (v. 17), injuries sustained from a fight (vs. 18-19), the beating of a servant (vs. 20-21), injuring a pregnant woman (vs. 22-25), injuring a servant (vs. 26-27), an ox or an open pit causing damage (vs. 28-36).

Eternal life under the law meant doing all of its requirements including the dead actions, “The man that doeth them shall live in them” (Gal 3:12). And the promise was that if a man did all of its requirements, not perfectly but faithfully, he would live again in resurrection. There were, however, times when God made exceptions, not to the moral requirements of the law but to its dead actions, to meet a greater pressing need.

Jesus Himself recounted the time when God allowed David and his men to eat consecrated bread to meet the need of their urgent hunger, “But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, **when he was an hungred, and they that were with him**; How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was **not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him**, but only for the priests?” (Mat 12:3-4). He also pointed out that the priests routinely broke the Sabbath by circumcising on that day, “Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and **ye on the sabbath day circumcise a man**” (Jhn 7:22). If the eighth day from birth happened to fall on the Sabbath day, the priests broke one dead action to keep another. There was also a time when God hearkened to the prayer of Hezekiah to allow some people to partake of the Passover though they weren’t cleansed according to the requirement of the law:

For there were many in the congregation that were not sanctified: therefore the Levites had the charge of the **killing of the passovers** for every one *that was* not clean, to sanctify *them* unto the LORD. For a multitude of the people, *even* many of Ephraim, and Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun, **had not cleansed themselves, yet did they eat the passover otherwise than it was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them**, saying, The good LORD pardon every one *That* prepareth his heart to seek God, the LORD God of his fathers, though *he be* not *cleansed* according to the purification of the sanctuary. **And the LORD hearkened to Hezekiah, and healed the people.** (2 Chronicles 30:17-20)

Although God required adherence to the dead actions under the law, when His people were living in moral unrighteousness, He hated their dead actions: “And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, **to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams**” (1Sa 15:22); “**For thou desirest not sacrifice**; else would I give *it*: thou delightest not in burnt offering” (Psa 51:16); “**To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to the LORD than sacrifice**” (Pro 21:3); “**For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice**; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hos 6:6); “Bring no more **vain oblations**; incense is **an abomination unto me**; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, **I cannot away with**; *it is* iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts **my soul hateth**: they are **a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them.**” (Isa 1:13-14); “I hate, **I despise your feast days**, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, **I will not accept them**: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.” (Amo 5:21-22).

Several times we’re told that Jesus Himself “broke” the dietary restrictions under the law: “And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, **Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?**” (Mat 9:11); “**The Son of man is come eating and drinking**; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!” (Luk 7:34); “And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, **This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them**” (Luk 15:2); “And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, **That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner**” (Luk 19:7).

Likewise, several times He “broke” the Sabbath day under the law: “How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore **it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days**. Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and **it was restored whole, like as the other**” (Mat 12:12-13); “And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that **Jesus had healed on the sabbath day**, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day” (Luk 13:14); “And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, **Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?** And they held their peace. And he took *him*, and **healed him**, and let him go” (Luk 14:2-4); “And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because **he had done these things on the sabbath day**” (Jhn 5:16); “Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because **he keepeth not the sabbath day**. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them” (Jhn 9:16).

Of course Christ never sinned. That He “broke” the dietary laws and the Sabbath day of the Old Covenant in order to uphold a greater moral good indicates that neither of these laws were moral in essence. He freed us from any dietary requirements, “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man” (Mat 15:11), “There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him” (Mar 7:15). And He said “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (Mar 2:27). Man was made on the sixth day, then the seventh day was made. Therefore, the Sabbath day was made to serve man’s needs, not that man’s needs must be neglected to serve the Sabbath. Since we’re no longer under the Ten Commandments, we’re no longer under the Fourth Commandment, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exo 20:8).

Christ's law

Jesus summarized the entire law in one commandment, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Mat 7:12), "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luk 6:31), "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mat 19:19, 22:39; Mar 12:31). Paul also stated "**For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"** (Gal 5:14), and later called it "the law of Christ" (Gal 6:2). Keeping this one law fulfills all the moral righteous requirements of the Old Covenant law, "for this is the law and the prophets" (Mat 7:12).

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: **for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.** For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.** Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore **love is the fulfilling of the law.** (Romans 13:8-10)

Since keeping the one law "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" fulfills everything Christ requires of us, then we're not required to also abstain from certain meats, keep any of the Sabbaths, observe the annual feasts, or even tithe. It's not "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" plus keep the Sabbath day. All the righteous requirements of the law are fulfilled in one word not in two, three, or more.

Faithfulness to God

(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. **Who against hope believed in hope,** that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, **So shall thy seed be.** And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: **He staggered [diakrino 1252] not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;** And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. (Romans 4:17-22)

In this passage, Paul was extrapolating upon Genesis 17 where God redirected Abraham's hope of an heir from Ishmael to Isaac. His promise to him years before was that "he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir ... So shall thy seed be" (Gen 15:4-5). Abraham, therefore, considered all along that Ishmael was the fulfillment of that promise. But he would learn later that his hope in this promise would be fulfilled in another biological son but through his own wife.

The Greek *diakrino* means "to contend with" as shown "when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision **contended [diakrino 1252] with him**" (Act 11:2). Although Abraham didn't contend with God about the fulfillment of His promise "He staggered [*diakrino*]1252] not at the promise of God," initially he did: "Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall *a child* be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? **And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!**" (Gen 17:17-18). He contended with God for Ishmael to be his heir. The

intended message Paul was revealing is that this event in Abraham's life foretold of the conflict that God's people in the early church would experience with remaining faithful to Him, "repentance from dead works [actions], and of faith [faithfulness] toward God" (Heb 6:1). Would they contend with God to keep "Ishmael"—the dead actions of the Old Covenant law? Or, would they remain faithful to Him by turning to "Isaac"—Christ's shed blood of the New Covenant?

Abraham is the father of all those that follow the steps of his example of faithfulness, "And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also **walk in the steps of that faith [faithfulness]** of our father Abraham, which *he had being yet uncircumcised*" (Rom 4:11-12). His faithfulness to God was shown in turning his hope from Ishmael to Isaac while still uncircumcised earlier that same day, "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and **circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day**, as God had said unto him ... **In the selfsame day was Abraham circumcised**, and Ishmael his son" (Gen 17:23, 26). Circumcision was the sign in his flesh that he wasn't contending with God but submitting to the true hope of fulfilling His promise—Isaac and not Ishmael. This correlates to God's people being faithful to Him in turning their hope of eternal life from the law to His Son, their promised Messiah.

Looking at just a few of Christ's healings from the Gospel of Matthew: "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great **faith [faithfulness]**, no, not in Israel ... And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour" (8:10, 13); "And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their **faith [faithfulness]** said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (9:2); "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy **faith [faithfulness]** hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour" (9:22); "And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, **Thou Son of David**, have mercy on us ... Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your **faith [faithfulness]** be it unto you" (9:27, 29); "O woman, great is thy **faith [faithfulness]**: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour" (15:28).

Did Christ mean that these people were healed by their faith or belief? Notice that the two blind men were crying out "Thou son of David." Jesus healed those that were faithful to God in receiving Him as their promised Messiah. This is what Christ taught, "Therefore leaving the principles of **the doctrine of Christ**, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of **repentance [metanoia 3341] from dead works [actions], and of faith [faithfulness] toward God**" (Heb 6:1). Once Christ came, God required His people's faithfulness in repenting or turning away from the dead actions of the law and turning their hope to Christ.

When Peter preached the first evangelistic message to his fellow Jewish brethren, he concluded it with the directive to "**Repent [metanoeo 3340]**, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ **for the remission of sins**, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Act 2:38). The blood of animals never remitted sins. They were to turn away from the dead actions of the law for righteousness and turn to the Lord for remission or forgiveness of their sins. The Greek verb *metanoeo* means "to turn away from" and *epistrepho* means "to turn unto," and this was the continued message to them, "Repent [*metanoeo* 3340] ye therefore, and be converted [*epistrepho* 1994], that your sins may be blotted out" (Act 3:19), "turned [*epistrepho* 1994] unto the Lord" (Act 9:35, 11:21).

Righteousness under the law

Although everyone sins, there were righteous people living under the law: “Then Joseph her husband, **being a just man**” (Mat 1:19); “a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife *was* of the daughters of Aaron, and her name *was* Elisabeth. And **they were both righteous before God**, walking in all the **commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless**” (Luk 1:5-6); “Simeon; and the same man *was* **just and devout**” (Luk 2:25); “And, behold, *there was* a man named Joseph, a counsellor; *and he was* **a good man, and a just**” (Luk 23:50). And Jesus Himself said there have been righteous people since the beginning: “sendeth rain on **the just** and on the unjust” (Mat 5:45); “That many prophets and **righteous men** have desired to see *those things* which ye see” (Mat 13:17); “That upon you may come all **the righteous blood** shed upon the earth, from the blood of **righteous Abel** unto the blood of **Zacharias** son of Barachias” (Mat 23:35).

If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**, ye do well: But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall **keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all**. For he that said, **Do not commit adultery**, said also, **Do not kill**. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law. (James 2:8-11).

Many use this passage from James to teach that righteousness under the law was only possible by keeping the law absolutely perfectly without ever sinning even once—meriting righteousness. But James was simply making the same point Paul made but from a different angle, “For this, **Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet**; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**” (Rom 13:9). Paul said that keeping one law keeps all the laws, while James said that breaking one of the laws breaks all the laws. It’s the same conclusion reached two different ways. Since all the laws are one whole, then one broken is the whole broken. James wasn’t teaching that righteousness under the law meant keeping it perfectly without ever sinning. That line of teaching discourages righteous living so that we’ll quit, “Well, we can’t do it anyway, so why even try? Besides, we’re saved by faith alone!”

The man that doeth them shall live in them

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, **what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?** And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is* none good but one, *that is*, God: but **if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments**. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (Matthew 19:16-19)

And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, **Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?** He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: **this do, and thou shalt live**. (Luke 10:25-28)

On these two occasions Jesus affirmed that those under the law would have eternal life by keeping the commandments. Now, many take what He said as only hypothetical—that He wasn't really telling these men that they could have eternal life by keeping the commandments. But that's simply not the case. The wise way to take what He said is that He said what He meant and meant what He said. He wasn't speaking theoretically. He meant that they not only could but must keep God's commandments to have eternal life. This has always been true and still is. After having been seated at God's right hand, Christ gave His Revelation to John, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:1), and stated three times: "the remnant of her seed, which **keep the commandments of God**, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 12:17); "Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that **keep the commandments of God**, and the faith of Jesus" (Rev 14:12); "Blessed *are* they that **do his commandments**" (Rev 22:14).

Moses said that eternal life under the law was by doing it, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: **which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD**" (Lev 18:5). The prophets and apostles affirmed this as well: "And testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy law: yet they dealt proudly, and hearkened not unto thy commandments, but sinned against thy judgments, (**which if a man do, he shall live in them;**)" (Neh 9:29); "And I gave them my statutes, and shewed them my judgments, **which if a man do, he shall even live in them**" (Eze 20:11); "That the man which **doeth those things shall live by them**" (Rom 10:5); "The man that **doeth them shall live in them**" (Gal 3:12).

Paul taught, "To them who **by patient continuance in well doing** seek for glory and honour and immortality, **eternal life**" (Rom 2:7), "For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but **the doers of the law shall be justified**" (Rom 2:13). Therefore, since he had already said here that "the doers of the law shall be justified," he certainly wasn't contradicting himself a little later by stating, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight" (Rom 3:20), "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom 3:28). He truly meant that we must do, fulfill, or keep the moral righteous requirements of the law to be justified—not only under the Old Covenant but also under the New. That "the doers of the law shall be justified," includes even the uncircumcised keeping the righteous requirements of the law, "Therefore if the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law" (Rom 2:26), "And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law" (Rom 2:27).

Paul cited David's sin and repentance as his support, "That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged" (Rom 3:4), "I have sinned against the LORD" (2Sa 12:13), "**Against thee, thee only, have I sinned**, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and **in sin did my mother conceive me.**" (Psa 51:4-5). Although arguably the greatest Jew in Israel's history, David concluded that he was conceived and shaped by God in the womb uncircumcised. Therefore, in breaking God's commandments, he was no better than the uncircumcised. His circumcision profited him nothing as Paul declared, "For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision" (Rom 2:25).

In fact, Uriah's righteous actions were an indictment against David, "**And Uriah said unto David**, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? **as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.**" (2Sa 11:11). This uncircumcised Hittite was keeping the righteous requirements of the law while the greatest of the Jews was not, "Wherefore hast thou **despised the**

commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast **killed Uriah the Hittite** with the sword, and hast **taken his wife to be thy wife**, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.” (2Sa 12:9).

What Paul taught in chapter three of Romans, “Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified **in his sight**” (Rom 3:20), “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom 3:28), is that the actions of the high priest in offering animal sacrifices won’t justify any flesh in God’s sight. This is what David learned, “Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and **done this evil in thy sight**: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest ... **For thou desirest not sacrifice**; else would I give *it*: **thou delightest not in burnt offering**” (Psa 51:4, 16). The “deeds of the law” in chapter three are different from “the doers of the law” back in chapter two. One is dead actions while the other is the moral righteous requirements.

Faith versus works

The Greek *ergon* means “actions” but was translated as either “deeds” or “works” in “the deeds [*ergon* 2041] of the law” (Rom 3:20, 28), “the works [*ergon* 2041] of the law” (Rom 9:32; Gal 2:16, 3:2, 5, 10), to intentionally impose a false understanding of righteousness under the law. Romans chapter three is about God’s righteousness through Jesus Christ’s faithfulness, “the righteousness of God through **the faithfulness of Jesus Christ**” (Rom 3:22 NET), “the justifier of the one who lives because of **Jesus’ faithfulness**” (Rom 3:26 NET). The Greek *hilasterion* means “mercy seat” where the high priest under the law would sprinkle the blood of animals once a year, “And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat [*hilasterion* 2435] ... But into the second *went* **the high priest alone once every year, not without blood**, which he offered for himself, and *for* the errors of the people” (Heb 9:5, 7). Therefore, when Paul said, “Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation [*hilasterion* 2435] through faith [*faithfulness*] in his blood, to declare his righteousness for **the remission of sins that are past**, through the forbearance of God” (Rom 3:25), it was about Christ’s faithfulness to shed His blood upon the true mercy seat as opposed to the actions of the high priest shedding the blood of animals.

Although “the deeds [*actions*] of the law” (Rom 3:20, 28) are specifically the high priest’s dead actions, it’s being taught that “deeds” or “works” are actions of trying to merit righteousness by obeying God’s commandments perfectly. By altering our understanding of what Paul said about the law, the message of salvation was corrupted to simply believing some facts are true without obeying God’s commandments, “justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Rom 3:28). However, it’s actually “justified by faith [*faithfulness*] without the deeds [*actions*] of the law,” because we’re justified by Christ’s faithfulness to shed His blood without the actions of shedding the blood of animals prescribed by the law.

Under the Old Covenant law, there was no such concept of meriting righteousness by perfect living without sin. Everyone, including the high priest himself, was conscious of sin and therefore submitted to the ordinances of animal sacrifices: “And Aaron shall bring the bullock of the sin offering, which *is* **for himself**, and shall make an atonement **for himself, and for his house**, and shall kill the bullock of the sin offering which *is* **for himself**” (Lev 16:11), “made an atonement **for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel**” (Lev 16:17), “the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered **for himself, and for the errors of the people**” (Heb 9:7). It was never about keeping God’s commandments perfectly but keeping them faithfully. Paul was teaching that it’s now about hearing of Christ’s faithfulness to God in shedding His precious blood for our sins.

The hearing of faithfulness

Jesus Christ's faithfulness to His Father was to do the work His Father sent Him to do, consummated with dying on the cross for the sins of the world: "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (Jhn 4:34); "I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (Jhn 5:30); "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (Jhn 6:38); "I do always those things that please him" (Jhn 8:29); "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." (Jhn 10:18); "I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do" (Jhn 14:31); "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (Jhn 17:4); "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou *wilt*" (Mat 26:39); "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phl 2:8); "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered" (Heb 5:8); "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God" (Heb 10:7).

Paul taught the Galatians that we're not justified by the actions of the law but by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, "yet we know that no one is **justified by the works [actions] of the law but by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ**. And we have come to believe in Christ Jesus, so that we may be **justified by the faithfulness of Christ and not by the works [actions] of the law**, because by the works [actions] of the law no one will be justified" (Gal 2:16 NET). We're justified by His faithfulness to His Father in giving Himself for us on the cross, "I have been **crucified with Christ**, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So the life I now live in the body, I live because of **the faithfulness of the Son of God**, who loved me and **gave himself for me**. I do not set aside God's grace, because **if righteousness could come through the law, then Christ died for nothing!**" (Gal 2:20-21 NET). He then continued this thought into the next chapter:

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit **by the works [actions] of the law, or by the hearing of faith [faithfulness]**? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain. He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, **doeth he it by the works [actions] of the law, or by the hearing of faith [faithfulness]**? (Galatians 3:1-5).

This "hearing of faithfulness" is the Galatians initially hearing from Paul the true gospel message about Christ's faithfulness as stated at the beginning of his letter, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto **another gospel**: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would **pervert the gospel of Christ**. But though we, or an angel from heaven, **preach any other gospel** unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal 1:6-8), "But I certify you, brethren, that **the gospel which was preached of me** is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but **by the revelation of Jesus Christ**." (Gal 1:11-12).

This true antithesis of "the actions of the law" versus "the hearing of faithfulness" concerns which we trust for salvation—the dead actions of the law, or Jesus Christ's faithfulness to His Father? Paul challenged the Galatians, "He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, **doeth he it by**

the works [*actions*] of the law, or by the hearing of faith [*faithfulness*]?" Which of the two messages they heard was confirmed with miracles, signs, and wonders that Jesus Christ said would follow?

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and **preach the gospel** to every creature. **He that believeth [*trusts*] and is baptized** shall be saved; but he that believeth [*trusts*] not shall be damned. **And these signs shall follow them that believe [*trust*]** ... And they went forth, and **preached every where**, the Lord working with *them*, and **confirming the word with signs following**. Amen." (Mark 16:15-17, 20).

Prior to their evangelization by the apostle Paul, the Galatians had been serving false gods through various means involving the material elements of this earth, "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, **ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods**. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how **turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements**, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? **Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.**" (Gal 4:8-10). His point was that turning to the dead actions of the law for justification—including the keeping of the feasts and Sabbaths—is essentially going right back to idolatry. It's the same thing he warned the Colossians about, "Let no man therefore judge you in **meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days**: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ." (Col 2:16-17). Under the Old Covenant, God allowed Himself to be worshipped through these dead actions that He prescribed for His people to keep. But once His only begotten Son came and consummated His plan of salvation, He requires His people to turn from these dead actions and to His Son for justification under the New Covenant.

The law was like a school teacher that taught God's people about their Messiah to come, "Wherefore **the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ**, that we might be **justified by faith [*faithfulness*]**. But after that faith [*faithfulness*] is come, **we are no longer under a schoolmaster.**" (Gal 3:24-25). The dead actions of the law foreshadowed as types and figures the true redemption that would come in Christ. But once He came, God's people are no longer under the dead actions.

The gospel message Paul preached to the Galatians which was confirmed by miracles from the Lord Jesus Christ wasn't at all against the moral righteousness of the law. In fact, his message affirmed the morality of the law entirely, "**For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself**" (Gal 5:14), which is what Jesus Christ Himself preached, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mat 19:19, 22:39; Mar 12:31). And this one commandment summarized everything Christ taught in His Sermon on the Mount and everything in the law, "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: **for this is the law and the prophets**" (Mat 7:12).

Writing to the Romans, Paul stated that Christ ended the law's requirements, "**For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness** to every one that believeth. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, **That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.**" (Rom 10:4-5). He ended the requirement of keeping the dead actions of statutes and judgments, "Ye shall therefore **keep my statutes, and my judgments**: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I *am* the LORD" (Lev 18:5). Paul then quoted again from Moses:

It *is* not in heaven, **that thou shouldest say**, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, **that we may hear it, and do it?** Neither *is* it beyond the sea, **that thou shouldest say**, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, **that we may hear it, and do it?** But the word *is*

very nigh unto thee, **in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.** (Deuteronomy 30:12-14)

But the righteousness which is of faith [faithfulness] speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down *from above*;) Or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, *even* in thy mouth, and in thy heart: **that is, the word of faith [faithfulness], which we preach;** That if thou shalt **confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus,** and shalt **believe [trust] in thine heart** that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (Romans 10:6-9)

The righteousness which is by Christ's faithfulness "speaketh on this wise." In God's wisdom, He hid in a mystery within the writings of Moses what He would later accomplish through His Son Jesus Christ. His Son would come and teach the moral righteousness of the law very clearly for us to hear and do it, "Therefore whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them** ... And every one that **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not**" (Mat 7:24, 26). And baptism is the point we declare from our mouths that we've heard and will do all that He commanded, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mat 28:20). Therefore, we can't make excuses for our disobedience "that thou shouldst say." We can't say that we hadn't heard or didn't know because we already affirmed from our mouths that we heard and understood. This is salvation. It's not believing some facts are true and we're good to go. It's confessing the Lord Jesus Christ—affirming from our mouths we have heard and will obey from the heart our resurrected Lord seated in heaven.

Paul then reached the logical conclusion, "So then faith [faithfulness] cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17). This popular verse isn't saying that the more we hear, the more we believe! That's false doctrine intended to keep people hearing, and hearing, and hearing ad nauseam but not doing to be saved. Paul was saying that Christ's faithfulness to His Father to come down from heaven into this world "that is, to bring Christ down *from above*," and His faithfulness to go to the cross in trust that His Father would raise Him from the dead "that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead," is the message he was preaching, "that is, the word of faith [faithfulness], which we preach."

"So then faith [faithfulness] cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," is simply the logical conclusion of the previous statements. To be saved we must call on the name of the Lord, to call on His name we must first trust Him, to trust Him we have to hear about Him, to hear about Him there must be a preacher sent—a preacher sent from God with His words. Thus, the beautiful feet that trekked over the mountains of Asia and Macedonia are Paul's, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" (Isa 52:7), "And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" (Rom 10:15). "So then faith [faithfulness] cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Hearing about Christ's faithfulness comes by the preacher sent from God.

Reformation or Rebranding?

The Protestant Reformation about 500 years ago led by Martin Luther was a counterfeit. It was instigated by the Roman Catholic Church itself as a means by which the Scriptures could be released to the world while still maintaining strict control over the truth. The truth being communicated through the Scriptures was corrupted through skewed translations and false teaching of Protestant Trinitarian churches. Protestant churches are essentially their mother Church rebranded under a new name with a new gospel message. Their core beliefs are still the same Roman Catholic false views of God, Jesus, and man: that God is a Trinity of persons, that Christ is an eternal spirit clothed with flesh, and that man is an eternal spirit that goes to either heaven or hell after death.

Not only did Luther continue to embrace these false views, but he was also horribly anti-Semitic. In the last couple years of his life he wrote the book "On The Jews and their Lies" which was even used by Hitler to help foment hatred for the Jews and justify the holocaust. Yet Luther is honored and praised by Protestant ministers! He held a blasphemous view of God, a false view of Jesus Christ, a wrong view of man and the destiny of man, and admittedly hated people. How could any such person possibly have attained and taught the right gospel message? Yet his "enlightenment" of *sola fide* or faith alone is hailed as a return to the true gospel preached by the apostles.

Luther's wrong understanding of "The just shall live by faith" (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38), is that we simply believe some facts are true. But it was all a devious deception to damn countless multitudes of souls. It was designed to keep people from obeying Christ's commandments under the guise that they need only believe. This wrong understanding of "The just shall live by faith" (Rom 1:17) laid the groundwork for taking such statements as "justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom 3:28) to mean justified by believing without our meritorious deeds. But it's simply "doctored" translations fueled by false doctrine.

The just shall live by faithfulness

Habakkuk's famous statement "but the just shall live by his faith [*emuwnah* 530]" (Hab 2:4), isn't about faith but about faithfulness as it's correctly translated in some versions, "but the person of integrity will live because of his faithfulness" (NET), "but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness" (NIV). The Hebrew noun *emuwnah* appears around 50 times in the Old Testament and always indicates faithfulness in every context without exception. It's rather fishy that in the King James Version, Habakkuk 2:4 is the only occurrence in 50 where *emuwnah* is translated as "faith." The Greek *pistis* in "The just shall live by faith [*pistis* 4102]" (Rom 1:17; Gal 3:11; Heb 10:38) is wrongly translated as "faith" in accordance with Luther's false salvation message, then imposed back upon what Habakkuk said.

The Greek noun *pistis* appears almost 250 times in the New Testament and most all of its contexts allow it to be translated as either "faith" or "faithfulness." There are, however, three places where the contexts *require* "faithfulness" as its meaning: "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith [*faithfulness*] of God without effect? (Rom 3:3); "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith [*faithfulness*], Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal 5:22-23); "Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity [*faithfulness*]; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Tit 2:10). And although there aren't any places where the contexts require "faith" for the

meaning of *pistis*, this didn't stop the translators from rendering it consistently as "faith" rather than "faithfulness."

This word also appears about 30 times in the Septuagint (Deu 32:20; 1Sa 21:12, 26:23; 2Ki 12:15, 22:7; 1Ch 9:22,26,31; 2Ch 31:12,15,18, 34:12; Neh 9:38; Psa 33:4; Pro 3:3, 12:17,22, 14:22, 15:28; Sng 4:8; Jer 5:1,3, 9:3, 15:18, 28:9, 32:41, 33:6; Hos 2:20; Hab 2:4), and all but two are rendered as "faithfully," "faithfulness," "truth," "trust," "loyalty," "reliable," "steadfast," "assuredly," and on one occasion the proper name "Amana." And the contexts of the two exceptions (Deu 32:20; Hab 2:4) don't force the meaning of "faith" but only allow it. In fact, the majority of its occurrences require "faithfulness" with only a couple of exceptions allowing "faith." In short, the Septuagint translators understood *pistis* as "faithfulness" and used it consistently with this meaning.

"For I am not ashamed of **the gospel of Christ**: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed **from faith [faithfulness] to faith [faithfulness]**: as it is written, **The just shall live by faith [faithfulness]**." (Rom 1:16-17). The gospel of Christ that Paul wasn't ashamed to preach is the message Jesus Christ Himself preached, "the gospel of his Son" (Rom 1:9), "my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ" (Rom 16:25). And He preached faithfulness.

The gospel message Jesus Christ Himself preached is faithfulness to Him as Lord: "Who then is **a faithful and wise servant**, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?" (Mat 24:45); "Well done, *thou* good and **faithful servant: thou hast been faithful** over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Mat 25:21); "And if ye have not been **faithful** in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? **No servant can serve two masters**: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Luk 16:12-13); "And he said unto him, Well, thou **good servant**: because thou hast been **faithful** in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (Luk 19:17).

Jesus Christ healed those that were faithful to God in receiving Him as their Messiah: "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great **faith [faithfulness]**, no, not in Israel" (Mat 8:10); "And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their **faith [faithfulness]** said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Mat 9:2); "Daughter, be of good comfort; thy **faith [faithfulness]** hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour" (Mat 9:22); "And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, **Thou Son of David**, have mercy on us ... Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your **faith [faithfulness]** be it unto you" (Mat 9:27, 29); "O woman, great is thy **faith [faithfulness]**: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour" (Mat 15:28).

The statement "Now the just shall live by faith [faithfulness]" (Heb 10:38), is understood clearly by the entire chapter that follows it. Hebrews chapter 11 is all about those that were justified by their faithfulness to God: "By faith [faithfulness] Abel" (v. 4); "By faith [faithfulness] Enoch" (v. 5); "By faith [faithfulness] Noah" (v. 7); "By faith [faithfulness] Abraham" (v. 8); "Through faith [faithfulness] also Sarah" (v. 11); "By faith [faithfulness] Isaac" (v. 20); "By faith [faithfulness] Jacob" (v. 21); "By faith [faithfulness] Joseph" (v. 22); "By faith [faithfulness] Moses" (v. 23); "By faith [faithfulness] the harlot Rahab" (v. 31); "And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: (v. 32). Because they went to their deaths in faithfulness to God, "These all died

in faith [*faithfulness*]" (v. 13), therefore they will live in resurrection and never die again, "Now the just shall live by faith [*faithfulness*]." They diligently sought the reward of eternal life from God and remained faithful to Him unto death, "But without faith [*faithfulness*] 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" (v. 6).

"Looking unto Jesus **the author and finisher of our faith [*faithfulness*]**; who for the joy that was set before him **endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down **at the right hand of the throne of God**" (Heb 12:2). Had the Son of God not come into this world and sacrificed Himself on the cross for the sins of the world, the faithfulness of all those men and women in the past would have been in vain. Their hope of eternal life would have been put to shame and they would never live again.

The pronoun "our" in "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith [*faithfulness*]" is italicized indicating that it's not in the underlying Greek text. But a definite article, however, is in the text. In other words, it should be rendered "the faithfulness." Jesus Christ is the "author" or Orchestrator of the faithfulness of all those Old Testament saints, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." (Jhn 1:1-2). He is the Word or Messenger of the Lord that spoke to them. And He is the "finisher" or Consummator of their faithfulness by His own faithfulness in dying on the cross, "Now the just shall live by faith [*faithfulness*]" (Heb 10:38).

The false antithesis of faith versus works

Faith or belief is best understood as simply one component of faithfulness. All good relationships, particularly marriage relationships, require faithfulness from both sides. And faithfulness includes faith because a couple can't have a good marriage while not believing a word the other says! Good relationships, however, aren't limited to only faith or belief but also include love, trust, obedience, unity, sacrifice, understanding, sincerity, and humility. But the doctrine of *sola fide* conceived by Luther claims that we're in a right relationship with God by only one component of faithfulness—faith alone!

Justification by faith alone is a false narrative being pushed throughout the New Testament by a corrupt theological system and tainted Bible translations to keep people from being faithful to God and ultimately from living eternally, "The just shall live by faith [*faithfulness*]." By restricting justification to a single component of faith, people become apathetic toward faithfulness. After all, if we're saved by faith alone, nothing else is even necessary. In fact, if we're saved by faith alone, anything else is even detrimental. Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ's commandments is deemed *our* works that indicate lack of faith in *His* finished work. Obedience to Christ actually becomes a bad thing! It's a horribly twisted logic that's damning multitudes.

The "deeds [*ergon* 2041] of the law" (Rom 3:20, 28) are the high priest's actions of shedding the blood of animals and sprinkling it on the mercy seat. And "the works [*ergon* 2041] of the law" (Gal 2:16) are Peter's actions of breaking his kosher diet when "he did eat with the Gentiles" (Gal 2:12). But by translating *ergon* as "deeds" or "works" and teaching that it is attempting to merit righteousness by obeying God's commandments perfectly, then "justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom 3:28), and "justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law" (Gal 2:16), becomes faith alone without meritorious works. There is no such antithesis of faith versus works in Scripture. It's simply a false antithesis intended to limit faithfulness to only faith so that ultimately we'll be unfaithful to God and perish.

Conclusion

Jesus Christ is our Savior and stated that we must live righteously according to the standard He taught in His Sermon on the Mount or we won't be saved, "For I say unto you, That except **your righteousness** shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, **ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven**" (Mat 5:20). And He concluded His Sermon by contrasting two different people, illustrated by two different houses:

Therefore whosoever **heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and **it fell not**: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that **heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and **it fell: and great was the fall of it.** (Matthew 7:24-27)

The person that hears what Christ commanded and obeys is like a house built on a foundation that stands through the storm. But the person that hears what Christ commanded and doesn't obey is like a house built upon sand that falls in the storm. The only difference between the two is either doing or not doing, obeying or not obeying. And He said nothing here of faith alone or even of faith at all!

The narrow way that leads to eternal life is keeping His one commandment of love, "**Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them**: for this is the law and the prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and **narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.**" (Mat 7:12-14). Our Savior taught us that obedience to His one commandment "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Mat 19:19, 22:39; Mar 12:31), is the narrow way that leads to life.

Our Savior told us to obey Him: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mat 28:20); "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jhn 14:15); "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me" (Jhn 14:21); "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (Jhn 14:23); "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you" (Jhn 15:14); "which keep the commandments of God" (Rev 12:17); "they that keep the commandments of God" (Rev 14:12); "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments" (Rev 22:14).

Finally, our Savior warned us against being deceived, "**Take heed that no man deceive you**. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall **deceive many**" (Mat 24:5). Faith alone is a false narrative interwoven through the New Testament by corrupt Protestant theology and skewed Bible translations. And faith versus works is simply a false antithesis intended to inhibit obedience to Christ and promote unfaithfulness. It's a false gospel message deceiving and damning many.