

Blessed are They that Do His Commandments

From the very beginning, God has required man to keep His commandments, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, **thou shalt not eat of it:** for in the day that thou eatest thereof **thou shalt surely die**” (Gen 2:17). But because he disobeyed, God banned him from the tree of life, “lest he put forth his hand, and take also of **the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever**” (Gen 3:22-23). And at the very end of Scripture we read that it’s those keeping His commandments that regain access to the tree of life, “**Blessed are they that do his commandments**, that they may have right to **the tree of life**” (Rev 22:14). From beginning to end, eternal life has always been about keeping God’s commandments.

The false gospel of *sola fide* or “faith alone” concocted about 500 years ago by Martin Luther asserts that we’re saved by faith and nothing but faith. In fact, if there’s anything other than faith, including obedience to God’s commandments, then we’re not saved. Furthermore, it’s claimed that salvation under the law of Moses was by keeping God’s commandments perfectly without ever sinning. But since nobody could do it, then salvation under the law was also by faith. This is not true. There was never a requirement of utter perfection under the Old Covenant.

The animal sacrifices offered under the law by the high priest were for the people’s sins and for his own: “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 have made an atonement **for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel**” (Lev 16:11,17); “And by reason hereof he ought, as **for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins**” (Heb 5:3); “Who needeth not daily, as **those high priests**, to offer up sacrifice, first **for his own sins, and then for the people’s**” (7:27); “**the high priest** alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered **for himself, and for the errors of the people**” (9:7).

God’s mercy isn’t for those breaking His commandments but for those keeping them, “And **showing mercy [hesed 2617]** unto thousands of them that **love me, and keep my commandments**” (Exo 20:6; Deu 5:10), “the LORD thy God, he *is* God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and **mercy [hesed 2617] with them that love him and keep his commandments** to a thousand generations” (Deu 7:9).

Under the Old Covenant, God’s people were saved by living righteously in obedience to His commandments. But when they did sin, they would repent and offer an animal sacrifice that would cover it. And this is the same model under the New—as God’s people today, we must live righteously in obedience to His Son’s commandments and confess when we sin, “**If we confess our sins**, he is faithful and just to **forgive us our sins**, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1Jo 1:9).

Since *sola fide* claims that Abraham is our example of faith or believing, therefore “faithful Abraham” (Gal 3:9 KJV, WEB, YLT) is mistranslated as “Abraham the believer” (NET), “Abraham, the man of faith” (NIV), “believing Abraham” (NKJV). But Abraham is our example of faithfulness to God in obeying His commandments, “thou hast **obeyed my voice**” (Gen 22:18), “**Abraham obeyed my voice**, and kept my charge, **my commandments**, my statutes, and my laws” (Gen 26:5).

Paul taught, “For if **Abraham** were justified **by works [actions]**, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed [trusted] God**, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Rom 4:2-3). Abraham’s “actions” were that of building altars to offer sacrifices: “there he **built an altar** unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD” (Gen 12:8), “Unto the place of **the altar, which he had made** there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD” (13:4), “**built there an altar** unto the LORD” (13:18). That he “trusted God” is that he trusted God would one day provide the sacrifice for his sins, “God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering” (22:8).

God’s people under the law of the Old Covenant were saved by loving God and keeping His commandments, “them that **love me, and keep my commandments**” (Exo 20:6; Deu 5:10), “them that **love him and keep his commandments**” (Deu 7:9). Jesus said the same, “If ye love me, keep my commandments ... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ... If a man love me, he will keep my words ... He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings” (Jhn 14:15,21,23,24). And John as well, “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we **keep his commandments**” (1Jo 2:3), “For this is the love of God, that we **keep his commandments**” (1Jo 5:3), “And this is love, that we **walk after his commandments**” (2Jo 1:6). Eternal life comes not to believers but to the obedient, “**Blessed are they that do his commandments**, that they may have right to **the tree of life**” (Rev 22:14).