

“THE LAW OF FAITH”

ROMANS 3:27

By Jack W. Langford

Most everyone knows what a “law” is. Basically, it is an order or rule established by authority. In the Bible the “Law” through Moses was a body of principles and precepts that express the Divine will, especially for the nation of Israel. Likewise there is a moral “law” that is established in the heart of every human being (Jews and Gentiles) much like the ten commandments—see Romans 2:15. On the other hand, there are certain things that we normally do not regard as laws—and the principle of “Faith” is one of them. However, the Apostle Paul refers to “*The Law of Faith*” in Romans 3:27. We shall find that, according to Paul, “Faith” is a rule established by authority. According to Paul “Faith” has properties which indicate a principle or precept that expresses the Divine will for mankind. The inspired Apostle takes this subject very seriously. In fact, it just so happens that this is one LAW, the obedience of which will determine your eternal destiny. Make no mistake about it—the person who violates this “Law” is doomed.

Many a person has been called before the courtroom of his conscience to examine if his devotion to God is correct. Man’s conscience convicts when God’s moral laws are broken. Many an inward verdict of “guilty” has been rendered (again Rom. 2:15). Now I would like to bring you once again into the courtroom of your conscience to examine those who would advocate violating this most important LAW of God—the “LAW OF FAITH” (Romans 3:27). Man’s eternal salvation depends upon the observance of this “Law.” The Law of Faith is like a “key” that opens the door to great riches. As has been carefully displayed before you in the charts on “*THE PLAN OF SALVATION*” (if you have not read them, go back and do so)—therein are the Riches of God’s grace. The Substitutionary Death, Burial and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has been carefully portrayed before you by many Scriptures. In that event, Christ paid the penalty for all the sins, of all mankind, of all the ages. Therein is manifested the GRACE of God on our behalf. “Grace” means “*unmerited favor.*” One has defined “Grace” this way—God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.” That means no one can “deserve” it. No one can “merit” unmerited favor. It is “free.” It is the “Gift of God.” To think one could “work” for it would be to have contempt for God’s gift. Remember the “key.”

How can one obtain the benefits of Christ’s redemptive work?

Now the great question before all mankind is, “How can one obtain this GRACE of God for the salvation of his soul???” Here is where the “LAW OF FAITH” comes in! The answer in the Scriptures is very clear—

*“For by Grace are you Saved—THROUGH FAITH;
and that not of yourselves: it is the Gift of God: not of Works,
lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8,9).*

*“Therefore it is of FAITH, that it might be according to GRACE”
(Rom. 4:16).*

“FAITH,” you see, is the vital connecting link to the saving GRACE of God. In addition, it must be “without works”! To break the “Law of Faith,” simply add any kind of “Works” to it! And if you do, you violate it!

Most teachers in “Christendom” will cheerfully acknowledge this “Law” in the abstract. They would all admit that the “Law of Faith” is posted everywhere throughout the Bible. However, as you and I know, the Devil will always try to make exceptions to any of God’s Laws—ESPECIALLY THIS ONE! Thank God, the “Law of Faith” is not some abstraction. It is specific and unequivocal—over and over again. Devil-deceived teachers would attempt to mingle “good works” of some form with “Faith” in order, they say, for people to get saved. When people believe this lie, they are damned for sure! It is a most FATAL mixture! The Apostle Paul calls any such message “*another* gospel (good news)...which is not another (it is bad news)...but a *perversion* of the Gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6,7).

The “Fatal” gospel

Why is it FATAL? Because the GRACE of God is ALL Sufficient, whereas man’s works are fallible, imperfect and insufficient! As a consequence, all sects that preach this perverted gospel end up with a fallible, imperfect, and insufficient salvation. Just ask one of them if they are saved; they answer, “I hope so,” “I think so,” “If I don’t slip,” “If I hold on faithful to the end,” “Who could know for sure?” or “God will judge me in the end!” My friends, this kind of a “gospel” is anything BUT “good news!” Why is it that other honest persons can answer, “Yes, I’m saved, and safe in Christ for ever! All glory to God!”? Is it not because their trust is wholly in Christ and not in themselves—“Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption” (I Cor. 1:30).

<u>WHAT GOD’S WORD</u> TEACHES	<u>WHAT MAN’S WISDOM</u> TEACHES
1. Salvation is by ATONEMENT	Salvation is by ATTAINMENT
2. Upon the Ground of DIVINE MERCY	Upon the Ground of HUMAN MERIT
3. Obtainable by FAITH	That is too EASY
4. What you need is a NEW HEART	What you need is a NEW START
5. In other words receiving a NEW LIFE	In other words turning a NEW LEAF
6. Now your motto will be “DONE”	Now your motto will be “Do, Do, Do”
7. ENVELOPE yourself with CHRIST	DEVELOP yourself with CHARACTER
8. It is GOD that Works in you	It is SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS That Works in you

What is Faith?

Salvation had better not be a gamble! Faith is not “Chance”! Faith is a CHOICE. When that choice is trust in God’s provision, you fulfill the requirement of God and lay hold of what is secure and steadfast and eternally rewarding—“But without FAITH it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a REWARDER of those who diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

Faith is not Self-Confidence! Faith is *reliance* upon another, *trust* in another and Confidence in Another—Who is PERFECT—the Lord Jesus Christ. *“To Christ give all the prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins. While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word”* (Acts 10:43,44). *“And when there had been much disputing (by those who thought they should add good works to faith in order for salvation), Peter stood up and said to them, ‘Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God made choice among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. So God Who knows the heart, acknowledged them giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us (Jews), and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by FAITH”* (Acts 15:7-9).

Faith in Christ implies an attitude change, a turn-about in your thinking—“repentance,” if you please! Take the thief on the cross for instance. At the beginning he apparently joined the other criminal in reviling Christ in mockery (Matt. 27:44). But something Christ said or did, perhaps His prayer to God for the forgiveness of those who were killing Him, changed the attitude of this one criminal. And herein is one of the most amazing examples of Faith in the Bible. There is Christ—beaten, mocked and humiliated, supposedly totally helpless—and being told to “save himself if he could.” And yet this thief turns in repentance to Him and calls out in Faith “Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom” (Luke 23:42). Amazing! Yet, Rewarding!

The Simplicity and Timelessness of Faith

One thing this demonstrates is that there is no form of words that God demands. There is no set pattern as in a religious ritual. One individual may say, “Lord, I believe” (John 9:38). Another may not say anything with her lips but only weep and literally “wash the feet of Christ with tears” (Luke 7:48-50). Yet Christ will say, “thy FAITH hath saved thee; go in peace.” Another would only beat upon his chest and not even look up, but hang his head in shame and call “O, God be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13,14). Yet Christ would say, “Trully I say to you, this man went down to his house justified!” Or, like this thief upon the cross, just cry out “Lord, remember me!”

The second thing this demonstrates is the timelessness of salvation by Faith. Salvation has always been on the same basis. The Scriptures says, “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). The apostle Peter said this and applied it to the generation of Jews to whom he was speaking. Yet this is a quotation from the Hebrew Scriptures (Joel 2:32), and it was most certainly applicable in the times of the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact the principle goes all the way back to Genesis 4:26—the first and second generations. “Then began men to call upon the Name of the Lord.”

Yet at the very same time we should realize that Joel forms these words as a prophecy of the future which is yet to come. Therefore the principle is also true of the future. As I have demonstrated on the charts about salvation—it is the same in every age.

The Law of Faith according to Romans 3:21-26

*“But now the righteousness of God apart from the Law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God **through Faith** in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe...being justified freely by His **Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus**, Whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, **through Faith**...to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has **Faith in Jesus**.”*

In explaining this passage, one must first understand what “the Law” was. The Law of Moses was a “Works System.” The Law epitomized all the various kinds of good works that there are. There were good works of moral and ethical nature. There were good works of religious, ritualistic performance. There were good works of civil and national character. If there was any category of good works to be found, you would find it in the Law system. The obedience that the Law demanded was total and complete. The Law system manifested the moral, ethical, ritualistic, social and national righteousness of God. It was a perfect system. It was a perfect standard. Paul would say the Law was “holy, just and good” (Rom. 7:12). The only problem was, natural unregenerate mankind could not keep the Law. If he broke one area he would be guilty of breaking the whole (James 2:10). The more man tried, the more obvious became his sinfulness. Therefore under the Law man became guilty before God (Rom. 3:19,20). So, it is clear that man cannot be saved by keeping the righteousness of the Law of Moses.

So then the inspired apostle reveals a different source for the “righteousness of God.” Paul speaks of “the righteousness of God through Faith in Jesus Christ, to all and upon all who believe.” Paul further explains that this righteousness “justifies” (declares a man righteous) “by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” In verse 27 Paul explains that we obtain God’s Grace through Faith and calls this “the Law of Faith!” Consequently a person can be saved by keeping the Law! But what Law does he keep? Why, of course—“The Law of faith!” That means as Paul continues to explain, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by Faith APART FROM the deeds of the Law” (verse 28).

The Law of Faith Illustrated

The very first illustration of the “Law of faith” in operation for salvation is given in the very next chapter of Romans—Romans 4:1-8, the cases of Abraham and David.

*“For what does the Scripture say? ‘Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness’ (Quote from Gen. 15:6).” Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as **Grace** but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his Faith is accounted for righteousness.”*

“Just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works... ‘Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin’ (quote from Psalm 32:1,2).”

In both of these instances men were saved by Faith “without works.” In the dictionary of God a new ingredient is attached to Faith. Earlier we stated that Faith is not “chance,” but a “**choice**.” We stated also that Faith is not “self-confidence,” but “**confidence in One Who is Perfect**.” We also saw that Faith implies an attitude change called “**repentance**.” Now we learn of an additional ingredient of Faith—“*Faith is counted for Righteousness*.” That means that the righteousness man needs in order to be acceptable in God’s presence **is freely credited to us by our Faith in Christ**. Paul therefore speaks of “**the righteousness of Faith**” (Rom. 4:11, 13, 22, 24 and especially Philip. 3:9) “imputed to us who believe...”

Diluting the Definition of Faith

All of this above is beautiful and seems simple enough, but the Devil does not like simplicity (II Cor. 11:3), nor does the natural religious man want to admit his good works cannot save him (Luke 18:18-23). I offer strong objection when I hear so-called “gospel preachers” dilute “Faith” to mean or be a component part of water baptism or ten-commandment Law keeping. If you remember, some new converts of the Pharisees in the early church tried to make “circumcision” be added to Faith in order for people to be saved (see Acts 14:27-15:1). Of course circumcision was necessary all right—however, it was not the outward physical one, but rather that which was inward, spiritual and of the heart—see Col. 2:11; Rom. 2:28,29; Acts 7:51; Jer. 9:26; Lev. 26:41; Deut. 10:16, etc. These Judaizers were effectively answered in the first Church counsel (see Acts 15:9,10). And today, the modern Judaizers, under the guise of being “Christian preachers” would try to add water baptism to Faith in order for a person to be saved. Like circumcision, baptism is necessary, but not that which is outward in the flesh, but rather that which is inward and spiritual and which takes place at the point of saving Faith—see Col. 2:12 (a baptism made “without hands” and “by faith in the operation of God”); I Cor. 6:11 (“washed by the Spirit); I Cor. 12:13 (baptized by the Spirit); Luke 11:38,39 & Mark 7:4-19 (see chart, baptized inwardly); Jer. 2:22 & 4:14; Isa. 1:16-18, etc. In addition these modern mixers fail to admit that physical water baptism had long been a vital part of the Mosaic Law System (Heb. 9:1 & 10), and that Law, as you should understand, could NEVER SAVE! And should never, therefore, be mixed with Faith!

7 Reasons Why GRACE can never be obtained by Works but only by Faith!

1. Good Works encourages “**Boasting**”—Rom. 4:2 & Eph. 2:9. (God’s Grace is repulsed by boasting.) Faith excludes Boasting—Rom. 3:27.
2. Good Works makes the Reward a “**Debt**”—Rom. 4:4. (Grace means unmerited Favor.) Faith receives the Reward freely—Rom. 3:24.
3. Good Works **Cancels Out** Grace—Rom. 11:6. (God’s Grace must be available.) Faith openly receives God’s Grace—Rom. 4:16.

4. Good Works brings *Condemnation, Imputes Sin and brings Wrath*—Rom.3:19,20 & 4:15. (This is the opposite of Grace.) Faith Imputes God’s Righteousness—Rom. 3:21,22 & 4:3,5.
5. Good Works “*Voids*” (Lit. to render inoperative) Faith—Rom. 4:14. (Grace is compatible with Faith.) Faith must be “without Works”—Rom. 3:28 & 4:5,6.
6. Good Works “*Frustrates*” (Lit. to set aside or void) Grace—Gal. 2:21. (Grace must not be set aside.) Faith is acceptable to Grace—Eph. 2:8,9 & Gal. 3:2,3.
7. Good Works demonstrates Man’s righteousness, whereas Faith Demonstrates God’s righteousness—Rom. 1:17 & 3:26.

Good Works are Vital but NEVER FOR GETTING SAVED!

Now please don’t misunderstand me! I certainly believe Christians should practice good works, but never *in order to get saved!* A Christian is said to be “created unto good works” (Eph. 2:10). They practice good works because they ARE saved, and not to GET saved! Good works emanate from “Christ-in-him.” Good works are, therefore, the inevitable result of being saved!

Thus, an UNSAVED person is justified (declared right) for salvation “by Faith WITHOUT WORKS” (Rom. 4:4-6): whereas a Christian is said to be justified (declared right) in his new life “by works” (James 2:21). As you can see there are two ways of being justified. Thus one is not justified “by Faith only” (James 2:24), because he can also be justified “by works.” In the first case an unsaved person is said to be justified for salvation “by Faith without works.” However, a person who is saved demonstrates his new life by good works. He is “declared right” in his new life “by works.” Rome has led the way, with several of her daughters following, in trying to make people believe that James 2:24 is saying a person cannot be saved only by Faith. That is a damnable lie! James 2:17-26 is not talking about how one obtains salvation. The Gospel of salvation is not even given. James believes exactly as does the Apostle Paul (Acts 15:11-13) that we are saved by “Faith without works.” However, the problem James is dealing with were those hypocrites who professed “faith,” but had no “fruit” to prove it. James is telling how saved people are to “shew” or demonstrate their faith by their “works.” Those people who merely profess faith in Christ but do not have good works in their life to demonstrate that faith—theirs was “dead faith.” Their “faith” was not real. James indicated Christians needed to “SHEW” their Faith by their works (James 2:18), and justification by faith was not the only way to be justified.

The case of Abraham illustrates the issue. When approximately 80 years old, his “faith” was said to be “imputed to him for righteousness,” and “he was justified by faith without works” (Gen. 15:16; Rom. 4:1-6 & James 2:23). However, when Abraham was well over 100 years of age, his faith was tested by offering up Isaac (James 2:21), and he was said to be “justified by works”—that particular work of offering his own son. Thus Abraham was justified by faith “without works” (for salvation) long before he was “justified by works” as a believer.

The same principle is stated many times. For instance—

“For the Grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age...and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

(Titus 2:11-14)

*“But when the kindness and the love of God toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing (Literally, *Leutron*, a basin or laver, as used in the Temple service purification for the priests) of regeneration and renewing of the HOLY SPIRIT... This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works”* (Titus 3:4-8).

The only time in the Bible where good works were indicators of a man’s search for God is in a case like that of Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, who was given the gospel by the Apostle Peter. Peter had stated that “in every nation whoever fears God and works righteousness is accepted by Him” (Acts 10:35). Obviously these good works could never save Cornelius or anyone else, but they were indicators of the person’s search for God. Therefore, Peter gave Cornelius and his household the message of remission of sins by FAITH (belief) in Christ Jesus—Acts 10:42,43—and they were instantly saved. The water baptism that followed was not for salvation, but because they were now a saved company of people believing in Israel’s Messiah and associating with believing Jews. Therefore they received the baptism of John—Acts 10:37 & 11:16.

“The Work of God—that you Believe”

As recorded in John 6:28 when the Jews asked Christ publicly, “What shall we do, that we may work the works of God? Christ answered and said, “This is THE WORK OF GOD that you BELIEVE on Him Whom HE (God) has sent” (verse 29). Christ addressed the Jewish religious leaders, who are like many Christian religious leaders today. They thought one must add rituals (like water baptism) and good works (of moral ethics) to their faith in order to get saved. Thus Christ, in speaking about the “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3) of this present age, made it very clear by removing all other works, and stressing one fact alone—FAITH. Faith or belief in Christ is “THE WORK” that is different—radically different—from all other works! There are works in general, and there is “the work,” singular. There are works of the flesh and then there is a work of the heart—Faith. Faith in Christ is the work of the heart that saves. Remember, the Scripture is not talking about mere intellectual consent to something. Rather, one must “believe from the Heart” (Rom. 10:10) in order to be saved.

**“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be Saved!”
Acts 16:30, 31.**