

H O U S E o f W I S D O M

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Email: woody@dtgministries.org; Website: http://www.dtgministries.org

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Romans 3 (Law of Faith)

(3:20-31)

Read the book of Romans over and over to establish these scriptures in your mind. Take time, if you can, to read the book of Galatians too, as it is a companion book to Romans, and adds much to the explanation of the law. It is necessary to make reference to concepts already mentioned and fill in others already established. Some of the more common ones are - faith of Christ, under the law and deeds/works of the law. Often these are shortened to just faith, in the law (KJ, by the law), law or works. Look up the extra scriptures mentioned in the study too.

Romans 3:20-24: *20. Therefore by the deeds (or, works) of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. 21. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; 22. Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: 23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:* Whenever you read the word justified ^(G1344) in a scripture, or it's related words from the same root (G1342-root, G1343, G1345, G1346 or G1347), think righteous, or right thinking, which comes only from God. No one is made righteous by law keeping (works/deeds of law, Gal 3:21).

The phrase by the law is the knowledge ^(G1922) of sin has always been explained to me as keeping the ten commandments for righteousness. This phrase is much deeper, as it pertains to having the spiritual understanding the law. There are several Strong's numbers translated having to do with knowledge. *Epignosis* ^(G1922) is the full, exact knowledge (G1107 is the verb form) which comes only from the Father and the Son (2Pet 1:2, 3, 8; 2:20). It is not our knowledge about the Father and Son that saves us, but the receiving of their knowledge. So, when a person has full or exact knowledge, they understand the knowledge. Unfortunately, a single English word hardly ever expresses the entire Hebrew concept. (The types of knowledge are: general, fragmented- G1108, intuitive- G1492, exact, clear- G1922, experiential- G1097; H1847 includes all, H1843, 44 general) Here is an O.T. example:

Numbers 15:24: *Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the* ^(H4480) *knowledge* ^(H5869) *of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savor unto the Lord, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering.* The phrase *without the knowledge* is literally from the eyes. Verse 24 would have been rendered more accurately as, *if ought be committed by ignorance from the understanding of the congregation.* The idea is that, *if ought be committed from the lack of understanding.* Ignorance is mentioned several times in Numbers 15:22-29. To see something spiritual is to understand it. What a person does is caused by their thoughts. Looking at the Levitical system as a type to teach me to overcome, so that when, because of the understanding God gives to me, I see that I have sinned, I lay down, or sacrifice the thought that causes me to sin. This idea is represented metaphorically by the sacrifice of the animal. The sprinkling of the animal's blood is a metaphor of Christ's shed blood, and it is the study of the cross that brings my sins to light.

We all have been guilty of reading the Bible and trying to follow the instructions. However, God's righteousness is manifested apart from the law by means of the cross, and all of which pertains to it is witnessed by the Bible.

The witness happens when He impresses you with an understanding of what you read. Job is an excellent example. He was considered a righteous servant by God (Job 1:8), yet without a full understanding. After the dialogue with his three friends, the Lord spoke to Job: **Job 38:1-3**: 1. *Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,* 2. *Who is this that darkens counsel by words without (full) knowledge^(H1847)?* 3. *Gird up now thy loins (mind - 1Pt 1:13) like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me.* In the next four chapters the Lord ask Job questions he could not answer. Finally, Job realized, **Job 42:2-5**: 2. *I know that thou can do every thing, and that no thought can be withheld from thee.* 3. *Who is he that hides counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that which I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.* 4. *Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me.* 5. *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye sees thee.* Taking the Bible as it is written does not give a person complete knowledge. We must hear spirit of God explain it: **Proverbs 2:6**: *For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.* As Christians we have heard things about God, and we are guilty of uttering things from the Bible we understand not. Believers must come to the point of seeking God to understand the Bible, whether reading for themselves or hearing it from another. God speaks to each personally, and will reveal Himself as well our sins, using the law as a tool for instruction to help us to know that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, and that no amount of keeping the letter will cleanse us.

Romans 3:24-26: 24. *Being [made righteous] freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:* 25. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation^(G2435) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission^(G3929) of sins that are past, [in] the forbearance of God;* 26. *To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just and justifier of him which believes in Jesus.* From what are we being redeemed? **Ephesians 1:7**: *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. The phrase forgiveness^(G859) of sins^(G3900) should be deliverance from faults. (See Lk 4:18, where G859 is translated deliverance and liberty, which is the purpose of Jesus' visit; See Gal 6:1 & Jam 5:16 for G3900, often translated as the outward action rather than the inward defect) A fault is a moral weakness which leads one to commit sin. [a more accurate rendering of the Greek]*

In verse 25, there are two words that must be considered. The Greek word hilasterion^(G2435) is used only twice. **Hebrews 9:5**: *And over it the cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat^(G2435; H3727), of which we cannot now speak particularly. The mercy seat on the ark is a place of reconciliation and not a place of appeasing (propitiation) God. What God did in Jesus was an act of mercy toward humanity. To appease God with a sacrifice is a Pagan concept. The other word is parensis^(G3929) which means *to pass over*, which I believe is in reference to Passover as a type, when death passed over all homes of those who had put blood on the doorposts. Additionally, verse 26 needs explaining: *that he might be just, and the justifier of him which (G1537=*ek*, indicating source) believes (G4102=*faith*) in Jesus*, but better understood as, *that he (the Father) might be righteous, and making righteous those whose faith^(G4102) is from^(G1537) Jesus*. The source of faith (spiritual understanding) is the Father, and Jesus is the channel through which we receive faith. The shed blood of animals are a figure of applying Christ's explanation of the cross to our thinking. **1John 1:6-9**: 6. *If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:* 7. *But if we walk in the light, as he (the Father) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin.* We are cleansed with words (Jn 15:3; Eph 5:26) and not with law-keeping (works/deeds).*

Romans 3:27-28: 27. *Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith.* 28. *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified (regarded as innocent) by faith without the deeds (works) of the law.* What Paul is saying is that there are two approaches, or two ways of looking at the law:

1. To use it as a law of works is when a person reads the Bible and attempts to keep what it says without any

input from God. Yes, the written word was inspired by God, but it is mostly written in a way that requires mankind to search and seek God with all their heart, mind and soul in order to understand it (cf Pr 8:8-9 Wisdom speaks).

2. The law of faith is the explanation that comes from the Father through the Son. It is His understanding which enables us to see that He has always regarded us as innocent because of our ignorance. It does not mean that we have not sinned, but only that God is not keeping an account of them. By receiving His understanding we are able to see that He loves us as much as His only Son, and to see what needs to be changed in our way of thinking.

Romans 3:29-31: *29. Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also: 30. Seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. 31. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.* There is some subtlety in verse 30 that needs explaining: *the circumcision by (ek^{G1537}) faith, and uncircumcision through (dia^{G1223}) faith.* While the terms *circumcision* and *uncircumcision* are used to represent the literal Jews and all other non-Jews (cf Eph 2:11; Gal 2:7), they are also used metaphorically to represent the inward, spiritual (Rom 2:29) Jew. In this verse, the Greek word *ek* indicates source, where *dia* indicates the channel through which something happens. The spiritual Jew is rendered innocent from the faith of Christ, and his testimony of faith will be the channel through which the non-spiritual Jew will come to know God. Here is an example from the prayer of Jesus for His disciples: **John 17:20-21:** *20. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; 21. That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.* Jesus breaks the bread and gives it to His disciples, and His disciples give it to the people, and we become spiritually one with the Father and the Son.

Do we then make void the law through faith? No, we establish the law. This verse is the conclusion of verse 27 above, where Paul presents two approaches to the understanding of the written word. Those who are “under the law” (governed by the Bible) try to establish the law by their works, or their own understanding, when in reality, the law should be established by means of the faith of Christ as He explains it. **Mark 4:33-34:** *33. And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. 34. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.* When explained by the Lord to those who hear, the parables and proverbs will give knowledge (cf Pr 1:1-6). Therefore, the law is holy, just and good (Rom 7:12) if it is used lawfully (1Tim 1:8), where the religious organizations of men try to establish the law by their creeds, and therefore cannot come to an agreement.

Summary: There is nothing wrong with the law. The problem is with man’s understanding and use of it. No part of the law has been abolished (Mt 5:17-18; Lk 16:16-17) - the commands in stone, the feast days or the sacrifices. However, we are NOT to go build a booth on the day of Tabernacles, nor kill an animal to appease God, nor are we required to worship God on a specific day of the week. All those things are written, and Israel’s experiences are recorded for our learning about a loving God and how to be delivered from the bondage of sin. They are especially for our admonition upon whom the end of the world has come (1Cor 10:6-11). The law of love was fulfilled in Jesus, and it will be fulfilled in everyone who has ears to hear. **Proverbs 10:12:** *Hatred stirs up strife: but love covers all sins. Amen.*