



**The End of an Era
The Era of Justification by Faith in Christ
Part 2
Romans 3:21-31**

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Last week we began to look at and understand what took place on the cross. Paul is now telling the church in Rome that it was much more significant than anyone could have ever comprehended. It was the end of an era. And as we discussed dispensationalism, we also learned it was the end of the dispensation of the Law with the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the beginning of the dispensation of grace, with the empowering of the Holy Spirit upon the church in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost.



By the way, Ascension Day, the day that Jesus ascended to the Father is coming up on May 14th and Pentecost, also known as Shavuot, begins sunset on May 21st ending on sunset May 23rd.

Romans 3:21–31

“But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, but it is the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in God’s merciful restraint He let the sins previously committed go unpunished; for the demonstration, that is, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Where then is boasting? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith. **For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one. Do we then nullify the Law through faith? Far from it! On the contrary, we establish the Law.**” (NASB 2020)

When we stopped last time, we were at verse 25. We will pick up with verse 26.

Everything that Christ did for us on the cross, being our justification, our redemption as well as our only avenue of approach to God since He has satisfied for us what we could not handle on our own; was done because of His love for us and our incredibly deep need for salvation. Literally a demonstration of His righteousness. Paul tells us in Romans 5 what He did.

Romans 5:6–11

“For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous person; though perhaps for the good person someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also celebrate in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.” (NASB 2020)

We will cover this more in depth when we get to Romans 5. But the bottom line for now, we were sinners and Christ, even while we were still in that miserable state, went to the cross for us so we could then be with Him for all eternity. We see in verse 26 the why.

Romans 3:26

“for the demonstration, that is, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” (NASB 2020)

Why doesn’t God zap sinners today, see above. Why does God “let” bad people get away with the bad things they do? See above. The reality is no one is truly getting away with anything. We learned that earlier.

Romans 1:24

“Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.” (NASB 2020)

The lifestyle of sin shows up in the body. The miles pile up at a faster rate than one would expect. No one is getting a pass as we learned from Peter in his discussion of Lot.



2 Peter 2:7–10

“But God also rescued Lot out of Sodom because he was a righteous man who was sick of the shameful immorality of the wicked people around him. Yes, Lot was a righteous man who was tormented in his soul by the wickedness he saw and heard day after day. So you see, **the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials, even while keeping the wicked under punishment until the day of final judgment. He is especially hard on those who follow their own twisted sexual desire, and who despise authority. These people are proud and arrogant, daring even to scoff at supernatural beings without so much as trembling.**” (NLT)

You and I look at those who are living a sinful lifestyle and we see that many are good at providing the outward show of happiness and looking good, but inside they are miserable. We must remember what Jesus says about the enemy and what his true intent is for all of us.

John 10:10

“**The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;** I have come so that they may have life, and may have it abundantly.” (NET 2nd ed.)

Everyone is busy trying to fill the hole in their soul (Ecclesiastes 3:11) that only Jesus can fill, but they will instead go after relationships, substances, and on and on. Many are busy doing, as Johnny Lee related in his song, “looking for love in all the wrong places.” There is a toll that begins to build up and since Satan has come to steal, kill and destroy; the person who has not sought Jesus Christ but instead is looking elsewhere will many times see their youth and mental health stolen, their health both physically and mentally killed and many opt to simply exist until death while a few opt to destroy themselves. That can be slowly with alcohol or drugs, or quickly in suicide. They believe they are escaping the guilt they experience.

When some older adults were asked why they attempted suicide, the reason given most often was a desire to escape. Suicide is less about attention seeking, selfishness, vengeance, or anger, and more about escaping from pain. Folks don't want to die as much as they want to escape from the pain of their accusing thoughts and their depression. Some depressed people have experienced painful circumstances like child maltreatment, chronic pain, discrimination, or divorce. But painful circumstances are neither “good reasons” nor “good-enough reasons” for suicide. Many people endure these painful circumstances and do not kill themselves. (Gibson and Mason 2020, 11)

Jesus Christ came to this planet to redeem us, to free us, and to save us from this pain and eliminate the need to escape but instead to really learn how to live.

Jeremiah 29:11

“**For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.**” (ESV)

John 8:31–36

“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “**If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**” They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’” **Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**” (ESV)

What Jesus is saying here is that when we believe, when we come to Christ and as we continue in His word walking with Him, then and only then will we know the truth. This is the truth in God's word. Truth that does not change...ever. It frees us.



God has never changed His view on sin, He still hates it, all of it. “Jesus does not imply that believers will never make a mistake or wrong decision, but one of the benefits associated with conversion is the impartation of truth. We do not have to accept the changing philosophies of life. We have received truth and are able to discern truth.” (Benfield 2015, 493)

Jesus tells us that as we continue in His word, we will be able to know what true truth is. When we know that, then we are truly set free. We are no longer dominated by the sin nature following our urges, but now we take a step back and ask, what does Jesus say about this? What does the word have it in it to guide me in making a decision about this. Yes, we will blow it, but when we do, we have a promise.

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (ESV)

That hole is now filled, and the Holy Spirit is busy changing us.

But what about those who continue in their rejection and die in their sins. What we are talking about here is the state of the one who has rejected Jesus Christ, the state of the unbeliever. All of us were here at one point before coming to Christ. And for those who reject Christ and die in their sins, they are under punishment the entire time after they die even before the Great White Throne.

We learn in Luke 16, those without Christ who die are in torment.

Luke 16:22–24

“Now the poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. **The rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades, as he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far off with Lazarus at his side. So he called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this fire.’**” (NET 2nd ed.)

Those who die without Jesus Christ arrive in Sheol and are in torment immediately. Note, “I am in anguish in this fire.” Jesus is the one who told this story, it is a true story and what we see is that between death and judgment, those who die in their sin, are in torment, all the time.

The second thing we notice is that the rich man was in confinement, He could not leave where he was and even though he could see paradise in the distance, he could not go there, and no one could come to him. Just like someone sitting in a jail cell awaiting trial.

Luke 16:25–26

“But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things and Lazarus likewise bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in anguish. Besides all this, **a great chasm has been fixed between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.**’” (NET 2nd ed.)

The one who dies without Christ, enters their next reality in torment, unable to leave with zero freedom, and under a constant state of punishment and this is all before the Great White Throne even takes place. Again, looking at 2 Peter 2:9 and also what Jesus taught, the unbeliever who dies in their sin, is under punishment continually until the Great White Throne takes place, at which time they will be resurrected, judged, and go to an even worse location where they will then spend eternity. We call it hell. And one more thing we learned, the unbeliever, as well as the believer, are fully conscious and aware of what is happening.



Jesus though, as Paul has indicated here in Romans, has done what is required to redeem us, to set us free, He has demonstrated His righteousness showing that He can indeed be just and also for those who come to Him, the justifier, making us right before God through faith in what He did for us on the cross. And because of that, we can be part of that demonstration of His righteousness and not find ourselves on the outside looking in.

Romans 3:27

"Where then is boasting? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith." (NASB 2020)

Everything Jesus has done as His grace gift to us, leaves us in the position of having to throw away our pride. When any of my grandkids produce a drawing or any artwork at all and give it to me, it goes on the refrigerator, or over a doorway, or anyplace else we could find to place it and show how we loved what they had done for us. Did that encourage pride in them, yes. The intent though was to encourage them to continue to take chances and develop skills that need the opportunity to grow, like art. Skills I do not have.

I remember with my dad, that anything I did to show off or demonstrate what I could do, yes, a moment to be proud, I was normally shot down. More than once, I was questioned as to why I didn't do better than I had. For him, I had to earn his love every day, and it was not a matter of pride, but a matter of, have I done enough for you with this to get a "good job" from you today. I heard that every now and then, but I had to go back and re-earn it again the next day.

We would call that works, pride. After I came to Christ, I learned to do things for the Lord and again, I thought I was having to earn His love everyday as well. But then I learned about grace.

Jesus Christ has provided all of us His grace gift of salvation, and all we have to do is accept it. He loves us no matter what and we do not have to do anything to earn His love. I am so thankful for that. He loves us because He is love.

Is there anything I can boast about concerning my salvation? No, but trust me, going to Bible school, I did indeed hear some boast about how they were better followers of Jesus than anyone else, and then I would watch them blow it. For the follower of Jesus Christ, we really do not have anything at all to brag about. I have even heard folks try to outdo each other on who was a worse sinner Jesus had to save.

The Christian life is not a competition to see who can have the most accolades before getting to the finish line. It is not a competition to show how wicked you were before coming to Jesus either. In fact, Jesus show us and tells us that any chase like that is totally opposite of where He wants us to be. He demonstrates this in John 13 and one of the guys who had trouble learning the lesson was Simon Peter.

John 13:3–16

"Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands and that he had come from God and was going to God, **got up from supper, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."** Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean." **After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had reclined again, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and**



you are right, for that is what I am. So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, slaves are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them." (NRSVue)

Jesus Christ, the creator of everything, God in the flesh, washed feet.

That is something that only slaves would do in that day and age. No one with any pride at all in themselves would ever stoop to do such a thing. Exactly the lesson Jesus was driving to.

His lesson, lose the pride, lose the selfishness that are the hallmarks of the Temple leadership, and be a servant. Be willing to and step out to take the lowliest job and do it to the glory of God.

I have had people I do not even know contact me and tell me how great they could do leading worship, or kids, or any ministry you could think of. When they ask what would it take to come on staff, I first let them know that we are not in a place for that to happen just yet, but if they would like to be considered, we do have a need in set up and tear down every week as well as clean up. I never hear from them again.

I spent a summer working at a Christian Camp and learned there, what it meant to be a servant. I thought I would be a counselor, nope, I was a dish washer and floor scrubber. Not always, but that was part of the job. There were those weeks where a church would bring their own counselors with them, and instead, scullery duty called. It was a hard lesson for all of us to learn. We were learning what it meant to serve. All of us, at one time or another, did our time in the kitchen. The real fun we discovered, was when there would be a service just outside the doors of the kitchen, was to sing along and then see if we could out sing those who were on the other side of the doors. Those poor guys cleaning pots and pans were not poor guys at all but we were worshipping the Lord as we served. That is what Jesus is looking for. Humble servants willing to do what He wants done.

Philippians 2:3–8

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross." (NRSVue)

Those who show up looking for a job do not want to be servants and learn how to follow and serve the Lord no matter what.

In the early church, when they needed help, what did they do? Did they run ads and look for highly qualified former pharisees to come and help? Nope, they prayed and then commissioned seven men to wait on tables (Acts 6:1-7). God wants healthy well fed sheep, and the size of the fellowship is not the issue as far as He is concerned. But the one thing I have learned is that He has given all of us spiritual gifts to be used in ministering to each other. Pastor Chuck Smith continues.

"Seven men were chosen to wait on tables, to distribute the welfare, and just generally to manage all of the minute details in the operation of the church. Our church today needs many people of this capacity; janitors, parking attendants, ushers, secretaries, receptionists, Sunday school teachers, counselors, prayer warriors, and more. While these positions may seem menial to some, they are all absolutely necessary for the smooth functioning of the church." (Smith 2003, 49)



We learned in our study of the book of Acts, that two of those men, were faithful and the Lord opened up more things for them to do. Stephen witnessed to the Sanhedrin and became the first martyr. Philip became an evangelist.

We forget what the Lord loves to do with those who show their faithfulness in the little things. He gives them bigger things to do.

Luke 16:10

“One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.” (ESV)

None of us have anything we can brag about at all. All of us are faithful followers of Jesus Christ and when He calls us to take that next step of faithfulness, whatever that might be, we are to say yes Lord and move forward. It might be washing pots and pans, and who knows, someday He may say the next step x 100s is start a church.

Pride though is indeed a problem. I like how C.S. Lewis frames this.

There is no fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others. The vice I am talking of is Pride or Self-Conceit: and the virtue opposite to it, in Christian morals, is called Humility. You may remember, when I was talking about sexual morality, I warned you that the centre of Christian morals did not lie there. Well, now, we have come to the centre. According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through **Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.** (Lewis 2021, 121-122)

When we boast, when we exercise pride, we are copying the originator of it, his name is Lucifer.

Isaiah 14:12–15

“How did you come to fall from the heavens, morning star, son of the dawn? How did you come to be cut to the ground, conqueror of nations? You thought to yourself, ‘I will scale the heavens, I will raise my throne above God’s stars. I will sit on the Mount of Assembly far away in the north. I will rise past the tops of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High.’ “Instead you are brought down to Sh’ol, to the uttermost depths of the pit.” (CJB)

The pride, the hubris of Lucifer is why he decided to deceive Eve. It is why he continues to deceive even today; he believes he will be like God and as we see in Revelation 13, for a short while, 3 ½ years; he is worshipped as such on earth. Until Jesus returns that is.

Proverbs 16:5

“Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished.” (ESV)

Proverbs 8:13

“The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.” (ESV)

Romans 3:27

“Where then is boasting? It has been excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.” (NASB 2020)



Why would Paul say this? Why wouldn't he? He had been a Pharisee, a professional law keeper. He was incredibly proud and was so convinced in his own righteousness that he became a hunter/killer of Christians, until confronted face to face by Jesus Christ.

Religion, and Paul would know, is the number one source of pride around the planet. God provided birds with different colors so we could glory in His work. But there are certain religions where they also wear brightly colored garments but for them it is so that as we look at them, we can appreciate how holy they must be. Yes, it is indeed a pride thing.

Religion—not true Christianity, but religion in the generic sense—is the ultimate setting for the very worst expressions of pride. For it is in religion alone that we are able to claim that God, and not mere human beings, sets his approval on us as superior to other human beings. Moreover, the more demanding or rigorous our “religion” is, the more prideful we become. (Boice 1991-, 406)

I am going to appeal to C. S. Lewis again for his observations of pride in those who are religious.

That raises a terrible question. How is it that people who are quite obviously eaten up with Pride can say they believe in God and appear to themselves very religious? **I am afraid it means they are worshipping an imaginary God. They theoretically admit themselves to be nothing in the presence of this phantom God, but are really all the time imagining how He approves of them and thinks them far better than ordinary people: that is, they pay a pennyworth of imaginary humility to Him and get out of it a pound's worth of Pride towards their fellow-men.** I suppose it was of those people Christ was thinking when He said that some would preach about Him and cast out devils in His name, only to be told at the end of the world that He had never known them. **And any of us may at any moment be in this death-trap. Luckily, we have a test. Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel that we are good—above all, that we are better than someone else—I think we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil. The real test of being in the presence of God is, that you either forget about yourself altogether or see yourself as a small, dirty object. It is better to forget about yourself altogether.** (Lewis 2021, 124-125)

Jeremiah 9:23–24

“This is what the LORD says: **“Don't let the wise boast in their wisdom, or the powerful boast in their power, or the rich boast in their riches. But those who wish to boast should boast in this alone: that they truly know me and understand that I am the LORD who demonstrates unfailing love and who brings justice and righteousness to the earth, and that I delight in these things. I, the LORD, have spoken!”** (NLT)

Galatians 6:14

“As for me, may I never boast about anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Because of that cross, my interest in this world has been crucified, and the world's interest in me has also died.” (NLT)

Paul went from being a boastful hunter/killer of Christians, to a humble servant of the Lord and his boasting, as ours, has indeed been excluded. Consider it gone. As we allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us, one of things you will indeed notice is that innate sin nature of wanting to boast in your own abilities, goes away.

I find I must agree with Paul in Galatians 6:14. I would desire that I would ever boast only in the Lord and what He has done in and through me as in me, there is nothing.

Paul made a huge transition, and he told his protégé Timothy all about it, reflecting a heart that has been humbled by the Lord.



1 Timothy 1:15–16

“It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that **Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost.** Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost sinner Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.” (NASB 2020)

A certain prosperity gospel false teacher would have you chant, as a mantra no less, “I am blessed. I am prosperous. I am successful” and on and on and on. Paul instead would say “**Wretched man that I am!** Who will set me free from the body of this death?” (Romans 7:24, NASB 2020)

Without Jesus, we are wretches. When we believe in what it is Christ came to this planet to do for us, that He died on the cross for our sins paying our penalty for what we have done, past, present and future, and that He then walked out of the grave proving He could indeed redeem us and at the same time showing that those who follow Him will live forever with Him. There is no place for boasting. There will be no clubs in heaven where we can one up each other on “How I got to heaven.”

We all get there the same way. By His grace gift of salvation.

Ephesians 2:8–10

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” (NASB 2020)

You and I are not saved because of who we are. We are not saved because of where we were born or who we were born to. We are not saved because we can do the rosary better than anyone else. We are not saved because we did catechism, we are not saved because we were baptized as a child. We are saved only through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Jesus saves!

John 14:6

“Jesus said to him, “**I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.**” (NASB 2020)

Romans 3:27–28

“**Where then is boasting? It has been excluded.** By what kind of law? Of works? No, but **by a law of faith. For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.**” (NASB 2020)

The reason why all boasting is excluded, other than it is indeed sin, is stated clearly for us right here in verse 28.

Boasting is excluded because we are saved by faith. There is nothing we could do or did to make this happen. And Paul is not done yet with driving this point home.

This tells us a lot about him as a man. He was so overwhelmed with Jesus Christ forgiving him and saving him in spite of his pride, murder, and on and on, that he cannot underemphasize anything about what salvation through faith is. He isn't done yet.

Now Paul not only drives the nail in, he turns the board over and clinches it. Listen to him: (McGee 1997, 668)



Romans 3:29–30

“Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.” (NASB 2020)

For centuries, the Jewish nation had been on a pride kick thinking they had an in with God and no one else did. For a Jew, if they had been trained up within the Temple, this could be a scandalous idea. William Barclay further outlines this.

“There were some Jews who arrogantly believed in the idea of the chosen people. They could say the most terrible things: ‘God loves only Israel of all the nations he has made.’ ‘God will judge Israel with one measure and the Gentiles with another.’ ‘The best of the snakes crush; the best of the Gentiles kill.’ ‘God created the Gentiles to be fuel for the fires of Hell.’ This was the spirit which made the law lay it down that it was illegal to help a Gentile mother in giving birth, for that would only be to bring another Gentile into the world. (Barclay 2002, 5)

Here though, Paul has asked that if you think that God can only save the Jews, you have missed the point of what he has been saying so far. And to drive that point home to the Jewish reader, he quotes from the Shema, Deuteronomy 6:4.

Deuteronomy 6:4

“Hear, Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!” (NASB 2020)

As Paul continues with his discussion of why salvation is the same for Jew and Gentile, through faith. If it is by works, and it is not, then only the Jew could be saved. Yet we already know based on what Paul has taught that even during the dispensation of the law, salvation was by faith looking forward to what God would do resolve the sin problem for those who were faithfully following Him. Paul asks the question and then rejects it saying that since God is the God of Gentiles as well as Jews, salvation for both would be the same.

Yes, He is indeed the God of both, after all, God is one.

By using the Shema as part of his proof, Paul is bringing in all of the Law to include creation and when God created the universe, He created man, as one unified whole physical and spiritual being which became ununified because of Genesis 3. The physical and the spiritual were no longer alive at once and the spirit is now dead and needs a new birth, available only Jesus Christ. Nicodemus was concerned about this when he met with Jesus one evening.

John 3:3–21

“Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.**” Nicodemus said to him, “**How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?**” Jesus answered, “**Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.** Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life. **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have**



eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.” (ESV)

Jesus is referring to the miracle that takes place when the divine activity remakes anyone. That person is then born all over again by the action of the very Spirit of God. (Morris 1995, 193)

And also note, Jesus used the term cosmos for world. He is not differentiating between Jew and Gentile, He uses the inclusive world. God loved the world and provided a solution for the world. That solution, per Paul here in Romans, is salvation through faith in Christ and it goes for both groups.

David Stern, a Messianic follower of Jesus emphasizes this point made by Paul here. “I will repeat, in order to avoid any misunderstanding: the righteousness which God confers through Yeshua is absolutely the same for Gentiles as for Jews. In the Kingdom of God, wherein God rules the saved, there are no second-class citizens, no “separate but equal”; rather, there is “neither Jew nor Gentile.” (Stern 1996, Ro 3:29)

Romans 3:31

“Do we then nullify the Law through faith? Far from it! On the contrary, we establish the Law.” (NASB 2020)

Paul is once again reflecting his rabbinical training. One anticipates a hypothetical questioner and then responds to the hypothetical. Paul is asking, out loud, if you are saying that the works of the Law do not save, are you then advocating eliminating the Torah totally? Once again, we are dealing with the religious Jew perspective. This is no different than many who are religious today.

I have heard, for example, that yes Jesus saves but it is also important to maintain the sacraments of the church, Dr Geisler relates the following.

“While Roman Catholic theology claims there is no salvation apart from God's grace, its view of the sacraments tends once more to take away with the left hand in practice what it has affirmed with the right hand in principle. The Catholic view of a sacrament, unchanged by the Council of Vatican II (1962–1965), is that it is given “not merely as a sign but as a cause of grace” (in Ott, FCD, 325).” (Geisler 2004, 274-275)

In other words, works are required to be saved and to maintain your salvation and the Council of Trent nailed that down further.

Trent made it infallible dogma that Catholicism is God's chosen organization to mete out God's sacramental grace, bit by bit, from birth to death. Consequently, the Roman Catholic Church is the institution of salvation—something to which Protestants take strong exception. (Geisler 2004, 276)

There is no Jesus plus in order to be or remain saved.

Of course we take strong exception to this. “My salvation is a work of God. I can't boast in my own works, because my salvation is God's work in me. He did it and I believed it. God counts my faith in the righteousness of Christ as my own righteousness.” (Smith, The Gospel According to Grace: A Clear Commentary On the Book of Romans 2015, 25)



Ephesians 2:8–9

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not a result of works, so that no one may boast.” (NASB 2020)

Have you trusted in His work on the cross for you? We are yet to go over “how we establish the Law.” That is yet to come here in Romans.

Our reality is that faith is the only true way to live before God and it has always been the case, even under the Law and before. Make that reality yours today. How? By believing.

Romans 10:9–13

“If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved. As the Scriptures tell us, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be disgraced.” Jew and Gentile are the same in this respect. They have the same Lord, who gives generously to all who call on him. For “Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved.”” (NLT)

ABC's of Salvation

- A. Acknowledge that you are a sinner, tell Him that.
- B. Believe that Jesus died on the cross for our sin and that He rose from the dead.
- C. Confess that Jesus is Lord. Tell someone about what you have done.

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