

More on Works of Law

Understand works of law vs the works of the Law

Fred R. Coulter—January 23, 2021

Now we're going to get back to some of Paul's difficult Scriptures. I had some questions come along about the places where Paul did not put the definite article the for 'works of law.' Without the definite article, works of law, and there is a distinct difference. Then we will also ask what it means to be *under law*, and *who is under law*? *I think you're going to be surprised!*

Let's see the progression of Paul in Rom. 1 & 2. After Paul gets done saying that he's coming and anxious to see them and so forth.

Rom. 1:16 states everything that Paul is going to cover in Rom. 1-8. It's all one long lesson with different points.

Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ because it is *the* power of God unto salvation to everyone who believes... [belief always requires obedience] ...both to *the* Jew first, and to *the* Greek."

The first big lesson is right here. The problem in the New Testament is not Catholic vs Protestant. That's the way it's mostly read by Christianity today. It is Judaism vs Christianity. That's the difference.

What was it that the Jews had that we covered in the message *What a Difference a Word Makes*, they had their own *works of law for their own righteousness!* They were ignorant of the knowledge of God and the righteousness of God.

Most people think that if it's Jewish, they're doing the will of God. There's hardly one Jew in the world that is doing the Word of God the way that they should, especially the Orthodox and the ultra-Orthodox *tradition*. We'll get to that as we go along in this, maybe not today.

What did Jesus say concerning the traditions of the Jews? *Full well you reject the commandments of God so that you may keep your traditions!* Their traditions were *works of law*, without the two definite articles. I'm just projecting ahead a little bit here.

Verse 17: "For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith unto faith, according as it is written: 'The just shall live by faith.'"

Faith requires action; always does! Faith is what you believe. In the Greek, the noun and the verb are almost identical"

- 'pistos'—faith
- 'pistaos'—faith that is works

Then it talks about the wrath of God because men sin. What happens when you have so much sin...? I want you to read all of Rom. 1 to really get the understanding of it. I think the best description you can get of what's going on here is look at a city like San Francisco. If you think that's bad, try Bangkok, Thailand.

Verse 24: "For this cause... [they didn't glorify God] ...**God also abandoned them...**" *Left off completely!*

- Who moves in when God is gone? *Satan!*
- Would you say that's what's wrong with San Francisco?
- And any other city like it?

We might as well include Washington, D.C.; *that's the most corrupt city in the whole world, or at least in the United States!*

"...to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts..." (v 24)

After they reject the Word of God and embrace lies; v 26: "For this cause, God abandoned them..." *It gets deeper, the degree of sin gets worse!*

Verse 28: "And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge..."

Isn't that what we have with the government today? *They don't want the knowledge of God!* They want to mention God, because some of their constituents may believe in God, but what they believe in their heart of hearts, when they're alone, that's what they really believe. They will never tell you that, because you won't vote for them.

"...**God abandoned them to a reprobate mind...**"

What is a reprobate mind? *A mind void of proper judgment!* You watch what comes out of Washington, D.C.: **reprobate decisions!**

Just to give you one: How can you have an impeachment trial to remove a President when he's already gone? *But they got to do it, because they have to get to Trump!* Be careful; he's gone! **Maybe God has something special waiting for you idiots!**

Verse 29: "Being filled with all unrighteousness..."

Now Paul starts talking about the real issue:

- How do you come out of this kind of behavior?

- How can you make your life right with God?

We're going to see the steps of progression that Paul is using to explain what God wants.

Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering... [God is longsuffering] ...not knowing that **the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?**"

So, the first thing coming back to God is ***repentance!*** You don't go to God and say, 'Here I am, God, look at how good I am'! remember Job and how well that went.

- What happens when you repent?
- What is repentance? *Turning away and forsaking sin, and admitting your sins to God and asking God to blot them out, which He will!*

We will find it Rom. 3, because it carries over to that point. But it begins first with repentance.

- What do you repent of? *Transgressions of the laws of God! That is sin!*

In the Greek it's even stronger: *lawlessness!* Anything that's contrary to God that you are doing, though you may think it's right ***is lawlessness!***

I want you to think about the Protestants. ***They are hopelessly drowned in lawlessness!*** Speaking of righteousness—whether for sin or for righteousness—speaking of God:

Verse 6: "**Who will render to each one according to his own works.**"

God deals in individuals! Yes, He works with groups, but just because you're in a group doesn't necessarily mean that God is dealing with the whole group.

I'll have to read you about what they did with the Revised Standard in John 14; the latest one that just came out.

Verse 7: "On the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in **good works** are seeking glory and honor and immortality—eternal life."

- What are good works? *Keeping the commandments of God!*
- Does God say that He's going to judge you according to your faith?

Faith is required, but He's going to judge you according to our works!

Verse 8: "On the other hand, to those who are contentious and who disobey the Truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish—upon every soul of man who works out evil, both of *the Jew* first, and of *the Greek*" (vs

8-9).

What does this tell us? *Even people not connected with anything to do with salvation, they're subject to the laws of God, whether they know it or not!* There's no way you can get around it.

Pay special attention to these next few verses, because these are key. Remember, we have repentance, and now we're going to see what happens after repentance.

Verse 10: "But glory and honor and peace to everyone who works good, both to *the Jew* first, and to *the Greek*, because **there is no respect of persons with God**.... [none] ...For as many as have sinned without law... [without the knowledge of law] ...shall also perish without law..." (vs 10-12).

Why? *The wages of sin is death*, and we all have 'the law of sin and death' in us!

"...and as many as have sinned within *the Law* shall be judged by *the Law*... [you know better] ...because the hearers of the Law are not just before God..." (vs 12-13).

To be ***just*** before God means *to be put in right standing with God!* How do you get in right standing with God? *Repentance and obedience!* That's what happens.

"...but the doers of the Law shall be justified" (v 13).

Everyone wants God's favor to be in right standing with God. The only way you're right with God is when your sins have been forgiven through the blood of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

- Is there anything in the world that can substitute for the sacrifice, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ? *Nothing!*
- What law can you do to replace that? *You cannot!*

But God does require that when you repent of your sins, you quit sinning and you start obeying, ***being a doer of the Law!*** "**...but the doers of the Law shall be justified**" (v 13).

In other words, if you have not repented, if you are not keeping the laws of God, ***you are not justified!*** It's that simple. "**...doers of the Law shall be justified.**"

Now then, we're going to see something very interesting here. To show to the Jews... The Jews still say to this day, 'We're the chosen people.' Well, you're not! If you were the chosen people you wouldn't have had Jerusalem destroyed out from underneath you nearly 2,000 years ago. But he did that because of sin, and God is no respecter of persons. So, here's something that grates... Have

you ever had bad piece of chalk on a blackboard? This is what this does to the Jew.

Verse 14: “For when the Gentiles... [called by the Jews ‘goyem’] ...which do not have the Law... [and Jews have the Law but don’t do it] ...practice by nature the things contained in **the Law...**”—*God’s Law!*

They learned enough to understand some things about the Law of God, such as:

- murder is wrong
- stealing is wrong
- lying is wrong

“...these who do not have the Law... [no, they didn’t have it given to them by God] ...are a law unto themselves” (v 14).

God recognizes that for certain blessings to them. I want you to notice the next sentence, because this becomes very profoundly important:

Verse 15: “Who show **the work of the Law...**”

That is different than *works of law*, which is *Judaism!* Works of law are the rituals of the pagan religions of the Gentiles. Works of law are the works and laws that humanists have for their own agenda.

But this is “...**the work of the Law...**”

- What does this show us?
- Is that good? *Yes!*

If Paul meant *the work of the Law* in all the places that we have covered that are *works of law*, he would have written *the work of the Law*. But *works of law*, as we have seen and will see again, are condemned, because those are a substitute for repentance and obedience to the Laws of God. Do you grasp that?

Verse 15: “Who show **the work of the Law** written in their own hearts, their consciences bearing witness, and their reasonings also as they accuse or defend one another.”

So, the phrase *the work of the Law* is good referring to the Laws of God. What did Paul say?

Verse 14: “For when the Gentiles, which do not have the Law, practice by nature the things contained in the Law, these who do not have **the Law...** [referring to God’s Law] ...are a law unto themselves; who show **the work of the Law** written in their own hearts, their consciences bearing witness, and their reasonings also as they accuse or defend one another” (vs 14-15).

- What is required to receive justification?
- What did we just cover?
 - ✓ repentance of sin

✓ doers of the Law

It takes faith to keep the commandments of God!

Romans 3:19: “Now then, we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and **all** the world may become guilty before God.” *That’s everybody in the world!*

Verse 20: “Therefore, **by works of law...** [no definite article for *works* or *law*] ...there shall no flesh be justified before Him...” *What does this tell us?*

Romans 2:13: “...**the doers of the Law shall be justified.**”

Romans 3:20: “Therefore, **by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him...**”

Works of law are not Godly works; these are substitute laws of men! If it were the works of God, it would be like:

Romans. 2:14 *who have* “...**the work of the Law...**”

But Romans 3:20 says:”...**by works of law...**”

The *King James* says, “the works of the law” ***and it’s a complete mistranslation!*** That’s how everybody gets led astray, mixed up and wondering what to do! The first time I read that, I knew about keeping God’s Law, but I couldn’t understand why we were to keep it and keep the Sabbath and all of these things, and yet, somehow God didn’t recognize it.

What the Jews were doing were taking their traditions and replacing the Laws of God with *their own laws; works of law!*

Next time I’ll read what every Jew has to do every morning as soon as he wakes up: *works of law!*

Romans 3:20: “Therefore, **by works of law there shall no flesh be justified before Him,** for through *the Law is the* knowledge of sin. But now *the righteousness of God...*” (vs 20-21).

- the goodness
- the mercy
- the kindness
- the forgiveness
- the grace of God

“...*that is* separate from law, has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets” (v 21).

I couldn’t understand that for a long time. ***It’s the sacrifice of Christ that is greater than all the laws of men!***

Verse 22: “Even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (vs 22-23).

If you all sin and come short of the glory of God, what do you have to do? **Repent and have your sins forgiven!** Then we know—and we’ll get to baptism a little later—we have to have baptism, which is vitally important.

Verse 24: “*But* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus.”

There is no work of law that you can do that brings forgiveness. Repentance of sin, asking God to cover your sins with the sacrifice of Christ, brings justification. Right standing with God only comes from God by an action on His part in response to your repentance.

Justification does not come because you do a certain ‘religious’ work and that’s supposed to put you in right standing with God. Again, *read the whole book of Job!* That’s what the Jews did, and the Gentiles had something very similar to it.

Justification means:

- you’ve repented
- you had your sins forgiven
- then baptism
- you’re put in right standing with God by having your sins removed

That doesn’t mean all your sins are removed in the future. *There is no such thing as the forgiveness of future sin!*

You can’t say, ‘O God, bless me today. I’m going to hold up this bank tomorrow and please let me get a lot of money.’

It isn’t going to work!

It doesn’t cost you any money, it’s *freely* (v 24). But what it does mean is that you now devote your life to God.

Verse 24: “*But* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus. Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood...” (vs 24-25).

Propitiation means *a continuous, on-going source of mercy and forgiveness upon repentance!* Do you just repent once and now you’re baptized and you don’t have to repent anymore after that? *No, not at all!* Since becoming a *true Christian* and having the Spirit of God, you must grow in grace

and knowledge. After you have repented of your sins and have been justified to God and have been baptized, we’re going to see then you have to **walk in newness of life!** Your life must change, but **it’s not an instantaneous complete change**, and now because you’ve had your sins forgiven you’re perfect! **NO!**

Concerning praying:

Matthew 6:9: “Therefore, you are to pray after this manner... [this is an outline] ...‘Our Father, Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name.’”

Everything pointed to God! Who forgave your sins? *God did through Christ!* That came from heaven to you! Your prayer is from you to God in heaven.

Verse 10: “Your Kingdom come... [the whole goal of all Christians] ...Your will be done on earth, as *it is* in heaven.” *That means God’s will in your life, as well.*

I can tell you right now that everything is being done according to the will of God on earth leading up to the return of Jesus Christ. We many not understand some of the things, but we will.

Verse 11: “Give us this day our daily bread... [thank God for everything you get, because He made it]and forgive us our debts... [sins] ...as we also forgive our debtors” (vs 11-12).

This is a daily prayer. We still sin. {note our series: *The Sin Within*} The conversion of the mind upon receiving the Holy Spirit begins to take place. The Holy Spirit of God will reveal to you the thoughts that you still have in your mind that are sin. God wants those repented of and forgiven. So, He leads you to repent of those things as they come along.

Have you had a perfect week? A perfect five days? Four days? Three days? Two days? One day? Well, maybe it was a ‘good’ day, but did you have sinful thoughts?

This is what God wants us to overcome and He provides us that with His Spirit. That’s why the daily prayer is “...forgive us our debts... [sins] ...as we also forgive our debtors”

Verse 13: “And lead us not into temptation, **but rescue us from the evil one...**”

I tell you that Satan is out there full blast all the time right now!

“...For Yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen” “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.... [that clarifies here related to praying] ...But if you do not forgive men their trespasses,

neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (vs 13-15).

That’s why nothing motivated from here, from us, by our own self can justify us! Justification can only come from God upon repentance and asking forgiveness.

Romans 3:24: “*But* are being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested *to be* a propitiation through faith in His blood, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are **past**” (vs 24-25).

Here’s something we all need to know: ***there is no such thing as a future sin!*** Sin is in the present time. When you sin, *it’s past!* You don’t go to God for forgiveness of sins you’re going to have tomorrow, or the next day, whatever. All forgiveness of sin is with *past sin!* As soon as you sin, it’s in the past!

The Catholics sell indulgences; that is you buy a piece of paper for so much money and the pope says that you’re forgiven for your sins in the future. Well, you might as well burn it, it’s worthless, because you can’t forgive future sin, because it hasn’t yet occurred.

Likewise with temptation. Temptation comes along and if you resist it, and put it away, you haven’t sinned. If temptation comes along and you give in to it, ***now you have sinned and you have got to repent!***

I hope everybody understands that, because that is so important to grasp. Remember that ***there is no work of any law of human origin that can put you in right standing with God***—period!

You must repent, and you must be a doer of the Law of God *first!* When you’re a doer of the Law of God, that will also reveal more sins to you so that you can be justified and be put in right standing with God.

That is an action by God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Nothing can substitute for that! Can’t be done any other way!

- ***the work of the Law***—referring to the Laws of God—is good
- ***works of law*** refers to the manmade endeavors of trying to create manmade righteousness to try and force God to except that and put them in right standing with God

I hope everybody got it!

I remember the first time I got it, and it took a long time to come to it. These are some of the difficult things that Paul has written.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 1:16-17, 24, 26, 28-29
- 2) Romans 2:4, 6-15, 14-15
- 3) Romans 3:19-20
- 4) Romans 2:13
- 5) Romans 3:20
- 6) Romans 2:14
- 7) Romans 3:20-25
- 8) Matthew 6:9-15
- 9) Romans 3:24-25

Also referenced:

Message *What a Difference a Word Makes*
Series: *The Sin Within*

FRC:bo
Transcribed: 1/27/20

Copyright 2021—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.