



THE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTIFICATION

The Bondage of the Will, the Freedom in Christ



By Zack Rosiere

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Concerning Justification	3
Concerning the Justification of the human spirit	7
Concerning Faith	10
Concerning the Law	16
Concerning Grace	20
Concerning the Bondage of the Will and Original Sin	22
Concerning Predestination	29
Concerning Evangelical Free Will: the Freedom in Christ	31
Concerning Philosophy and Human reason	35
Conclusion	39
Faith scriptures to meditate on	40

Introduction

The topic of salvation, especially in America today, has seemed to have lost its excitement. Most everybody has heard of John 3:16 and most everybody knows, even if they don't all believe it, that the way to heaven is thru Jesus.

I have been studying the sixteenth century reformation and it has opened my eyes to just how magnificent and wonderful salvation is. It is a topic that should never get old, it should never lose its excitement. It should be a topic that is so dear to us that we are willing to give our life for the opportunity to proclaim this good news. That was how the reformers felt in the sixteenth century. There were thousands of people that died so we could know the Truth of God's Word and His great love for us. It is because of the reformation that we can freely open a bible in our own language and read for ourselves just how much God loves us.

In God's eyes, this is the most important thing ever. It is so important, in fact, that He gave His only Son to be the final sacrifice for sin. He made it so that we could be partakers of God's divine nature. He delivered us out of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son so that we could have salvation. He made the cross the climax of all the ages, from eternity past to eternity future. He made the death and resurrection of His Son the most important thing that has happened and will ever happen. There is nothing deeper than what Jesus did for us on the cross and there is not a greater love displayed than His death and administration of His new covenant to us and for us.

It is my objective to stir up a fire inside you that can never be quenched; to develop a yearning and a desire for Jesus that can never be shaken; to promote a craving for God and His Word that you can't live without. I want you to be so satisfied in Jesus that nothing else in this life even comes close to the delight and enjoyment that you have with Him.

Concerning Justification

Justification is the first step in Salvation. To be justified means to be declared righteous, to be forgiven of sin, reconciled with the Father and pronounced and judged as in right standing with God.

Salvation, σωτηρία, *soteria*, is comprised of three main categories:

1. Justification
2. Sanctification
3. Glorification

A whole book could be written on *soteria*, but my main focus will be on justification and explain the effects of righteousness leading to sanctification and eventually glorification. It is important for the Christian to understand the categories of salvation because in a misunderstanding of justification and sanctification, there has been serious theological and doctrinal errors trying to understand the connection between our works and the work of Christ.

Just to be clear up front, there is no such thing as a good work without the Holy Spirit. That is a fundamental statement that has helped me to understand my role as it compares to God's role. Yes, we can do good works, but not before we are made righteous and not apart from God. Man is incapable of performing any good work on his own, and even after one is made righteous, just as Jesus said of Himself, "I can do nothing, but the Father working within Me, He does the work". Jesus then relates that to us when He says, "I am the Vine and you are the branches. Apart from me you can do nothing." Therefore, it is evident that man apart from God cannot perform a good work.

The whole of the Catholic religion, many other denominations of Christianity and the Jewish religion have based its doctrine on justification by good works; but we know from Eph 2:8-9 that one is made righteous by the free gift of God's grace thru faith in Jesus; not a result of our works but only by the work of Jesus on the cross can one be justified.

So then why are there so many scriptures that focus on “good works”, seemingly giving the idea of justification by our good works? This is where understanding the difference between Justification and Sanctification must be established. Many religions have blended justification and sanctification into one process to be made righteous. But this is incorrect. Although they are both steps in soteria, there is a certain order and function that each category of salvation has.

From the 4th century, starting with Pelagius, up until now, justification has been widely misunderstood. Pelagianism does not believe that human nature and the spirit of man was tainted by original sin. It is the belief that all men are good by nature and have the free will to choose good or evil on their own; and thru their own good works, assisted by God's grace, man can live a sinless life and attain justification thru their own merits. This started the doctrine of grace assisted good works leading to justification. Which, if this were true, means that the work of Christ wasn't good enough; that Jesus giving Himself as the sacrifice for sin didn't remit sin, but only aided a person thru the process of justification. To say that righteousness still comes thru one's works is to say that Christ died needlessly, Gal 2:21. This is so wrong, I don't even like talking about it, but it must be said to explain the error that people have had for nearly 1,700 years. This wrong thinking started a doctrine that enabled good works toward justification. They considered Jesus, but thought they needed to add to the work of Jesus for justification. These doctrines taught that justification was a process of working toward sinlessness. This process was made possible by God's grace, which freed the will, but then it was up to the individual and his good works to be saved. Grace, free will, and good works collaborating together to bring one into righteousness. Again, this type of thinking is selfish and blasphemes the work of Christ.

So, if this is so wrong, how, and why did this doctrine even come about? My opinion is this doctrine is blending the three parts of salvation, justification, sanctification and glorification, into one. When instead, each part must be treated separately and one must understand how there is an order and how each part builds upon the other.

For instance, if we look at something Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) wrote about justification, we will see that his thinking was partially on the right track, but he just associated it to the wrong category of salvation. Thru this misunderstanding, which may seem small, but

in reality, it makes the work of Christ of no effect. But instead, if you take his same theology and assign his thinking to the appropriate category of salvation, instead of deeming it all to justification, it makes his theology more accurate. This is rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

Thomas Aquinas wrote:

“Man’s will should be prepared by God thru grace. Humans could do nothing to cause grace: the gift of grace surpasses every other nature. And so it is impossible that a creature should cause grace. The human will was involved in the decision-making process, but it was the grace of God that drove the will.”

Following conversion, which was the result of God’s grace, the individual sought to do good works, and God assisted this endeavor through His cooperating grace. Then, if the individual persisted in doing good works, he would eventually attain glory, thru the inner regeneration of the soul.

So far, I would agree with Aquinas, because he hasn’t associated this process to any certain category of salvation, but this is where he starts to error:

“There are five effects of grace in us: firstly, the healing of the soul; secondly, willing the good; thirdly, the efficacious performance of the good willed; fourthly, perseverance in the good; fifthly, the attainment of glory”

Thomas associated this five step process as the path to justification. With this thinking, it puts all the work on the man, leaving him virtually helpless, trying to gain righteousness thru his own merits; with only the help of Jesus to give him a jump start at the beginning. It teaches that we are left on our own to perform good works for our self.

The correct way to look at good works is, it is not the good works of a person that makes him righteous, but the good work of Jesus on the cross. Even after conversion, any good work performed is not done thru the power of the individual, but thru the power of the Holy Spirit. We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we should walk in them, Eph 2:10. Even after being made righteous, it is still not us who does the good work, but the Father working thru us. Jesus Himself said “I can of My own self do nothing, it is the Father dwelling within Me who does the work”, Jn 5:19, 30, 14:10, 8:28. So if we take the five effects of grace laid out by Aquinas and associate them in the correct category and assume it is not us doing the work, but the Holy Spirit working thru us, then this thinking is corrected.

1. The healing of the soul (to be completely accurate, it is our spirit that is made perfect in righteousness, not the soul. The soul must be transformed by the renewing of the mind to God’s word)

2. Willing of the good (once we are made righteous, our soul starts to learn the things of God and becomes sanctified thru the fruit of the Spirit. Our soul begins to will the good works prepared for him by the Father)
3. The efficacious performance of the good willed. (this is the fruit of the Spirit that results in sanctification. The beneficial effects of the good works performed by the power of the Holy Spirit resulting in sanctification, Rom 6:22.)
4. Perseverance in the good (having done all to stand, stand, Eph 6:13, Col 1:9-12. Again we don't do this to be made righteous, we do it because we are righteous, resulting in sanctification)
5. The attainment of glory (this is the final step in salvation, the adoption as sons, the redemption of the body, the glorification in Jesus, Rom 8:23. This is our hope in Jesus after we are made righteous, not something we do to be made righteous)

This type of thinking is what has blinded Christians and kept them from knowing the Truth and how much Jesus loves us. Christians have not rightly divided the Truth and misunderstood the meaning of salvation and created false doctrine as a result of it. Even though some of these men were so close to the Truth, like Thomas Aquinas, but as you can see, if not properly discerned, can lead to devastatingly wrong thinking and the blasphemy of the work of Jesus.

It is the misunderstanding of the three categories of salvation that has created so much error in the church. Sanctification is not justification. Justification is an immediate transformation of the human spirit being made new by the Holy Spirit and faith in Jesus Christ.

Sanctification only happens as a result of justification. It is a combination of God's grace working in a person's soul to separate them from sin and this fallen world. It is the continual work of shaping the soul to be in conformity to the reborn, perfected spirit, cleansed only by the blood of Jesus. Sanctification cannot be achieved without the Holy Spirit working in the reborn spirit. Sanctification is a life long process that is only achieved thru the working together of the fallen soul, the reborn spirit and the Holy Spirit given by grace thru faith. This is where so many people get confused. The bible is full of conditional commandments, "if you do this, this will be the result." This can be misunderstood to believe that our justification is based on our works, when these commandments are actually focusing on the sanctification of the soul after a person has become justified by grace thru faith in Jesus; and

it is not even the result of our good works, but the good works of the Holy Spirit working in us to bear fruit and result in sanctification, Rom 6:22; setting a Christian apart from the sin of the world and preparing the soul for the final stage of salvation, which is the glorification of the body and the unification of the body of Christ, glorified together in Him.

As described above, there are three categories to salvation that I like to associate to the three parts of our being. We are a spirit, we have a soul and we live in a body. Each one of these parts of our being align with the steps to salvation.

1. Justification of the human spirit
2. Sanctification of the human soul
3. Glorification of the physical body

Concerning the Justification of the human spirit

Each of these three categories builds on the other and they must build in this order. Justification is usually what is meant when somebody says they are saved. Justification is the declaration of the Father pronouncing His righteousness on our spirit. It is the act of His grace being poured out on us; resulting in our sins being forgiven and redeemed from the corruption and effects of sin, resulting in a perfect newly created, born again spirit. Justification is a free gift of God's grace accepted by faith in Jesus, Eph 2:8-9. It has nothing to do with our works, but only the work of Jesus paying the price for our sin and accepting the wrath and judgment of God for our sin on Himself, Is 53:4-6. This is the first step to salvation, the forgiveness of sins and the only way to the Father. Thru Jesus, He has reconciled us into His family giving us eternal happiness and joy, living forever with Him.

How does one obtain justification if it is not something earned?

It is given as a free gift thru the Grace of God by faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:24- being **justified as a gift by His grace** through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

Romans 4:16- For this reason *it is **by faith***, in order that *it may be in **accordance with grace***, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

Ephesians 2:5- even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**),

There is one important factor that you must understand when it comes to justification. We are made righteous by Him and Him alone. It does not have anything to do with our works or merit. The gift of righteousness is by His grace and it is in Christ alone. One might argue that we have one work, the work of faith; but as we progress in this study, we will find that even our faith is not a work. Righteousness is not in any way conditional on our merits or works.

Paul explains this in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians. He states in Rom 4:3, Gal 3:6- Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Why does Paul go all the way back to Abraham to talk about justification? Isn't justification a new covenant topic? No, justification and reconciliation with the Father is the whole purpose of God's plan. And the plan of God started, not in the garden with Adam and Eve, but before the foundation of the world, Eph 1:4, 1 Peter 1:2,20. Before the world was ever created, He knew man would sin and He knew and planned that Jesus would be our Savior. God wanted a family that He could love and that would willingly love Him and choose Him. God gave each one of us a free will to choose Him, we will talk more about the nature of free will later. So, when God created us, He knew we would sin, but it was the redemption of His family thru His Son Jesus that formed the bond of reconciliation so the promise could and would never be broken. This is why the covenant and promise of righteousness is in Christ; this way it is not conditional on our behavior or actions, but only in Jesus. The conditions of the covenant is between the Father and Jesus in which case the bond can never be broken or separated. Thru this unbreakable covenant that Jesus has with the Father, we now are partakers of this same covenant thru the blood of Jesus, 2 Peter 1:4, Heb 3:1, 14. This makes the bond sure and true. If it were conditional on our actions, the covenant wouldn't last a day and no one would qualify for righteousness. Of course, God knew this and what is amazing is that He embraced these faults of ours and chose for us to participate in this plan of redemption and reconciliation with Him.

Now back to our original question- why does Paul go back to Abraham to explain justification? Abraham was the man that God chose to be the avenue in which Jesus, the Messiah would be born into this physical world. God granted the inheritance, the reconciliation of salvation, by means of a promise; that the Messiah would be born into this world thru his lineage. God made a covenant with Abraham that thru his seed all nations would be blessed. Now, the promise of inheritance wasn't made to Abraham or to all his descendants, but only to one person, the Seed, the Messiah, Jesus Christ; and it is by grace thru faith that the promise of inheritance is then given to all who believe, Gal 3:14, 16, 18-19, 22, 29, Rom 4:16. Abraham believed in this promise and was fully persuaded that what God had promised, He was also able to perform, Rom 4:21. It was this faith in the Messiah that righteousness was then credited to Abraham, Rom 4:22, Gal 3:6, Gen 15:5-6, Heb 11:8-10, 17-19. So, justification is a bible topic not just a new testament topic, however no one was actually made righteous until Jesus came to this earth and became the sacrifice for sin; and thru His death, He paid the price for sin and bore the wrath of God on Himself. Therefore, it is stated that Abraham was credited righteousness. At the time Abraham believed in the Messiah, he was set apart and his heavenly account was credited with righteousness, but that righteousness could not yet be administered to him because no one could be justified until Jesus performed His work on the cross and was raised from the dead. This explains why we see Abraham and other old testament saints in a holding place in Sheol, the bible calls it Abraham's bosom, Lk 16:22. This was a holding place for all those who believed in the Messiah. Their faith was credited to them as righteousness, but it could not be given until the price for sin was paid on the cross, and not just the cross, but the resurrection of Jesus had to take place in order that He would become our High Priest, able to administer the gift of righteousness to all who believe, Rom 4:25.

Righteousness is a universal promise to all who believe in Jesus. Jew or Gentile, whether it is faith in the coming Messiah, like that of the old testament saints, or faith in Jesus who had already come and will come again, as in the case for all new testament believers. We all qualify for the promise because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Rom 3:23, therefore all can be made righteous by grace thru faith in Jesus, Eph 2:8.

The gift of grace is available to all who believe, not just those who have a predetermined destiny to salvation. We will discuss the subject of predestination at a later time.

John 3:14-16- ¹⁴ “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵ so that **whoever** believes will in Him have eternal life. ¹⁶ “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes in Him** shall not perish, but have eternal life.

Romans 4:16- For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed **to all the descendants**, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

John 1:12- But **as many as received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name,

Titus 2:11- For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation **to all men**,

Romans 5:18-19- ¹⁸ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of **life to all men**. ¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the **many** will be made righteous.

Now, in order to finalize our discussion on justification, we must discuss what faith is and the connection of faith and grace.

Concerning Faith

There are some errors and misconceptions as to what faith actually is. The most important thing to remember is what faith is not. Faith is not a work. The minute we make faith a work, we start associating our merit, requiring our faith as a prerequisite to justification.

Justification is a free gift and accepting that free gift must also be free without any condition of merits of our own. So then let us refer to the Scripture to define faith. How does one acquire faith?

Answer: Thru the Spirit illumed Word.

Romans 10:17- So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

It is not just hearing the Word with your physical ears, but understanding it with your heart.

Jesus said- “those who have ears to hear let him hear”, Mk 4:9. The Greek word for hear is

associated with obedience. It is the ability to hear and accept and receive what is being spoken. This is demonstrated in the following scriptures. Matthew 13:9-19-⁹ **“He who has ears, let him hear.”**¹⁰ And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”¹¹ Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.¹² “For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.¹³ “Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and **while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.**¹⁴ “In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, **‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE;’**¹⁵ FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.’¹⁶ “But **blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.**¹⁷ “For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

¹⁸ “Hear then the parable of the sower.¹⁹ “When anyone **hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart.** This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

¹ Thessalonians 2:13- For this reason we also constantly thank God that **when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it** not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you **who believe.**

By receiving the word of God into your heart, believing that it is God speaking to you, and accepting what He says as final authority in your life, this word then performs its work and faith is enabled; giving the believer the ability to accept the free gift of grace.

Again, we must not view faith as a work or a merit that we have earned. Consider faith as an avenue to God’s grace; a portal that is opened by understanding and receiving His word, access to a power that is always available and never stops; then, it takes the responsibility of faith as a work off of the individual and humbles itself to God. Faith allows us and gives us the ability to think the way God thinks. It sparks our soul, our decision maker, to be able to choose God and His righteousness.

Faith, although it includes this, is not just believing or trusting in God. It is not something that one can build up in himself and store as power. Instead we need to view faith as an opening into the things of God. A way of access into His grace. The ability to think the way God thinks, desire what God desires. When one has more faith it is not that he contains more

faith, but that his access to God's grace is unhindered by the things of this world and his ability to accept the grace of God is enabled. To increase your faith is simply putting aside any distractions and cares of this world, humbling yourself to God. The less we are hindered, the greater our faith or access to God's grace becomes. This is why in Jude it says, ²⁰ **But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life, Jude 20–21.**

Notice that it is not our faith being built up, but it is on our faith, building and strengthening ourselves, by praying in the Holy Spirit. Now praying in tongues is a direct way to pray without any hindrance of the physical mind getting in the way; in which the entire time our soul should be focused on one thing, our hope in Jesus.

Take the example of the father who asked Jesus to heal his son. The father's son was demon possessed. He asked Jesus to help them, Mark 9:22–27- ²² **“But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”** ²³ Jesus said to him, **“If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes.”** ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, **“Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!”** ²⁵ **When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, ... Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose.**

Jesus helped the father's faith by rebuking the demon before the crowd could come and distract the father's faith. If Jesus would have waited, the crowd would have been all around and the father's faith deprived by the cares and distractions of this world.

Faith is not the work of believing, but the God given ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace; but from scripture we know that faith just doesn't magically appear. God set an immutable requirement in place before faith could be administered. He set the thing that He exalted high above everything else. Something even above His Name, Ps 138:2. He set His Word as a prerequisite to faith, Rom 10:17. Only those that willingly hear and understand His Word acquire faith.

I like to define faith like this:

Faith is the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture.

Scripture also says in Hebrews 11:1- Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Faith is the substance of our hope. True hope and our only hope is in Jesus, 1 Tim 1:1. Not in a new car, not a new house, not even the healing of our physical body, but only in Jesus. Now it is not wrong to say that thru our hope in Jesus He will meet our needs and these physical things like a car or a house or physical healing might manifest in our life, but that is not our hope. These are just the bi-products of our hope in Jesus. Just like the blessings of Abraham. The only blessing of Abraham is the promise of the Messiah, Gal 3:14, 18, 29. Abraham's wealth was just a bi-product of that blessing. Our hope is in Jesus. It is the eager expectation for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our body, glorified in Him, forever to be in Him, Rom 8:23-25.

Faith is the evidence of things not seen. Paul is still talking about hope. Hope is not seen, Rom 8:24, but faith, the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture, makes hope alive in our hearts, Heb 10:35-11:1. Because of faith, I can have evidence of His grace on my life. We are not talking about physical evidence, at least not right away, there can be a manifestation of physical evidence, but again that is not our hope, but this is the type of evidence that you know and experience in your heart. It is not something your physical senses can pick up on. For instance, take joy as an example John 15:11- "These things I have spoken to you so that **My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.**

Psalms 16:11- You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is **fullness of joy;** In Your right hand there are **pleasures forever.**

Hebrews 10:34- For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and **accepted joyfully** the seizure of your property, **knowing** that you have for yourselves **a better possession and a lasting one.**

Even in tremendously hard times, like if someone was taking everything you own and bringing you to jail to torture you and eventually kill you for being a Christian; that is about as bad as it can get, but even in a time like that, if your hope is in Jesus, your heart is full of faith, meaning that your ability to believe in Jesus and your access to God's grace is unhindered; the joy of the Lord will come upon you and sustain you and there is a happiness inside you that nothing else in this world can ever come close to. This is the evidence of things not seen. Even if your life were to be taken and you were killed for being a Christian, that is not

defeat, but victory in Christ; for to depart and be with Christ is much better, Phil 1:23; for to die is not to perish, but to be with Jesus forever, Lk 21:16-19. The evidence is not something physical, like a car or house or something temporal in this world. It is an everlasting evidence, an evidence of our hope in Jesus. The minute you make faith into a work, as if it is by something you are doing on your own merits; and if you expect a physical result as a confirmation of your faith, this thinking is selfishness, self-centered, not Christ centered, and even has elements of witchcraft blended with this type of thinking.

Faith is not a work. It is the ability given by the Spirit illumined word of God to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace. It is by grace we are saved thru faith, not by the work of faith. We are not healed by the work of faith, but by the gift of grace thru faith in Jesus. To use faith as a work is a misuse of this ability. Faith is not meant to use solely apart from God's grace. Faith is meant to keep your focus on Jesus and nothing else. To use faith to get something temporal from God is a selfish use of faith and will not result in anything. Faith gives a person the ability to connect this physical realm with the incorporeal things of God. It gives the person the ability to accept the free gift of grace in their corporeal life. I am not saying that sometimes this may result in a physical manifestation, but it will always result in spiritual fruit and a treasure stored up in heaven. To demand that it change something temporal is something that we are not authorized to demand. Our focus should not be on how can my faith change my physical life. It should be focused on our hope in Jesus. James 4:3 **You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.** And this I propose, although I know it might sound harsh, that faith in the well-being and prosperity for yourself and yourself only is a selfish motivation, seeking your own pleasure. Our focus should not be the temporal, but the hope in Jesus; then the physical needs of this life will take care of themselves. Jesus said "Matthew 6:31-34" ³¹ "Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'" ³² "For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for **your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**" ³³ "But **seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.**" ³⁴ "So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Our trust and complete reliance should be on God and on His Word, nothing else.

Romans 4:20-21 ²⁰ yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, ²¹ and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform.

We all have needs in this life, but if you start making those needs your hope, then all is lost. You have lost focus and you ask amiss because your trust is not directed toward God. No matter what our needs are, we must seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness and God will take care of your physical needs of this life.

Psalm 37:4-5- ⁴ **Delight yourself in the LORD;** And He will give you the desires of your heart. ⁵ **Commit your way to the LORD,** Trust also in Him, and **He will do it.**

When you are delighting yourself in the Lord and abiding in Him and His Word abides in you, the desires of your heart start to look like His desires. The desires of the heart are not selfish, but full of love for others, regarding others as more important than yourself.

Philippians 2:3- **Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;**

Come to God with a humble heart and humility of mind and fully persuaded that what God has promised, He is also able to perform.

1 Peter 5:5-7- ⁵ You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with **humility toward one another,** for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT **GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.** ⁶ Therefore **humble yourselves** under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, ⁷ **casting all your anxiety on Him,** because He cares for you.

Faith is the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture. It is the substance of our hope in Christ that does not disappoint, because at the appointed time Christ died for us even when we were still helpless and under the hold of sin; and thru this amazing act of love, Jesus poured out His love on us and endured the cross, enabling the Holy Spirit to come into our hearts and make us a new creation in Him, perfect and blameless without sin, Rom 5:5-6.

Now that faith has been defined, let us insert this definition of faith into some familiar scripture to shed new light on the function of faith. These are just a few verses I chose to put into the body of this document. There are quite a few more at the end of this paper just to help us gain concept of what faith truly is.

Hebrews 11:17-18

¹⁷ By (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who

had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; ¹⁸ *it was he* to whom it was said, “IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.”

Ephesians 3:17-18

¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture); *and* that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

Ephesians 2:8-9

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture); and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Mark 5:34

³⁴ And He said to her, “Daughter, your (ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction.”

Concerning the Law

We have defined what faith is and we know that faith is not a work. Now we must consider what is meant in Romans 3:28- For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.

To understand this, we must first understand why the law was given in the first place. A common misconception is that God first gave the law to see if man could follow it perfectly and in turn, be made righteous because of it. That thinking is nonsense and makes it seem like God made a mistake and then had to change His plans. God knows the end from the beginning and every decision we will make, Is 46:10, 25:1, 41:4, 48:3, Heb 6:17, 2Tim 1:9, therefore, God knew that man would sin and He knew the Law could not make anyone righteous. So, what was the purpose of the Law?

There are three purposes for the Law

1. To make sin apparent and lead us to Christ, Gal 3:24, Rom 3:20, 5:13, 7:7
2. To manifest Jesus in the flesh, Jn 1:14, Gal 4:4, Rom 1:3
3. To establish the guidelines and rules for righteousness in order that Jesus could fulfill them, Matt 5:17, Rom 3:31, Gal 3:19, Col 2:19

The law was sent to bring a knowledge of sin and to show people the need for a savior; for the Messiah to be made manifest in the earth; to establish a set of ordinances that had to be in place for Jesus to fulfill them and redeem us from sin and death. For without the Law, sin is not imputed, nevertheless, sin reigned from Adam to Moses, but with no law to establish what sin is and more importantly how to remit sin, Rom 5:13-14.

To make sin apparent and lead us to Christ, Gal 3:24, Rom 3:20, 5:13, 7:7

Without the law, we have no regulation for sin and without any regulation, man has no idea how corrupt he actually is. Therefore, this was the whole purpose of the Law and then expanded by Jesus on the sermon on the mount to make this point, Matt 5:17-48. The sermon on the mount is not the new standard to obtain righteousness. These rules are even harder and more rigid than the Law. Apart from Jesus, this actually brings more condemnation. So what is Jesus trying to tell us? He is telling us that we need Him. We need a Savior. We can't do this on our own. That is why the Law was sent, to show the need for a Savior. Since the Fall of man, sin entered into the world and death by sin. Man became inherently corrupt and the law was sent to make sin apparent and show the need for a Savior, Rom 4:14. The intent of the Law was never to make man righteous. It wasn't a surprise to God when man couldn't keep the law. The righteousness of the Law was never meant for man, the Law was made to show the effects of sin. To man, the Law was a tutor, Gal 3:24, because it made sin apparent. God had to establish a basis for sin and then make a way to get rid of sin. This is why He created the law, to establish the guidelines for Jesus to fulfill. The righteousness of the Law was meant for Jesus to fulfill. Because Jesus was perfect and without sin, the Law was not a tutor or a way to make sin apparent, but to Jesus it was power, and the power to conquer sin and death. **The Law is holy, righteous and good, Rom 7:12.** God knew the only person capable of fulfilling the Law was His Son Jesus. And when Jesus came to this earth, the Law was not a hindrance, filled with condemnation, but it was power. The Law is only weak thru sinful flesh, Rom 8:3-4, Jesus was the only one who could

complete the law and bring it to its full potential, 1 Tim 1:8, thus fulfilling and establishing the Law.

Romans 3:31- Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, we establish the Law.

The law is not destroyed, Jesus Himself said He did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it, Matt 5:17. By doing this He conquered sin and death and brought righteousness on all those that believe in Him.

The Law doesn't make anyone righteous. It just established the rules for righteousness in order that Jesus could fulfill them. Now, thru Jesus, the righteousness of the Law is administered to us thru grace by faith in Him, Romans 8:4- so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

This doesn't mean we must follow the Law to obtain righteousness, but instead have faith in Jesus that He paid for the condemnation of the Law for all sin for those that believe in Him. The Law not only made sin apparent, but it also established a way to forgive and remit sin. Scripture says,

"without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins" Heb 9:22, Lev 17:11, Ex 29:21.

The Law established atonement thru the sacrifice of innocent blood. This was intended as a foreshadow of the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Thru His blood we have the remission of sin. 1

Peter 1:18-20- ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ. ²⁰ For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you.

Righteousness is now by grace thru faith in Jesus so that the promise can be in accordance with grace and not works. For the promise was guaranteed to the Seed, and thru the Seed, anyone who is a new creation in Christ is a joint-heir and will receive the promise of eternal life thru inheritance.

To manifest Jesus in the flesh, Jn 1:14, Gal 4:4, Rom 1:3

The Law not only had to establish sin and make a way for the forgiveness of sin, it also needed to separate a chosen lineage to bring the Messiah into this world. This started with Abraham, before the Law, making the promise of the Messiah available to everyone who believes, but then thru the lineage of Abraham God set apart a chosen people to bring forth the Seed in whom the promise of life was made, Gal 3:19. For the promise wasn't made to the Jews, the chosen lineage, it was promised to Jesus who then made the promise of eternal life available to all who believe, Jew and Gentile, again clarifying that righteousness does not come thru the Law but thru Jesus Christ. God separated a

chosen people, not for righteousness, but to bring the Savior into the world. It was the lineage of the Jews, thru Jacob that the Messiah was to come. Thus, the Jews were given the Law to establish the physical means of bringing Jesus into the earth, Galatians 4:4-5⁴ **But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.**

For example, all the laws on offerings, Lev 1-7, were a foreshadow of the sacrifice that Jesus would fulfill on the cross.

The laws of religious festivals were established, foreshadowing Jesus as the Passover Lamb, His resurrection foreshadowed thru the feast of firstfruits and then the coming of the Holy Spirit foreshadowed as the feast of Shavout, also known as the Day of Pentecost, Lev 23.

The laws of cleanliness and eating habits were established to preserve the lineage so Jesus would be born healthy and disease wouldn't destroy the genealogy, Lev 11-15.

Laws on immoral relations, Lev 18, laws forbidding idolatry, Lev 19, laws forbidding human sacrifice and immorality, Lev 20; these all are laws to preserve the lineage and set it apart from the world.

To established the guidelines and rules for righteousness in order that Jesus could fulfill them, Matt 5:17, Rom 3:31, Gal 3:19, Col 2:19

There is a common element in all three purposes of the Law; that is our Savior, Jesus. This third purpose was Jesus mission on the earth. To fulfill the Law in order that its righteous effects could be administered to all who believe in Him. If the Law had not been established, the cross would not have accomplished anything because there would not have been a decree of ordinances established that was counted against us, Col 2:14. Jesus had to come to this earth as a man, born under the Law, Gal 4:4, and die as the final sacrifice for sin in order to pay the price for our transgressions and free us from the condemnation of eternal damnation. Some examples of these fulfillments are:

Deuteronomy 21:22-23²² **"If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree,²³ his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.**

Galatians 3:13- **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us— for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE"—**

Notice these words in Galatians "for it is written". If it wouldn't have been written in the Law, it would not have been established and Jesus could not have become a curse for us because there was not a law decreeing this. This just shows the awesome plan of God, that thousands of years in advance, God was establishing the plan of reconciliation.

Another ordinance that had to be set in place before Jesus could go to the cross was a decree stating how sins would be forgiven. God set forth a law that states "without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins" Heb 9:22, Lev 17:11, Ex 29:21.

In these examples, of which there are many more, we have shown that the Law had to establish the guidelines for Jesus to fulfill and in turn allow anyone who believes in Him to be forgiven their sins and made righteous. The purpose of the law is now made evident and one can see that man is not justified by the works of the law because the law was never intended for man in the first place. Man is only justified by the work of Christ on the cross and His resurrection by grace thru faith, not by any merits or accomplishment of his own, Rom 3:28, Eph 2:8-9.

Concerning Grace

There are three things that must work together in order for one to be justified.

1. The work of Christ, His death and resurrection, had to be accomplished
2. Faith must be activated by the Spirit illumed Word of God
3. Grace must be administered by our High Priest Jesus Christ

We have discussed the work of Christ and the meaning and role of faith, now we must discuss Grace. What is it and what does it do for us?

Grace is commonly referred to as God's unmerited favor. Meaning, the favor of God administered without any works or merits of our own. This is true, but it is not complete. Scripture also tells us: Grace is the gift of God, Eph 2:8; it is a supernatural force that surrounds us and enables us, Rom 5:2, 6:14-15, 2Cor 12:19; and it is the means by which we are saved and made alive, Eph 2:5.

Grace is the free, unmerited gift of God transforming us with His resurrection power to be made alive with Him forever

Paul tells us we are made alive by the effects of grace, Ephesians 2:5- even when we were dead in our transgressions, (God) made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

It is because of this parenthetical phrase that we understand just how powerful grace is. He could have just said “He made us alive together with Christ” and stopped there; and that would have been enough for us to believe and stand on, but he takes one more step to explain how we are made alive together with Christ- it is by grace that you have been saved.

Because of that statement, we know that the power of grace is what makes us alive together with Christ, Romans 8:10-11- If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. ¹¹ But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

It is grace by which we have our hope that one day we will be unified and glorified with Jesus forever. It is by grace that we are raised up out of darkness and translated into His marvelous light, 1 Pet 2:9, Col 1:13. It is by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God;* ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast, Eph 2:8-9.

Romans 4:16- For this reason *it is* by faith, in order that *it may be* in accordance with grace, so that the promise will be guaranteed to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

It is the grace of God that reconciles us with God and brings us into His family, Rom 3:24, 9:8, 8:29-30, Romans 8:14-17- ¹⁴ For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. ¹⁵ For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*.

God’s magnificent rescue from death, wrath, and bondage is all of grace.¹ There is absolutely nothing we can do to add to His grace. Grace is completely dependent on the meritorious work of Christ and it is a free gift administered to us thru our High Priest, Jesus Christ. Hebrews 8:1-3- ¹ Now the main point in what has been said *is this*: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ² a minister in the sanctuary and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. ³ For **every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices;** so it is necessary that **this high priest also have something to offer.**

¹ O’Brien, P. T. (1999). *The letter to the Ephesians* (p. 175). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

Hebrews 8:6- But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as **He is also the mediator of a better covenant**, which has been enacted on better promises.

Hebrews 9:11-12- ¹¹ But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation; ¹² and not through the blood of goats and calves, but **through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.**

The promise of the inheritance of eternal life was promised to the Seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ. Now this promise is only binding between the Father and the Son and it is by Grace that we are included in this promise. Because the covenant is only between the Father and Jesus, it can never be broken. If mankind were in any way liable by our works to uphold this covenant, the first man saved would have ruined the deal, just as Adam did in the beginning. This covenant could only be bound between the Father and the Son, therefore it could never be broken and would last forever. Now, thru our faith in Jesus, we can participate in the inheritance of the new covenant, but it is thru the free gift of grace administered by Jesus to us that we can receive the promise.

Concerning the Bondage of the Will and Original Sin

Jesus has made His righteousness available to everyone who believes. He has made a way to eternal life with Him, given us a way to have eternal happiness and unending joy in Him. He has prepared the wedding feast and invited all who believe in Him to participate. Now it is our decision to accept this invitation. This is the one thing God will not do for us. He has done everything else, but He will not force anyone against their will. God wants a family and He only wants those who freely choose Him.

The act of the will is the same as an act of choosing or choice. Every act of the will is a choice of the soul. The soul is an expression of the spirit thru the corporeal being. Mankind is a spirit, it has a soul and it lives in a body. The spirit and the soul can never be separated. However, the body can be separated from the spirit and the soul, as is the case with

everyone who has died. Those in heaven right now are waiting for their redemption as are we, the adoption as sons, the glorification of our body and the final unification with Jesus in Him. The soul's choices and decisions are an expression of our spirit, shown forth and manifested by are bodies, whether physical or glorified.

Our soul is our decision maker and the choices it makes reflect the inner man. Our goal as Christians is to be "like Christ". That is what it means to be a Christian. Jesus said, "If you have seen Me you have seen the Father". Can we say that about ourselves? If you see me, you have seen the Father? Unfortunately, not; and quite frankly I am embarrassed to even compare myself with the Father, and yet that is what will give Him the most pleasure and in turn will give me unending joy the closer I resemble my Father.

This process of transforming ourselves into a vessel that can portray and resemble His light is the process of sanctification. Sanctification is not Justification. Our justification is secure in Him because it is not by any merit of our own that we are made righteous, but by the work of Jesus on the cross. By and thru Jesus we are made righteous and anyone who confesses Jesus as Lord and believes in their heart that He was raised from the dead, he will be saved, justified and made righteous, Rom 10:9-10.

God has given us free will, but free will does not give you the power or ability to do good works unto salvation; it just allows you to choose Jesus and humble yourself to Him. No man can say Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit and no man can justify himself by his works. The only free will a man has is to choose whom he will serve.

But mankind has a big problem.

Because of the Fall, mankind is so corrupt that it cannot make the decision to choose God. Martin Luther called this the bondage of the will. He believed that the will of man was so corrupted by sin, that man could not choose God on his own. So if the only way to eternal life is to choose Jesus, but that free choice is so corrupt that it cannot and will not choose Him, then man is caught in a terrible and seemingly hopeless paradox that can only end in death and destruction. Martin Luther saw this problem and knew the answer didn't lie within ourselves, but in God. God would create a Way when there was no other way. Therefore, he believed that God had predestined the elect and pre-ordained those who would choose

Him. Allowing only the free will choice to be available to those that He predestined into His grace. These chosen people, endowed with the grace of God would then accept Jesus as their personal Savior, thus only allowing those that were predestined to be partakers of His promise. This was Martin Luther's solution to the corrupted will.

I respect Martin Luther immensely, and even though I agree with him that mankind was corrupted by the Fall and man cannot choose God while he is under the bondage of sin, I differ from his opinion of predestination because I believe that God does give us the choice to choose Him of our own free will. I believe God made salvation available to all who believe and His redemptive plan includes us being able to choose Him freely; but, I agree, there is a major hurdle in the way to do so. Our soul is in bondage because of sin, so how can mankind be freed from that bondage in order to choose Jesus? This is a topic that many great scholars have written hundreds of pages about. I will try to sum up my opinion in a much condensed version.

In the beginning, God created Adam and Eve and gave them the garden of Eden to cultivate and to live in. God placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden and commanded that from any tree in the garden he may freely eat, but the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he shall not eat, for in the day that he will eat from it, he will surely die, Gen 2:16-17. Satan, disguised as a serpent, tempted Eve and created doubt by asking a question. The serpent said, "Has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?'" Eve knew the correct answer and replied, "From the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat; but from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God has said, 'You shall not eat from it or touch it, or you will die.'" The serpent then replied to Eve with an outright lie saying, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

As we all know, Eve took the fruit, seeing that it was good to eat and gave some to her husband Adam who was with her. Notice that Adam wasn't off in the garden somewhere, he was right there with Eve, hearing every word that Satan was saying. The only difference, we learn from Paul in his first letter to Timothy 2:14, he says the woman was deceived, but Adam was not. Nonetheless, they both ate the fruit and fell into transgression.

Scripture says, after they ate the fruit, their eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked. Thru this transgression, they gained an intimate knowledge of sin, and instantly the

curse of sin corrupted the entire creation. Isaiah 45:7- The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the LORD who does all these.

Calamity came as a result of giving man free will and choice. God knew that if He were to give Adam a choice, it would result in sin. This was part of God's plan. He used the choice of free will to show that there is only One Way, and that is Jesus. Man cannot do it on his own. He must have a Savior. The conviction of sin will drive one away from self reliance and toward trust in God and the promise of the Christ.

So, it is a very important thing to remember that this was not a surprise to God. God knew they would sin and yet He wanted His children to have the free choice to serve Him. This is just conjecture, but I think they could have gained an understanding of evil and sin without actually eating the fruit. It wasn't the fruit itself that was corrupt, it was disobedience that allowed sin to enter. I believe, as Adam cared for the tree and cultivated it, without eating it, God would have taught them good and evil and they would have known sin without having to have actually committed it. Nevertheless, that didn't happen and God knew it wouldn't happen so sin came into the world and death by sin. The corruption of sin didn't just stop there, but Scripture tells us that death spread to all men, Rom 5:12, even over those who had not sinned. Even though the Law had not been established to impute sin, nevertheless, sin reigned in every person because the corruption of sin was in the seed, Rom 5:14; for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, Rom 3:23.

Therefore, Jesus had to be born of a virgin, made by the seed of the Holy Spirit, because the seed of man was corrupted by sin and even though Jesus had never sinned Himself, He would have been born with sin; therefore, the uncorrupted seed of God was the only way to bring Jesus into the earth as a perfect man. So, even if someone could follow the Law perfectly, without sinning, (which is impossible of itself), but say for instance if it were possible, that person would still be a sinner because he would have been born from sin by the corrupted seed of man.

Therefore, all men are corrupt by nature and cannot choose God in this reprobate state. The corruption of original sin made it impossible for the human soul to choose God. The soul had become cold and unregenerate, only loving the darkness and hating the light. A cold, unregenerate soul does not want to and cannot choose God.

Romans 5:12- Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so **death spread to all men, because all sinned**—

John 3:19–20- ¹⁹ “This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and **men loved the darkness rather than the Light**, for their deeds were evil. ²⁰ “For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed.

¹ John 2:11- But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because **the darkness has blinded his eyes**.

Romans 8:7- because the mind set on **the flesh is hostile toward God**; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is **not even able to do so**,

John 3:3- Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again **he cannot see the kingdom of God**.”

As you can see from the handful of scripture above that mankind has a big problem and this is why Luther chose predestination as the way man could be saved from this paradox; but I disagree that His children had to abandon this free will choice and God was forced to make the choice for Himself by predetermining those that would be made righteous. I believe that God wants us to be able to choose Him willingly and freely, just as He gave Adam and Eve the free choice in the garden. So, the question is, how can man get past the hurdle of the corrupted soul not being able to choose God for himself?

There are those, like Aristotle and Pelagius, that say original sin did not corrupt all men, but it is the individual sin of a person that corrupts them. Thus, allowing a person, by their own free will without the assistance of God's grace, to attain to moral perfection. We can prove this unscriptural by referring to the verses above, therefore this is not the answer to the bondage of the will. The short answer, in which I will focus the next several pages explaining, is-

We are saved by God's grace, shed abroad in our hearts thru faith in Jesus by the hearing and understanding of the Scripture.

Somehow God had to create in our soul a spark of life to allow us to choose Him. He did this by giving us His life giving Word, which then allows faith to stir our hearts and ignite a spark in our soul to then be able to choose Jesus. The answer to the bondage of the will is His Word. His Word, which has the most power, is most glorious and has the greatest

authority, even above His Name, Psalm 138:2b- For You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

God's Word was His answer to our bondage!

Justification comes by faith alone in the meritorious work of Christ.

Faith is the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture. It is not something earned. The efficacious enablement of faith is accessed when one hears the Scripture and understands it. This ignites a spark of life in the soul, thus allowing the corrupted soul to confess with the mouth that Jesus is Lord. This confession enables the unregenerate spirit to believe that Jesus was raised from the dead for his justification. This invites the Holy Spirit into the spirit making the old corrupted spirit a new creation in Christ. It is that spark of faith that ignites the soul and allows it to make the decision to justification.

Romans 10:8-10- But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, **the word of faith** which we are preaching, ⁹ that if you **confess** with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and **believe** in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

This spark of faith that ignites our soul when we hear and understand the Scripture is lit by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 3:11- "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will **baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.**

At this point, even at the very beginning when all the person may have heard is that Jesus loves them so much that He gave His life for them. That is all it takes for the spark to ignite; if the person has ears to hear and understands that Jesus loves them and died for them and was raised from the dead so we could have eternal happiness with Him. This awakens the soul just enough for man to choose Jesus and believe in his heart that Jesus was raised from the dead and all his sins have been paid for and washed clean by the blood of Jesus, resulting in justification.

God's word is available to all, thus salvation is for all and to all them that believe, not just those who have been predestined.

Romans 10:11-13- For the Scripture says, “**WHOEVER** BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.”¹² For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him;¹³ for “**WHOEVER** WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.”

Titus 2:11- For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to **all men**,

1 Timothy 2:3-6-³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,⁴ who desires **all men** to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.⁵ For there is one God, *and* one mediator also between God and men, *the* man Christ Jesus,⁶ who gave Himself as a ransom **for all**, the testimony *given* at the proper time.

Romans 5:18-19-¹⁸ So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of **life to all men**.¹⁹ For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the **many will be made righteous**.

While we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly. Jesus made His righteousness available to all who believe. Righteousness was offered to all men. Offering implies a decision, something that can be accepted or rejected. The promise of the gospel was offered to all men, it is only those who accept the invitation that are given the free gift. Jesus' parable of the wedding feast is a perfect example of this, Matt 22:1-14, Lk 14:16-24.

To make the promises of the Gospel only available to the elect would make God responsible for evil and reprobation, the rejection of God resulting and being condemned to eternal damnation. It is God's will that all be saved, thus justification ultimately depends on our free choice to choose to believe in Jesus. The belief that only God chooses the elect takes all responsibility from the person. We are still saved by grace thru faith, not of any of our merits or works but Christ alone, but it is our responsible decision that allows grace to save us. If the responsibility of choice is not applied to justification, it would result in chaos. Men would do and act however they want because there would be no effect to their decisions. Such thinking is not the will of God. God did not create robots with no decision-making ability. He wants a family that will choose Him and love Him.

The total control of God both in the physical and spiritual realms results in two errors:

1. this makes God responsible for evil. It makes God choose who gets to live with Him forever and who is damned to hell without any consideration of the choices or actions of the person.
2. If God were in total control of all things, even temporal things, it removes the responsibility of people and their actions, making them free of any unruly behavior and putting the blame on God.

Concerning Predestination

The subject of predestination has been widely misunderstood and used incorrectly. The main problem with the doctrine of predestination for an individual is it takes away the person's free will choice to choose God, thus it makes God not only responsible for those who have eternal life, but it also makes God responsible for choosing who goes to hell; when it is God's will that all men be saved. ¹ Timothy 2:3-6- ³ This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴ **who desires all men to be saved** and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶ **who gave Himself as a ransom for all**, the testimony given at the proper time. God is not responsible for evil and it is not God damning people into hell apart from their own will; it is the judgment of sin based on their choices that sends people to hell. Those that believe in Jesus, have their sins forgiven, therefore they are judged righteous thru the blood of Jesus and are granted eternal life.

Predestination is not God choosing who lives in eternal life with Him and who is condemned to eternal damnation. It is simply the foreknowledge of God, who knows the end from the beginning and made His plan for the redemption of man according to who would choose Him and who would reject Him. He knows every decision we will ever make and has formulated His plan to include us. His will is going to and will be done, we cannot do anything to change His plans, but we can choose at what level you want to participate in His plan. Do you want to sit on the bench on the sidelines? Are you in the bleachers or the parking lot? Or are you in the game on the field making a difference for the kingdom of God. These are all our decisions

and God knows the outcome of each of our decisions and He uses our involvement and includes us in His plan that He set in place before the foundation of the world. That is just how much He loves us. The fact that He would even think of involving us in something as important as the redemption of man and the reconciliation of His family is astounding.

Phillip Melancthon, a sixteenth century reformer, had another way to look at predestination in which I quite like. He stated that predestination is not predetermination of a person's destiny and their decisions, but the predetermined outcome of God's universal promises to all mankind.

It has been the assumption that predestination is focused on the individual, when instead predestination is just the predetermined effect of believing in Jesus. God predestined the effect of faith in Jesus to be the administered free gift of grace to the believer. It is not the individual person that has been predetermined, but the result of faith in Jesus, allowing them to participate in a predetermined elect group called the Church. It is the Church that has been predestined, and all who believe in Jesus can participate in the elect Church; the true universal Church, the body of Christ.

The decision to accept God's free gift of grace is a free choice to anyone, but the result of that decision, has a predestined result. For instance, if a man chooses to accept Jesus and the free gift of grace, the predetermined outcome to that decision is righteousness and everlasting life with Jesus. Though God was at work in justification, the elect were those who cooperated with God and freely, of their own wills, chose to accept His promises. The elect is a predetermined category of those people who choose God. Not necessarily a predestination of an elect individual. Election represented God's mercy or grace which came to us in the form of promises in the Word illumined by the Spirit,².

Romans 8:29-30- ²⁹ For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; ³⁰ and these whom He predestined, (those whom He foreknew that would receive the predestined result of His grace) He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

² Graybill, Evangelical Free Will, ch 8 page 246

1 Corinthians 2:7- but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden *wisdom* which God predestined before the ages to our glory;

Ephesians 1:5- He predestined us (He predetermined the result of grace to any one who should receive His free gift) to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

Ephesians 1:11- also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined (partakers of His predetermined result of grace) according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will,

In the defense against predestination, Melancthon stated that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was not a direct shaping of the will, but rather God letting Pharaoh make his own decisions to act in a manner he naturally desired. God gave him over to a reprobate mind; letting him go to his own choices and desires, Rom 1:28, Eph 4:19. The same can be true for Judas Iscariot. Judas was not destined to be the betrayer without his free will choice, but it was the foreknowledge of God that knew the decisions Judas would make and in turn, God selected Judas to be the betrayer as a result of his personal decisions.

John 6:64-65- "But there are some of you who do not believe." For **Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe**, and who it was that would betray Him. ⁶⁵ And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

Concerning Evangelical Free Will: the Freedom in Christ

Justification involves three things:

1. His Word
2. The Holy Spirit
3. Human free will as a result of hearing and understanding the scriptures. We will call this type of free will, evangelical free will. Free will as a result of the Spirit illumed Word of God.

Justification, as a result of our free decision, is the acceptance of God's free gift of grace. The decision to choose Jesus doesn't contradict grace. It is merely accepting God's gift to us, not by our works but solely on the work of Jesus.

The freedom of choice and evangelical free will are very different than Pelagianism. Pelagianism believes that with the free will comes good works that merit salvation. Evangelical free will states that man has free will to choose Jesus because of the Spirit-illuminated Word of God; but it is still by grace through faith that we are saved. The work of Jesus on the cross is the only work that merits justification. As we have stated previously, the human will could not make this decision for Jesus if it were not for the word and the influence of the Holy Spirit on the word to create faith in that person. Faith is the ability to choose the grace of God as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture.

People cannot choose to have faith in God unless they hear the Spirit-illuminated Word of God; but all people when they hear the Word of God (which is always illuminated by the Holy Spirit) have, at that moment, the free choice of whether or not to have faith in Christ. Predestination is not involved at all. The effectiveness of the Spirit's call is contingent upon the free response of the individual human will³.

God calls us and invites us into His family by the evangelical Word. The majority of those that come to God usually have the Word of God preached or spoken to them. It is through His Word that each of us are drawn to Him. He does not force Himself on anyone, but He makes Himself available to all.

John 6:44- "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me **draws him**; and I will raise him up on the last day.

John 12:32- "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will **draw all men to Myself**."

All through scripture, God is constantly using miracles, metaphors and types to foreshadow future events. The miraculous draught of fish with the disciples is a perfect example of God drawing us to Him.

³ Graybill, Evangelical Free Will, ch 9, page 289

John 21:6- And He said to them, “Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch.” So they cast, and then they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish.

Matthew 4:19- And He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

God has always used men to act as His mouthpiece to draw people to Him. In the Old Testament these were His prophets. Now, under the New Covenant, He has set in place a five category ministry system, Eph 4:11, to draw people to Him thru His word; still choosing to use men as His fellow-workers, 1 Cor 3:9.

Romans 16:25-26- ²⁵ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past, ²⁶ **but now is manifested**, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, **has been made known to all the nations**, leading to obedience of faith;

That is what is so amazing to me; that God would trust something this important as the administration of His word resulting in the salvation of mankind to us. Imperfect people who can and will mess things up and get in the way, but God doesn't see it like that. The process of us working with Him is what brings Him pleasure. It is not just the final completed act of salvation that God is interested in. He loves spending time with us on the journey in the plan of redemption, working with us every step of the way to bring as many people into His kingdom that will accept Him.

Romans 10:13-15- ¹³ for “WHOEVER WILL CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED.” ¹⁴ How then will they call on Him in whom they have not believed? How will they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And **how will they hear without a preacher?** ¹⁵ How will they preach unless they are sent? Just as it is written, “HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF **THOSE WHO BRING GOOD NEWS OF GOOD THINGS!**”

Acts 8:30-35- ³⁰ Philip ran up and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ And he said, “Well, **how could I, unless someone guides me?**” ... ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture **he preached Jesus to him.**

1 Corinthians 2:12-16- ¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, ¹³ **which things we also speak**, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those **taught by the Spirit**, combining spiritual *thoughts* with spiritual *words*. ... ¹⁶ For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT **HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM?** But **we have the mind of Christ.**

Evangelical free will is the freedom of Christ operating in the soul as a result of hearing, understanding, and accepting the Spirit illumed Word.

Galatians 5:1- It was for freedom that **Christ set us free**; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery.

John 8:32- and you will know the truth, and **the truth will make you free.**"

Jesus gave us this freedom to first, choose to believe in Him and His glorious work on the cross. Secondly, we must use this free will to keep choosing Him in every decision we have while we are on this earth. This leads us to sanctification. As we make the decisions to choose the things of God, the Holy Spirit is working within us to separate and set us apart from the sin of the world.

Galatians 5:13- For you were **called to freedom**, brethren; only *do not turn your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh*, but **through love serve one another**.

Use this freedom to love and regard others as more important than yourself. Have the same attitude in yourself that was also in Christ Jesus; that He humbled Himself to the will of the Father and became obedient to death on the cross, Phil 2:5, 8.

Hebrews 2:14-15- ¹⁴ ... through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and **might free those** who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Romans 8:2- For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus **has set you free** from the law of sin and of death.

As believers in Jesus, thru His grace we, therefore, do not have any condemnation of sin. Jesus paid the price for all sin and by accepting His free gift of grace, we are made free from the bondage of sin.

God created mankind with the necessity of serving a master. After the Fall, man became subject to the bondage of sin rather than being enslaved to God. Because of sin, the fundamental desire to serve God was corrupted and man became a servant to sin, subject to the bondage of sin. But now that Jesus has come, we have a choice to serve Him. Jesus said

²⁸ "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and **I will give you rest.** ²⁹ "**Take My yoke upon you** and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. ³⁰ "For **My yoke is easy** and My burden is light", Matthew 11:28-30.

Jesus wants us to bind ourselves with Him. Yoke ourselves and connect with Him. Anchor our soul to Him by hope, Heb 6:19, and be enslaved to Him; humbling ourselves to Him by making Jesus the Lord of your life. To be a servant of Jesus Christ is to put all your trust and hope in Him because He cares and loves us so much that He gave His life so that we might have an eternity of happiness and everlasting joy with Him.

By choosing Jesus, we are freed from sin and connected to Him thru grace. The Holy Spirit then has access to our spirit and we are made a new creation in Christ Jesus. Our spirit, thru the work of the Holy Spirit in us, bears the fruit of the Spirit, which then results in sanctification, leading to a glorious and future resurrection of our bodies, the adoption as sons, the glorification of our bodies, united in Him forever.

Romans 6:22- But now having been **freed from sin** and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

It is the daily decision, as a result of being made free in Christ and obtaining a free evangelical will, that we can choose to stand firm, be diligent, and press toward the prize of the high calling.

Concerning Philosophy and Human reason

Philosophy can be helpful in understanding the scriptures, but philosophy alone, as Aristotle teaches, cannot save one's soul. The human soul can learn, both to create and maintain order and to bring about the knowledge of sin and understand the need for a Savior, but this head knowledge is not enough for one to be born again.

1 Corinthians 2:14- But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and **he cannot understand them**, because they are spiritually appraised.

The key to breaking thru this corruption is God's Word, Faith, and His Grace. After this, one can put to work the temporal ideas of philosophy. Philosophy, when defined as grammar and rhetoric (the art of speaking or writing effectively): such as the study of writing or

speaking as a means of communication or persuasion, and dialectics (any systematic reasoning, exposition, a method of examining and connecting other scripture and references to clarify and explain a topic), is absolutely essential to the study of the Bible. But again, philosophy alone does not make one perfect, they are just tools we can use to expand our knowledge of the scripture. It is the Word of God alone that can give us this spark and ignite the soul to choose God.

Language and rhetoric are temporal containers of spiritual truth. Martin Luther said

“Without languages, we could not have received the Gospel... Languages are the sheath that contains the sword of the Spirit; they are the casket that guards the jewels; they are the vessel that holds the wine; and, as the Gospel says, they are the baskets in which the loaves and fishes are kept to feed the multitude.”

The physical mind is necessary in understanding the things of God, but it must be put in the correct order; the physical mind and philosophy must complement and support the bible, not change or alter the meaning of the bible.

If philosophy and human reason without the guidance of the Holy Spirit tries to take precedence of the scriptures, there are three fatal errors that ensue:

1. it tries to achieve its own righteousness thru works and not the works of Christ
2. it tries to change the spirit when only the blood of Jesus and the Holy Spirit can make a man a new creation
3. human reasoning is selfish and does not regard others as more important than itself, thus it does not see the plan of God or do anything to bring the body of Christ together in unity by love. Human reasoning will always force its way onto a person.

Human will in its natural, unguarded form will create chaos. This is why Paul says to obey government, Rom 13:1-7, because even in bad government and rule, even if that government is imprisoning and killing Christians, it is still maintaining order so the people do not create chaos. The human will must be reined in. The best way is by the Holy Spirit, but not all accept Him so God had to put carnal, temporal leadership in place to govern the ungodly. This can seem very bad, especially for Christians, but the sufferings and persecution that can arise because of bad leadership or a corrupt government can actually lead to furthering

the gospel instead of hindering it. We see this from Paul's writings to the Philippians, ¹² Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for **the greater progress of the gospel**, ¹³ so that my imprisonment in *the cause of Christ* has become well known throughout the whole praetorian guard and to everyone else, ¹⁴ and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord **because of my imprisonment**, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear, Philippians 1:12-14.

Another example of corrupt leadership that seemed to create a hindrance to the gospel, but instead aided in its furtherance and progression was the martyrdom of Stephen. In the book of Acts we are told that Stephen is stoned to death for preaching the gospel and because of this persecution, they all flee from Jerusalem. Little did they know at the time, this scattering actually led to the disbursement of the gospel over the known world. This persecution gave the gospel the launch that otherwise may have taken years to accomplish. Acts 8:1-4- And on that day **a great persecution began against the church** in Jerusalem, and they were **all scattered throughout** the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. ² Some devout men buried Stephen, and made loud lamentation over him. ³ But Saul *began* ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. ⁴ Therefore, **those who had been scattered went about preaching the word.**

This just proves that in all things, we must trust God. It is not God creating persecution, but despite the persecution, God's grace will abound.

Romans 8:28- And we know that **all things work together for good to those who love God**, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

When persecution arises from those who have not found God; from those still corrupted by sin, those that are hostile toward the things and people of God; stay rooted and grounded in His promises. Knowing this: Romans 8:18- ... that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Luke 21:16-18- ¹⁶ "But **you will be betrayed** even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and they will put **some of you to death**, ¹⁷ and **you will be hated by all** because of My name. ¹⁸ "**Yet not a hair of your head will perish.**

James 1:2- **Consider it all joy**, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,

Hebrews 10:32-34- ³² But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you **endured a great conflict of sufferings ... and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.**

Human reasoning and philosophy apart from God is so selfish, that it will always choose itself over anything else. But when the soul is sanctified and set apart from the corrupt things of the world; when it's focus is on the things of God and not of the corrupted self, the Holy Spirit can start to create in the regenerate soul the True Knowledge and Wisdom of God. We start to gain an understanding into the things of God and our carnal mind starts to grasp the things of God. We start to comprehend the incomprehensible because of the Wisdom working within us.

Ephesians 3:18-19- ... able to **comprehend** with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to **know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge**, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

God shares the deep things to those who delight in Him. The mystery of the cross and His redemptive plan that was hidden in Him since before the foundation of the world; and He has now revealed them to us by His Spirit.

For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM?

But we have the mind of Christ,

1 Corinthians 2:16

Conclusion

This writing has been an attempt to explain and discuss the fundamental principles of justification. In doing so, my goal was to get the reader to think about these principles that so many of us take for granted; topics like good works, faith, grace, predestination, etc.... My main objective was to prove to the reader just how corrupt mankind is without God and how very much we need Jesus. Without Him we are nothing and destined for an eternity of torment, but with Him, we are set free from sin and death and made alive in Him. With Him we have eternal joy and everlasting peace that we cannot find any where else apart from Him. In Him we are made perfect and complete, reconciled together with the Father destined for everlasting happiness in Him.

Grace and peace to you from our Lord Jesus Christ

Faith scriptures to meditate on

Romans 12:3- For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each the measure of (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture).

Luke 17:5- The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our (ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture)!”

Matthew 8:10- Now when Jesus heard *this*, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great (ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) with anyone in Israel.

Mark 11:22-24²² And Jesus answered saying to them, “Have (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) in God.²³ “Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be *granted* him.²⁴ “Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be *granted* you.

Mark 2:5- And Jesus seeing their (ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Acts 3:16- “And on the basis of (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) in His name, *it is* the name of Jesus which has strengthened this man whom you see and know; and the (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) which *comes* through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

Acts 6:5- The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

Romans 1:17- For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY (THE ABILITY TO BELIEVE IN JESUS AND ACCEPT THE FREE GIFT OF GRACE AS A RESULT OF HEARING AND UNDERSTANDING THE SCRIPTURE).”

Romans 3:28- For we maintain that a man is justified by (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) apart from works of the Law.

Galatians 3:8- The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture), preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, *saying*, “ALL THE NATIONS WILL BE BLESSED IN YOU.”

Romans 10:8-10- ⁸ But what does it say? “THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART”—that is, the word of (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) which we are preaching, ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

² Timothy 3:15- and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) which is in Christ Jesus.

¹ John 5:4-5- ⁴ For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world—our (ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture). ⁵ Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Hebrews 11:1- Now (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) is the assurance of *things* hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:3- By (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

Hebrews 11:6- And without (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) 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 seek Him.

Hebrews 11:8-10- ⁸ By (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹ By (the ability to believe in Jesus and accept the free gift of grace as a result of hearing and understanding the Scripture) he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign *land*, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; ¹⁰ for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.