

rendering a favorable verdict.¹² We are found guilty. We are not acquitted of sin. So clearly, Paul is thinking of "dikaioo" in the sense *to have justice done*:

Romans 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man has justice done¹³ by faithfulness without the deeds of the law.

When we trust in Christ, God reckons that *justice is done* to us by the sacrifice of Christ. The penalty is paid. We receive a pardon (forgiveness) and not an acquittal. Christ pays our penalty after an unfavorable verdict. A pardoned person is treated like the innocent person in the end because he does not have to pay the penalty, but God has not unjustly said that the pardoned person was *justified, declared righteous* in His eyes. Paul is just saying that *justice has been done* in Christ.¹⁴

By Faithfulness

Now we will turn to the words "by faith" to find out by whose faith justice is done without our works.

Most Christians are taught that "by faith" we are talking about our faith. Partly this is true. Our faithful trust is a condition of justice-application in Christ. However, Paul does not focus on the believer's faith in his key statements. He writes, "which is by faith of Jesus Christ" (Romans 3:22, KJV) and "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe"

¹² Exodus 23:7, "I will not justify the wicked".

¹³ This is the exact same grammatical form of the Greek δικαιόσθαι word cited in the lexicon for this definition.

¹⁴ Δικαίω in context: Rom. 3:24 *justice being done* freely; 26 *one doing justice for*; 28 *justice is being done*; 30 *which shall do justice for*; 4:5 *that does justice to*; 5:1 *justice being done* by; 9 *now justice being done* by; 6:7 *has had justice done* because of sin; 8:30 he also *did justice for*, whom he *did justice to*; 8:33 *that is doing justice*; 1Cor 6:11 *ye are righteous*; Gal 2:16 *does not have justice done, we may have justice done* by, shall no flesh *have justice done*; 17 *seek to have justice done*; 3:8 *would do justice for*; 11 *no man has justice done*; 24 *we might have justice done* by; Tit 3:7 *that justice being done* by.

(Gal. 3:22, KJV). Do you notice that he says it is by the "faith OF Jesus"? Whose faith are we talking about? Is it Jesus' faith or ours?¹⁵

It is His faith. It is sad that so many modern translations have overlooked this truth by mistranslating "faith IN Jesus" when the original means "OF". There is one notable exception to this among translations. The *New English Bible* translates: "But the scripture imprisoned everything and everyone under sin so that the promise could be given—because of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ—to those who believe" (Gal. 3:22, NET)¹⁶. So *justice is done* for us by the *faithfulness of Jesus Christ*. It is not our faith that is the instrument of salvation. It is Christ's faithfulness. Here is the NET Bible's note on Romans 3:22:

⁹tn Or "faith in Christ." A decision is difficult here. Though traditionally translated "faith in Jesus Christ," an increasing number of NT scholars are arguing that πίστις Χριστοῦ (*pistis Christou*) and similar phrases in Paul (here and in v. 26; Gal 2:16, 20; 3:22; Eph 3:12; Phil 3:9) involve a subjective genitive and mean "Christ's faith" or "Christ's faithfulness" (cf., e.g., G. Howard, "The 'Faith of Christ,'" *ExpTim* 85 [1974]: 212-15; R. B. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ* [SBLDS]; Morna D. Hooker, "Πίστις Χριστοῦ," *NTS* 35 [1989]: 321-42). Noteworthy among the arguments for the subjective genitive view is that when πίστις takes a personal genitive it is almost never an objective genitive (cf. Matt 9:2, 22, 29; Mark 2:5; 5:34; 10:52; Luke 5:20; 7:50; 8:25, 48; 17:19; 18:42; 22:32; Rom 1:8; 12; 3:3; 4:5, 12, 16; 1 Cor 2:5; 15:14, 17; 2 Cor 10:15; Phil 2:17; Col 1:4; 2:5; 1 Thess 1:8; 3:2, 5, 10; 2 Thess 1:3; Titus 1:1; Phlm 6; 1 Pet 1:9, 21; 2 Pet 1:5).

It is also remarkable that the Greek translation of Habakkuk 2:4 in the Septuagint, which was used by Paul's contemporaries says, "The just shall live by MY faithfulness"¹⁷. How could The LXX get away with that! The reason it could is that the Hebrew text reads, "the just shall live by

¹⁵ The King James identifies it as Christ's faith. This means that this translation is the most accurate as opposed to the more modern versions on this critical issue. I will be basing all of our conclusions on the Greek or Hebrew and not translations.

¹⁶ www.bible.org. The disagreement between the King James Version and the NIV, NASB and other modern translations on whether it is the "faith of Christ" or "faith in Christ" is the proverbial smoking gun showing that a crime has been committed by the translators at the heart of one of the bibles more important doctrines.

¹⁷ ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται

HIS/his faithfulness" (בְּאַמּוּנָתוֹ). It could be interpreted as either God's faithfulness, our faithfulness, or both God's faithfulness and our faithfulness. Paul interprets Habakkuk 2:4 both ways. When applying it to the satisfaction of God's justice in Christ, he interprets it as Christ's faithfulness. Every Jew and God fearing Gentile in the dispersion that Paul preached to would have had access to this understanding, because the Bible they used said, "The just shall live by My faithfulness".

Whose faithfulness? God's faithfulness. That is how the just shall live, first and foremost, and only in the second place "by his *own* faithfulness" (cf. Lev. 18:5).

So what does "justified by faith" really come from, in the original language? It means "justice-is-applied by faithfulness". It is Christ's faithfulness in doing the work of atonement by which the justice of God is applied to us, and therefore the penalty is paid! What a beautiful insight when we comprehend the original text! Furthermore, "justice-is-applied by faithfulness" also encompasses the fact that we must repent and faithfully trust God for the justice to be applied in Christ:

Romans 3:22 Even the justice of God *which is* by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that firmly trust: for there is no difference: 23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; 24 having justice satisfied¹⁸ freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

The Reformers might be excused because of their ignorance of Greek and Hebrew¹⁹, but in these last days, the prophecy in Daniel is being fulfilled:

KJV Daniel 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. 4 But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, *even* to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

¹⁸ or *applied, done*.

¹⁹ The reformation introduced the study of Greek after a thousand year Latin hiatus. They did not fully grasp the idea of tense in Koine Greek, and key religious terms, such as "faith," "justify," "righteousness" and "law" were overly influenced by Ecclesiastical usage. Modern research has exposed its deficiencies.

We must recognize that Luther and Calvin were in error.²⁰ For what was the fruit of their work? Luther called for persecution of the Jews and Calvin burned men at the stake just as the Catholics.

God's Faithfulness unto Our Faithfulness

Therefore, if your understanding of the gospel was focused on "justified by faith" in the sense of a declaration of innocence before God by your faith, then you have missed the gospel by that emphasis. It is time to understand that God's "justice-is-applied by the faithfulness" of Christ. Paul sums up the work of Christ in one word: "faithfulness". By this he means Christ's faithful action in doing the work of atonement for sin. His faithfulness is the work of atonement. Rest assured that by saying "faithfulness" instead of "faith" that we are fully in accord with the Greek and Hebrew background of this word²¹. The photocopy of Bauer's Lexicon, on the page below, gives the definition "*faithfulness*" in the first definition. Its examples show that there is no doubt of this meaning with respect to God. It cites, "*the faithfulness/ commitment of God*" and cites Hosea 2:20 (Hebrew Text, 2:22) as a key example of this sense.

²⁰ Luther erred on other points also, such as baptism "worketh forgiveness of sins" and "It is the true body and blood ... under the bread and wine." Calvin developed a philosophical system based on the monk Augustine's theology and philosophical determinism. Both Calvin and Luther persecuted the Anabaptists.

²¹ *Faithfulness* is definition 1a in Bauer's Lexicon. Also the margins of many bibles translate Habakkuk 2:24, "the just shall live by his faithfulness"; also, Hosea 2:20 (KJV), "I will even betroth thee unto me in **faithfulness**: and thou shalt know the LORD," has the same Hebrew and Greek construction as Hab. 2:4 which properly translated "faithfulness" (ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐκ πίστεώς μου ζήσεται, LXX, Hab 2:4; καὶ μνηστεύσομαι σε ἑμαυτῷ ἐν πίστει καὶ ἐπιγνώσῃ τὸν κύριον, LXX, Hos. 2:20).

πίστις, εως, ή (Hes., Hdt.+; ranging in meaning from subjective confidence to objective basis for confidence).

① **that which evokes trust and faith**—Ⓞ the state of being someone in whom confidence can be placed, **faithfulness, reliability, fidelity, commitment** (X., An. 1, 6, 3; 3, 3, 4; Aristot., Eth. Eud. 7, 2, 1237b, 12; Polyb. 7, 12, 9; 38, 1, 8 al.; Herodian 2, 14, 4 al.; SIG 675, 22; OGI 557, 16; PTebt 27, 6; 51 [II BC]; POxy 494, 9; 705, 32; other pap M-M. s.v.; Ps 32:4; Pr 12:22; Jos., Ant. 2, 61; TestAsh 7:7) w. κρίσις and ἔλεος **Mt 23:23**. (Opp. ἀπιστία as Hes., Op. 370) τὴν πίστιν τοῦ θεοῦ καταργεῖν *nullify the faithfulness/commitment of God* (cp. Ps 32:4; Hos 2:22) **Ro 3:3**. πᾶσαν π. ἐνδείκνυσθαι ἀγαθὴν *show all good faith(fulness)* **Tit 2:10** (cp. BGU 314, 19 μετὰ πίστεως ἀγαθῆς). W. other virtues **Gal 5:22** (on πίστις, πραύτης cp. Sir 45:4; 1:27). W. ὑπομονή **2 Th 1:4**. τὴν πίστιν τετήρηκα *I have remained faithful or loyal* (πίστιν τηρεῖν as Polyb. 6, 56, 13; 10,

And remember that many preachers have correctly pointed out that faith which does not result in faithfulness or good works is not really true faith. James says the same. With this in mind, let us look at Paul's thesis in Romans 1:16-17:

NKJ Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who firmly trusts, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. For in it the justice of God is revealed from faithfulness to faithfulness; as it is written, "The just shall live by faithfulness."

Let's examine this. Salvation begins with God's faithfulness and is supposed to result in our faithfulness. That is why he says, "faithfulness to faithfulness". Moreover, the proof text is Habakkuk 2:4 which means both God's faithfulness and our faithfulness will enable us to live.²²

You may ask how our faithfulness results in life. The answer is very simple. Whenever you do what is right you avoid death, and remain in life. However, since we have sinned, and continue to be sinful, we need God's faithfulness in the atonement of Christ so that justice can be done and we

²² KJV Leviticus 18:5, "Ye shall therefore keep my statutes, and my judgments: which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the LORD."