

KJV 1 John 2:4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the **truth** is not in him.

The Just Shall Live By His Faithfulness

Habakkuk 2:4 is a summary of the Bible's teaching on salvation. First the just shall live by His faithfulness, because God provides the atonement and sanctifies us by instructing us. On the other hand, we live by our faithfulness because we choose to remain/abide in that instruction and continue to obey Him in love and faithfulness. It must be recognized that Habakkuk 2:4 is a restatement of Lev. 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" (KJV) combined with the idea that God's faithfulness is also involved in salvation. The Septuagint (LXX) was the Greek translation of the Law and Prophets that Christians used for four centuries after the resurrection of Jesus. Habakkuk 2:4 in their text read, "The just shall live by My faithfulness"; The fields were well plowed for Paul's explanation of this as the "faithfulness of Christ".

The Conclusion of the Matter

In this short book I do not have space to comment on every text that might have a bearing on this subject. It is my hope that you will understand the gospel as taught in the Scripture. First we must admit we are sinners and place our firm trust in the God who forgives our sin through the work of Christ. When this is done, God's justice against our sin is satisfied by Messiah's sacrifice. We are neither perfectly made righteous or declared righteous, but what is imputed to us is God's justice: a decree that God's legal justice against our sin is fully satisfied. Then through the process of sanctification we are made righteous by degrees until the coming of Christ when the process is brought to full completion. At that time we are declared completely righteous. Before that time, we are only declared righteous according to the degree in which we actually are made righteous as the faithfulness of Christ, his life, is taught to us and becomes part of us through obedience to his commandments in love.

The Catholics argued with the Lutheran's and Calvinists over the meaning of *justified by faith*. The Catholics said it meant *made righteous* and the Lutheran's *declared righteous*. The blind lead the blind, because

they omitted critical truths. First they omitted the sense of *justice-applied by the faithfulness* of Christ's work on the cross, and destroyed the gospel. Both camps wanted perfection now. The Catholics made the inner man perfectly righteous, and Luther and Calvin reacted and only *declared* the believer perfectly *fictitiously* righteous. But neither is the truth! Perfection has not come yet, so the Catholics are incorrect. And God does not declare sinners fictitiously righteous (Exodus 23:7), so Luther and Calvin were wrong. Paul refutes them both in one sentence:

Galatians 5:5 For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faithfulness.

What did Paul say? He saith that righteousness that comes by our faithfulness is something that must be waited for. Therefore, it is not yet perfected, and since he saith it is by faithfulness, it is clear that we are not yet declared perfectly righteous by faith! In one sentence, Paul refutes the doctrine that perfection is inwardly obtained or legally obtained by the faith. For we saith we must "wait" for the hope of righteousness by faith. And if we must wait for the righteousness by faith, then we are not yet perfectly righteous by faith!

Anyone who puts their trust in the Catholic *made righteous* or Calvin's *declared righteousness for acquittal before God* has completely missed the gospel and is still trying to be pardoned on the basis of his righteousness, or God thinking he is righteous. Paul has written:

Galatians 5:4, Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

Both the Catholic doctrine of *infused righteousness*, and the Protestant doctrine of purely *forensic righteousness* without works are fictions designed to make them righteous in the sight of God, when clearly they are not righteous. These doctrines may be errantly believed in some sense by many true Christians, however, they were motivated by the mystery of iniquity and by men who wanted an acquittal before God, rather than accepting the pardon He offers in Christ. To this day everything built on these doctrines have kept the God's people in bondage and have quenched the pouring out of God's Spirit on His people.

Yes, there are many who hold to part of the doctrine (not thinking they are acquitted), but who know the gospel, and don't acquit themselves with it. But these days, the church is all mixed up. How do we know the

difference between the truly faithfully with theological dross, and the faithful in name only with theological dross – those weeds in God's grain crop? Here is how we will know them: by their fruits. Those who persecute us for correcting this doctrine are not of God. If they think it is so central to their gospel as to persecute for it, then that is the fruit that they need it and want it for their acquittal, or for psychological relief from unrepentant sin.

The most important thing about the gospel is trusting in Jesus (Yeshua) for everything concerning your life. Knowledge is needed, but without trusting God, knowledge will get you no where. I hope you can see how doctrines such as total depravity and the imputation of Adam's guilt, and pre-mature thinking of oneself as legally righteous in God's eyes is a diversion from the simple facts of the gospel. I have briefly discussed reformed doctrines of unconditional election, limited atonement, and perseverance of the saints; these also divert us from gospel and living a repentant life. No one should substitute once saved always saved for a life of firm trust in God combined with repentance and good works. No one should think that it is impossible to fall from grace no matter what they do or believe. And no one should think that God calls only the elect. It is written that many are called and few are chosen. God offers salvation to many, but only those who are responding with repentance and trust in God will be chosen for salvation. Who will be saved and who will not be was not decreed. There are many who can be saved if the gospel is explained to them without all the extraneous doctrines piled on by the Church.

KJV Matthew 22:12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 14 For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

What is this garment? This garment is the righteousness of Christ. Those who trust in God will be putting this garment on, and Jesus' will remove the remaining spots on the final day of atonement (Lev. 16:30) to make us ready for the feast. But those who trust in some kind of mysterious inner righteous perfection (and not in God) or some legal tricks (and not in God) will find themselves without a pure wedding garment. They will find themselves short on works before a God who will demand their acquittal:

KJV Revelation 19:8 And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine **linen**, clean and white: for the fine **linen** is the **righteousness** of saints.

KJV Revelation 22:14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

The Call to Repentance and Revival

Dear reader, now that you have reached the end of this book, you may wish to pray this prayer to embrace the true gospel of salvation, or to re-affirm it if you are already in the faith. If you already believe, then add the () to the prayer. The [] are allowable alternatives. You are welcome to say both.

Dear Lord Jesus [Yeshua],

I confess that I have transgressed your laws, and have sinned against you. I am sorry and want to mend my ways. I need your help to do it. I will (keep) trust(ing) in You LORD [YHWH] to save me from my sins. I believe that you died to pay the penalty for my sin. I plead guilty before You and trust You to apply the payment you made for sin on my account. I accept your pardon [forgiveness]. I confess that you do not acquit sinners, and agree that I need your atonement to pay the penalty. I do not want to offer my own righteousness to satisfy your justice, Lord, but only your justice done for me by the death of your only Son. Nor Lord do I offer the righteousness that you will give to me to satisfy your justice against sin, not my faith, not my trust, not baptism, nor any trust in legal accounting tricks before you. I know I am a sinner in your sight, and that I will not be without sin in your sight until you return to complete the cleansing of my sin nature.

Lord, I know that I need to enter into covenant with you, and that I must cease from sins of rebellion against you. I agree that I will only get to know you by loving you and obeying your commandments, and I know that when you convict me of sin, I must not seek psychological relief in false doctrines that I can pursue sin and still belong to you. I know that assurance can only come by trusting the name of your Son Jesus [Yeshua] and obeying his commandments.

Thank you Lord for your promise of eternal life in righteousness. Remember me in Your Kingdom.

Amen.