

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

November 2000

"To all that be in Rome [or wherever you may be], beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 1:7) We have recently been printing several articles concerning the Sabbath. I wish to thank each of you who have written in to share your thoughts on this subject. Your input is very much appreciated. This month we are reprinting an article entitled "Righteousness by Faith" that appeared in the May 1998 issue of *Present Truth*. Many of you have not read this article and since it clarifies our position on salvation by faith and not by works we decided to share this with you along with the studies on the Sabbath. We pray that each article in this issue will be a blessing to you. Please see the notice about our new fax line on page 10.

Scriptures Usually Quoted to Prove the Abolition of The Sabbath, Examined

by James White

The principal portions of Scripture quoted to sustain the no-Sabbath doctrine, are all from the epistles of the Apostle Paul. It is my object to prove to the reader, that these Scriptures do not mean what they are said to mean; and that they do not present the least evidence for the abolition of the weekly Sabbath.

We will first take a view of some of the trials of the early Church, and the Apostle's labours with them in their trials. A portion of the Christian Church were converts from the circumcision, or Jews, and a portion from the uncircumcision, or Gentiles. The converts from the Jewish Church were still inclined to hold on to, and practice, many of the ceremonies and customs of the Jewish religion, in which they had been educated; while the Gentile Christians were free from these customs, as they had not been educated in them.

Peter did not see that the Gospel was for the Gentiles, until God gave him a vision upon the housetop, and sent him to preach to them at the house of Cornelius. He would not eat with the Gentiles, or keep company with them, until he was shown that God was *"no respecter of persons."* (Acts 10:1-45)

Certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren that they must be circumcised in order to be saved. *"Paul and Barnabus had no small dissention*

and disputation with them, and went up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and elders about this question." (Acts 15:2) There they were met by certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed who said *"that it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."* (Acts 15:5) After they had discussed this question, they came to the following conclusion which they wrote and sent to the brethren which were of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia.

"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well." (Acts 15:28, 29)

With these facts before the mind, turn to Paul's epistle to the Galatians, where it is said that the Apostle has

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taught the abolition of the Sabbath. The apostle says, *“O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith.”* (Galatians 3:1, 2)

It is very evident who had bewitched them. From what the Apostle says in the first and second chapters, it is clear that the Church in Galatia had been led from the truth of the Gospel by Judaizing teachers who had commanded them to be circumcised and to keep the law of Moses. Paul speaks in his second chapter, of the conference at Jerusalem with the Apostles and elders on this question, recorded in Acts 16:1-29. He then states that he withstood Peter to the face “because he was to be blamed,” for eating with the Gentile Christians in the absence of those of the circumcision and then when they were present, refusing to eat with the Gentiles. *“But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all. If thou being a Jew, livest after the manner of the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews.”* (Galatians 2:14)

I have been thus particular that the reader may clearly see, and understand the Apostle’s subject, in his epistle to the Galatians.

They had left the simplicity of faith in Jesus, and were turning back to the deeds of the law of Moses, which had been dead 25 years.

Paul speaks of circumcision, of their observing days, and months, and times, and years, and eating with the Gentiles; all of which related wholly to the ceremonial laws of Moses, and had no reference to the moral law of God, the ten commandments.

Galatians 5:4

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

This text is frequently quoted by the no-Sabbath teachers to show that those who are keeping the seventh-day Sabbath have fallen from grace. Now if we fall from grace for keeping the fourth commandment in the decalogue, do they not fall from grace for keeping the first, third, fifth, seventh, or eighth commandment in the same law? If we fall from grace by keeping the Sabbath commandment, we cannot be restored again to grace until we break it. And by the same rule those who are

keeping the third, fifth, and eighth commandments, must dishonour their parents, swear, and steal, before they can be restored by divine grace.

I leave the reader to decide as to the justness of this startling conclusion. My desire is to hold up to view, the no-Sabbath, no commandment system in its true, hideous, and crooked form, that the reader may not be devoured by it. If we fall from grace by teaching the Sabbath, then St. Paul, and all the Apostles fell from grace, by teaching the commandments.

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, (which is the first commandment with promise.)” (Ephesians 4:1, 2)

This is the first commandment of the decalogue which has a promise annexed to it, and the first on the second table of stone. There is not a man or woman in the world who believes that the Apostle fell from grace for urging upon the Ephesians the claims of the fifth commandment in the moral law.

Neither is there a man or woman who really believes that we have fallen from grace (for the sin of Sabbath-keeping as some would have it) for keeping and teaching the fourth commandment. Those who give this impression do not really believe any such thing, but they seem willing to give this wrong impression in order to hide the Sabbath truth.

Romans 14:5, 6

“One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.” (Romans 14:5, 6)

If we would understand the Apostle’s subject and argument, we must read the whole chapter.

The Christians at Rome were labouring under trials similar to those in other Churches. Some of them were holding on to the Jewish customs of eating, and feast-days, and others were opposed to these customs. Paul’s greatest trial with them was their judging one another, and making these things a test of Christian fellowship.

“Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth; for God hath received him.” (Romans 14:3) He is here teaching them a lesson of Christian forbearance in those

things which were not a test of fellowship. He would have every man fully persuaded, and established, as to his own duty in regard to eating, and feast-days; then act conscientiously before God. Such a course was acceptable to God, therefore it was wrong to judge one another.

The Apostle was "all things to all men," that "by all means" he might "save some." He even had Timotheus circumcised because of the Jews. (See Acts 16:1-3.) This Jewish custom was not to be observed by the Christian Church, still, Paul would have his fellow labourer (whose father was a Greek) circumcised, that they might better find access to the Jews.

"Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God IS SOMETHING." (1 Corinthians 7:19, See Whiting's translation.)

The keeping of the commandments of God, is nowhere spoken of in the New Testament as a thing of little importance, as circumcision, eating, and feast days are; but it is always made a test of Christian fellowship, and Eternal Salvation.

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:4) *"If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments."* (Matthew 19:17) *"For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments."* (1 John 5:3)

There is no evidence that St. Paul has reference to any of the commandments of God in his fourteenth chapter to the Romans. His subject is eating, and feast-days which some of the Church regarded, and others did not. The word eateth is mentioned in this chapter eleven times, eat three, meat four, drink twice, but the Sabbath (which the no-Sabbath teachers understand to be the subject of this chapter,) is not once mentioned. Those who have relied on this chapter as proof of the abolition of the Sabbath, have guessed at Paul's meaning, but if they will carefully examine the whole chapter, with a desire to get the truth, they will see that they have guessed wrongly. If we read only the fifth and sixth verses of this chapter, without an understanding of the Apostle's subject, we may infer that the Sabbath is meant. But an understanding of his subject, his trials, and his labour with his brethren at Rome, destroys all grounds for even an inference, that he refers to the seventh-day Sabbath.

Now let the reader bear this in mind, that Romans 14:5, 6, is one of the four or five texts which support the whole no-commandment, no Sabbath argument. I have

shown that the no-Sabbath system has no foundation in this portion of Scripture; and by the help of the Spirit of truth, I will show that it has no foundation in the Scriptures of truth.

It is time for us to be fully awake to the whole truth in relation to the Sabbath; and not be deceived by those who are making void the law of God. O, that God would wake up the "little flock," and show them all His Sabbath.

Colossians 2:14-17

These verses are also quoted to prove that the seventh-day Sabbath is abolished. *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."* (Colossians 2:14)

The handwriting of ordinances that was nailed to the cross at the crucifixion of the Messiah, was the typical, ceremonial law of Moses, which was written by the hand of Moses in a book.

The crucifixion was the dividing line between the two dispensations. *"In the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease."* (Daniel 9:27)

The first covenant, which had *"ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary,"* (Hebrews 9:1) was a shadow of the second, and better covenant. The law was the shadow, and the Gospel is the body that cast the shadow; and as all shadows reach to their body, and no farther, it is very clear that the sacrifices and oblations, new-moons, feast days, and Sabbaths of the Jewish law ceased, when the precious body and blood of the Lamb of God was sacrificed on the cross. This is what Paul calls "nailing it to his cross."

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the Sabbath-days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." (Colossians 2:16, 17)

If we compare this text with Romans 14:3-6, we shall see that both refer to the same subject. Some regarded the Jewish Sabbaths, new-moons, and feast days, after they were abolished and nailed to the cross, and others did not. Paul would not have the Colossians judged by Judaizing teachers, in respect to those things that had ceased, according to the testimony of the Prophet.

"I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new-moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts." (Hosea 2:11)

Read the entire second chapter of Colossians and you will see what Paul was referring to that had been nailed to the cross. In verse 8 Paul said, "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*" (Colossians 2:8) Certainly Paul would not refer to any of the Ten Commandments of God as "the tradition of men."

In verse 11 Paul clarified, "*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands.*" (Colossians 2:11) Here Paul reminded the Colossians that they have already been circumcised in heart and have no need of outward circumcision.

In verse 22 Paul refers to what has been nailed to the cross as "*the commandments and doctrines of men.*" (Colossians 2:22) Certainly no one would imagine that Paul was referring to any of the Ten Commandments as commandments and doctrines of men.

Now we will turn to Leviticus 23:24-38. Here are four Jewish sabbaths. One on the first day of the seventh month, one on the tenth, one on the fifteenth, and one on the twenty-third day.

"*These are the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, ... BESIDES THE SABBATHS OF THE LORD.*" (Leviticus 23:37, 38)

The Sabbaths of the Lord our God, come every seventh day; but some of the Jewish convocation sabbaths were nine days apart, others not but four days between them. Here is a clear difference made between the two kinds of sabbaths. The Sabbath of the Lord, so called by way of distinction, is not classed with the other sabbaths. The Jews were to observe their convocation sabbaths at their appointed time, "*BESIDES THE SABBATHS OF THE LORD.*"

The Sabbath of the Lord our God was instituted at the creation, before the fall, when the earth and man were holy, and Eden bloomed on earth. The convocation sabbaths of the Jews were given at Mount Sinai, more than twenty-five hundred years after, and were a portion of the handwriting of ordinances of the law of Moses, which was nailed to the cross at the death of the Messiah.

The fact that some were teaching these Jewish customs to the Christian Church, and judging them in respect to them, drew the Apostle out to write as he has to the Galatians, Romans, and Colossians, upon this subject.

Now where is the proof that the Apostle refers to the weekly Sabbath in Colossians 2:14-17? If there is any,

let it be produced. I have no fears, however, in stating that there is no good evidence to be given, to prove that he refers to the Sabbath of the Lord our God; but there are many reasons (some of which I will give) to show that he has no reference to it.

1st. That which was blotted out, and nailed to the cross, was the handwriting of ordinances given by the HAND of Moses; but the Sabbath commandment was written with the FINGER of God. Moses wrote his law in a BOOK; but God wrote his ten laws, on TABLES OF STONE. It was the HAND WRITING in the book of the covenant, that was blotted out at the death of Christ, and not that which was written on the two tables of the covenant with the finger of God. One was a faulty covenant imposed on the Jews until the time of reformation, or first advent of Jesus; the other is God's perpetual, everlasting covenant.

In order that we might be impressed with the perpetuity of the royal law, God engraved it on tables of stone. The idea of blotting out what Moses wrote in a book, is perfectly natural; but what idea can we have of blotting out what Jehovah has engraved, with his finger, on tables of stone! The Apostle has taught us that it was the HANDWRITING of ordinances that was blotted out, and nailed to the cross; therefore, he had no reference to the Sabbath law; for that, God has engraven in stones with his FINGER.

2nd. The Sabbath never was "against us;" but was made for the good of mankind in all ages. It was "made for man;" because he needed a day of rest from this world's labour, and care: he also needed the Sabbath-day to spend in the worship of God.

The Holy Sabbath never was in man's way, only as God put it in his way for him to keep; therefore he has not "taken it out of our way."

The law of Moses was imperfect. It could not "*make the comers thereunto perfect;*" (Hebrews 10:1) therefore the first covenant which was faulty, "*that was against us, which was contrary to us,*" and which was in the way, was taken out of the way, and nailed to the cross; and gave place to the new, and better covenant, of which Jesus Christ is a Priest.

God's everlasting covenant of commandments is a perfect law, by which we are to be judged; therefore God cannot give a better one to take its place. (See James 1:25; 2:8-12.)

"*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*" (Romans 7:12)

A law that is “holy,” “just,” and “good,” and “spiritual,” never is against, or contrary to man, or in his way, but it is just what his wants require; therefore the Apostle has no reference to the Sabbath, or any of the commandments in God’s holy, royal law of liberty. Which of the Ten Commandments could possibly be against us? Could it be the eighth commandment that forbids stealing? Maybe it is against the thief, but it is not against the people of God.

3rd. Paul does not speak of “the Sabbath-day” which is associated with the other nine moral laws; but the sabbath-days, which are associated with “meat,” “drink,” and “new-moons” in the ceremonial laws of Moses. Some object to this because the word days connected with sabbath is supplied by the translator. Here I will give a few lines from the pen of J. B. Cook, in his excellent “Testimony” published in 1846, which read as follows:

“Colossians 2:16, does not speak of the Sabbath; but sabbaths—called in our version incorrectly sabbath-days, (days being supplied by the translator.)”

Some may still object to the word sabbaths, as J. B. Cook has changed his views on the Sabbath.

Then we will take *Young’s Literal Translation*. He translates it *sabbaths*; and if this does not satisfy the reader; then we will take *Darby’s Translation*, or *Green’s Literal Translation*, or the *New King James Version*, all of which translate it *sabbaths*

4th. All that the Apostle has mentioned; such as new-moons, and sabbaths, were shadows, which ceased when they reached their body, at the introduction of the new covenant.

“Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.” (Colossians 2:16)

But the Sabbath of the Lord our God is not a shadow; for it is to be perpetuated to all eternity. (See Isaiah 66:22, 23)

All flesh never have worshiped God on the Sabbath since Isaiah wrote this prophecy, neither will they till the righteous are all gathered into the New Earth; then the Sabbath will be observed as long as the immortal saints, and the New Heavens and Earth remain.

Mark this. The Sabbath was instituted in Eden, before the fall, when man was holy, and the earth was holy; and will be as much in its proper place after the restitution, as it was before the fall. It is not an ordinance given to restore fallen man to God; for it was given when man could talk face to face with God and angels, in the holy garden.

All shadows cease when they reach the bodies which cast them. Follow the shadow of a tree to its body, and there the shadow ends. But the weekly Sabbath will never end; therefore it is not a shadow; but a body, as well as the other nine commandments. The ten commandments are of the same nature; and if one is a shadow, they are all shadows. How can we make swearing, stealing, and killing, shadows? This we cannot do. Neither is there a man that can show that the Sabbath is a shadow.

I know that the old tradition is imprinted deeply in many minds that the seventh-day Sabbath is a type of the seventh thousand years. But where is the Scripture to prove it? It is not to be found.

But if any choose to hold on to this tradition, let them remember that all types, or shadows reach to their bodies; and admitting that the seventh thousand years is the body, and the seventh-day Sabbath the shadow; they are driven to the irresistible conclusion, that the seventh-day Sabbath was to continue the same until the seventh millennium.

The view that the Sabbath is a type of the seventh thousand years, and that it ceased at the crucifixion, makes a blank space of more than eighteen hundred years between the body and shadow, which is not in accordance with the system of types in the Bible, or with good sense.

Finally, the fact that the early Christians were troubled by those who were teaching them that they must observe the law of Moses in order to be saved, shows what Paul’s subject was, and that he did not refer to the Sabbath; but to the shadows of Moses’ law, which began to reach their body when the new covenant was introduced by the death of the Messiah.

2 Corinthians 3:7-13

These verses are also quoted to prove the abolition of the Sabbath; but they does not prove any such thing. I think all Bible readers will admit that the Apostle is here contrasting the ministration of the Jewish covenant with the ministration of the Gospel covenant.

God’s law “written and engraven in stones” was to remain unchanged, as long as heaven and earth remain; but the MINISTRATION of it by the outward ceremonies of the law of Moses, was “done away,” or “abolished” to give place to the better ministration of the same law by the Holy Ghost. The glory of the first covenant, represented by the glory of Moses’ face, was to

pass away, and to be swallowed up by the exceeding glory of the ministration of the Spirit.

The light of the moon is glorious, but when the sun rises in all its glory the light of the moon is done away.

We may as well say there is no light, when the light of the moon is done away by the exceeding light of the sun, as to say there is no law, because the ministration of it under the first covenant is done away by the exceeding glory of the ministration of the Spirit.

Mark 16:2

“And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.” (Mark 16:2)

Editor’s Note: This section on Mark 16:2 was written by Lynnford Beachy.

Recently a man sent me a copy of an article on the Sabbath which commented on this verse and stated in part, “The word ‘week’ there in the Greek is ‘sabbatismos,’ plural (sabbaths). So, we have ‘the first day of the sabbaths.’ The word ‘first’ here is not the feminine Greek ‘mia.’ The word ‘first’ here is the Greek word ‘protos.’ You say, ‘Brother Weaver, what in the world does ‘protos’ mean?’ It means ‘prototype.’ It’s the first one of all those that are going to follow.... So Jesus Christ is inaugurating a new era.

“And at Mark 16:9, he says,... ‘the first day of the sabbaths.’ And again at Luke 24:1,... ‘upon the very first day of the sabbaths.’ And again at John 20:1, he says, ‘The first day of the week [sabbaths]...’ Over and over, in all of the Gospels, the Word of God is telling us that Jesus Christ inaugurated a new set, or different kind of sabbaths.” (A sermon by Pastor John Weaver as printed in *The Christian Jural Society News*, page 15)


First of all let me point out that the Greek word translated “first” in Mark 16:1 is not *protos* but *mia*, but it is *protos* in Mark 16:9. However, the word *protos* does not mean “prototype” as the author would have us believe. *Protos* simply means the first of anything, “first in time or place, first in any succession of things or persons.” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*) Notice how it is used in the following verse: “Now the **first** [protos] day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?” (Matthew 26:17) If we would apply Pastor Weaver’s definition here then we would have to say that this was the very first “feast of unleavened bread,” but there had been a feast of unleavened bread every year for over a thousand years. The Greek word

protos was used 104 times in the New Testament, and it was never translated “prototype.”

Furthermore, the phrase, “the first day of the sabbath” was the Jewish way of saying the first day of the week. John Gill, commenting on this subject wrote, “The first day of the week, or ‘sabbaths’; so the Jews used to call the days of the week, the first day of the sabbath, the second day of the sabbath.” (*John Gill’s Expositor*, on Matthew 28:1)

In the New Testament the Greek word σαββατον can mean either “Sabbath” or “week.” There was no other Greek word to signify “week.” Please notice how this word is used in the following verse: “I fast twice in the **week** [σαββατον], I give tithes of all that I possess.” (Luke 18:12)

John Gill commented on this verse in this way, “I fast twice in the week, &c. Not ‘on the sabbath’, as the words may be literally rendered,... for the sabbath was not a fasting, but a feasting day with the Jews; for they were obliged to eat three meals, or feasts, on a sabbath day, one in the morning, another at evening, and another at the time of the meat offering: even the poorest man in Israel, who was maintained by alms, was obliged to keep these three feasts. (Maimon. Hilch. Sabbat, c. 30. sect. 9) It was forbidden a man to fast, until the sixth hour, on a sabbath day; that is, till noon (T. Hieros. Nedarim, fol. 40. 4)... But the word is rightly rendered, ‘in the week’; the whole seven days, or week, were by the Jews commonly called the sabbath; hence, בשבת וזוהר, ‘the first of the sabbath’, and the second of the sabbath, and the third of the sabbath (Maimon. Hilch. Mechosre Caphara, c. 2. sect. 8); that is, the first, second, and third days of the week. Now the two days in the week on which they fasted were Monday and Thursday, the second and fifth days.” (*John Gill’s Expositor*, on Luke 18:12)

Those who are resting on their mistaken views of these texts, which I have examined, for the abolition of the Sabbath, are on a sandy foundation. Unless they haste to get off from it, and have their feet planted on the commandments of God, “the overflowing scourge” that is soon to “pass through,” will sweep them away in ruin. (Isaiah 28:15) 

(This article was taken from the first and second editions of a newsletter entitled “The Present Truth,” written by James White and first published in Middletown, Connecticut in July and August 1849. It has undergone minor editing for printing in this newsletter. We will be printing more of these studies in future issues and pray they will be a blessing to you. Editor)

Righteousness by Faith

by Lynnford Beachy

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” (Matthew 6:33) Jesus has told us that we should seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness. Where do we seek for God’s righteousness? *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. **For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.**”* (Romans 1:16, 17) If we are to seek first God’s righteousness, then we must search in the gospel.

Israel gave us an example that we must not follow. *“Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone.”* (Romans 9:31, 32) We can see that we are not to seek God’s righteousness by the works of the law, but by faith. *“For they [Israel] being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* (Romans 10:3)

We must examine ourselves to see if we are going about to establish our own righteousness. Our own righteousness is useless to us, and is as filthy rags. *“But we are all as an unclean thing, and all **our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* (Isaiah 64:6) All the works of the law that we have done are as filthy rags in the sight of God. Everything we do, or can do, is tainted with the sins of our past. Therefore we must have a righteousness that is above our own righteousness.

“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.” (Romans 4:2, 3) Here is a clear definition of “righteousness by faith.” Abraham’s belief in God is what was counted unto him for righteousness. It was not Abraham’s works that were counted unto him for righteousness, but his faith.

“How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision [works], or in uncircumcision [no works]? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he

received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.” (Romans 4:10, 11) Abraham was counted righteous before he had any works. His works were simply a result of the righteousness that he had by faith.

“Now to him that worketh [goes about to establish his own righteousness], the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt.” (Romans 4:4 ASV) To the man that goes about to establish his own righteousness, the reward is not considered a free gift, but something that he has earned, or a debt. *“So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.”* (Romans 9:16) The reward (which is eternal life) is not given because we are willing to do the deeds of the law or even if we *do* the deeds of the law, but because God has been merciful.

*“But to him that worketh not [does not go about to establish his own righteousness], but believeth on him that **justifieth** ¹³⁴⁴ [“to render innocent,” (Strong’s) or “to pronounce righteous” (Thayer’s)] the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.”* (Romans 4:5) We must first believe that we are ungodly; then we must believe that God can, and will, justify us. If we believe that God is ready and willing to justify us, our faith is counted for righteousness.

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” (Titus 3:5) God does not save us because we have done a certain amount of righteousness, but because He is merciful. Righteousness is a free gift and not something that we must earn. *“For if by one man’s offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of **the gift of righteousness** shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.”* (Romans 5:17) Jesus told us to *“ask and ye shall receive.”* Since righteousness is a free gift, we should ask God for that gift, and He has promised that we will receive it if we believe.

God tells us that *“there is none righteous, no not one.”* (Romans 3:10) We are not to think of ourselves as though we are righteous because of something we

have done. "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing. ..." (Romans 7:18) Nothing that comes from ourselves is good. This idea was understood by Job: "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life." (Job 9:20, 21)

Job said that even if he were perfect, he would despise his life. He would understand that no good thing came from himself. In the beginning of the book of Job God said that Job was perfect: "And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8) God considered Job perfect, yet Job says that if he were perfect he would still despise his life and not lift up his head with pride. "If I be wicked, woe unto me; and if I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head. ..." (Job 10:15)

"I can of mine own self do nothing"

Even Jesus, when He was on this earth, said, "there is none good but one, that is, God." "And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto Him, Why callest thou me good? **there is none good but one, that is, God:** but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matthew 19:16, 17) Jesus understood that if He did not have help from God, His Father, then He would have been as bad as any other man. Some say that Christ was referring to Himself as good along with His Father. If this were the case, He would have said, "There is none good but two, that is God and myself." Obviously He did not say this, and was referring to His Father only.

Jesus acknowledged that His Father was the one who was doing the good works in Him. "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works." (John 14:10) Jesus also tells us in John 5:30: "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." As it is with Christ in this area, so it is with us. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the

same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5)

The rest for the people of God

In the fourth chapter of Hebrews God shows us a rest that symbolizes righteousness by faith. "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief." (Hebrews 4:6) The Israelites did not enter into God's rest because they were trying to establish their own righteousness, and did not have faith in God. We must take heed lest we follow their example. "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Hebrews 4:11)

Paul clarified, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." (Hebrews 4:9, 10) If we truly have righteousness by faith, we will cease from our own works. We will not seek our own pleasure, but will know that whatever God wants us to do, that is the best thing we could possibly do.

Isaiah wrote concerning this rest. "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour Him, **not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words.**" (Isaiah 58:13) We know that on the seventh day of every week we are to honor God by not doing our own works or finding our own pleasure or speaking our own words. Did Jesus fulfill this verse in His life? Yes!

We already read that Christ never did his own works, but the Father did all the works in Him. He also did not speak His own words, but His Father told Him what to say. "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." (John 12:49) Neither did He find His own pleasure, but always did those things that pleased His Father. "And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for **I do always those things that please Him.**" (John 8:29) This, of course, was His delight. "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:8)

Did Jesus do these things on only one day out of the week? No! He did the will of His Father every day of

the week. Whether He was building a table while He was a carpenter, or teaching the multitudes, He never did His own ways, sought His own pleasure, or spoke His own words. Isaiah 58:13 must be lived out in our lives every day of the week. If we are doing these things, we have truly entered into His rest.

We are not to do our own ways, but rather to allow God to do His work in us. *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.”* (Philippians 2:13) Every good thing that we think we have done, or that we see in ourselves, we must acknowledge that it is God who is doing those things and not ourselves. *“That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you **in** [or “to”] Christ Jesus.”* (Philemon 6) *“LORD, thou wilt ordain peace for us: for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.”* (Isaiah 26:12) It is the Lord who is doing all the good works in us, and not us.

We are not to trust in our own righteousness, or it will prove our ruin. *“When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.”* (Ezekiel 33:13)

We must understand that God’s righteousness does not come to us by the law. *“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for **if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.**”* (Galatians 3:21) Paul makes a very good point in Galatians 2:21. *“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for **if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**”* If we could have become righteous by doing the deeds of the law, there would have been no need for Christ to humble Himself and die for us. Surely Christ would not have died for nothing.

I pray that we would all *“be found in Him, not having mine [our] own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”* (Philippians 3:9)

Faith without works is dead

In the book of James we find these interesting words: *“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I*

*will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that **faith without works is dead?**”* (James 2:18-20) The works that a man has are simply a result of the righteousness that he has by faith. Faith without works is dead because if a man has faith, then works will be a natural result, and a sign that he has faith. If there are no works, it is evident that there is no faith, because faith works. *“For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but **faith which worketh by love.**”* (Galatians 5:6)

It is not the works (a result of faith) that save a man, but faith is what is counted for righteousness. Look at what Paul tells a man that was in need of the way of salvation. A jailer was just about to kill himself for fear of what would become of him, when Paul yelled out to him. The jailer ran in *“And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.**”* (Acts 16:30, 31) Paul didn’t give him a long list of what to do and

what not to do, but he merely said, *“Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved.”* Paul understood that believing on the Lord Jesus is what saves a poor sinner like you and me. The works will naturally come as a result of that belief, but those works cannot and will not save anyone.

The thief on the cross was not saved by any works that he had done, but by believing on the Lord Jesus. May the Lord help us all to better understand this vital issue, because if we are found in our own garments (our own righteousness), we will be cast out as was the man at the wedding feast. *“And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. 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.”* (Matthew 22:11-13) *“Hast thou faith? ...”* (Romans 14:22)

If we could have become righteous by doing the deeds of the law, there would have been no need for Christ to humble Himself and die for us.

If there are no works, it is evident that there is no faith, because faith works.

The Big Rocks in Your Life

A while back I was reading about an expert on the subject of time management. One day this expert was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration those students will never forget. As this man stood in front of the group of high-powered over achievers he said, "Okay, time for a quiz."

Then he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouthed mason jar and set it on a table in front of him. Then he produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar. When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is this jar full?" Everyone in the class said, "Yes."

Then he said, "Really?" He reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. Then he dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces of gravel to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks.

Then he asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?"

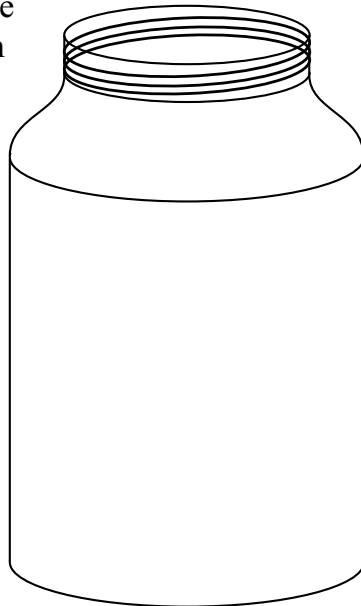
By this time the class was onto him. "Probably not," one of them answered.

"Good!" he replied.

He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping the sand in and it went into all the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?"

"No!" the class shouted.

Once again he said, "Good!" Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked up at the



class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?"

One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you try really hard, you can always fit some more things into it!"

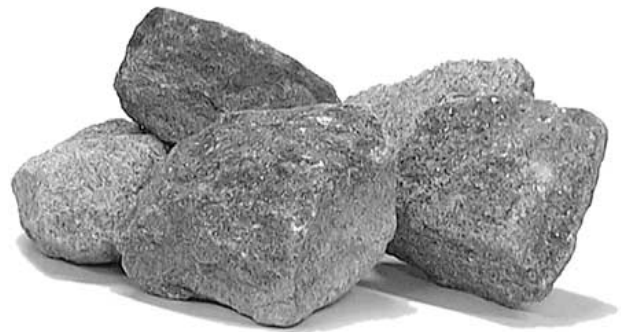
"No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point. The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all."

What are the "big rocks" in your life?

If we accept the counsel of Jesus the biggest "rock" must be seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Jesus said, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" (Matthew 6:33)

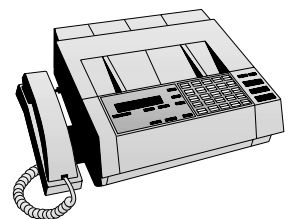
Remember to put this BIG ROCK in first or you'll never get it in at all. Tonight or tomorrow morning when you get up remember to spend time seeking God in prayer and the study of His Word. Put this big rock in first or it will never get in at all.

Selected



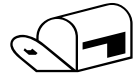
New Fax Line Installed

We have recently acquired a second line to receive faxes. The number is (304) 732-7322. This line will be available as a fax line only. If you would like to speak with anyone please call (304) 732-9204. Thank you.

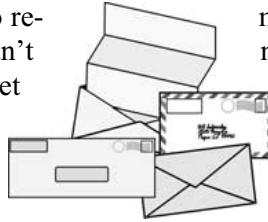




Letters from our Readers



“I’m happy the Lord brought you into my life. After reading your letters life is different. When I got the last letter I couldn’t leave it till I read it, all of it. I believe we live in the end time of this world and darkness (spiritual) is coming all over, also in the church. The Lord calls for people like you to keep awakening God’s people or to awake them to reality. Your letters are calling to repentance and for a closer walk with God. I didn’t know about you from the beginning so I didn’t get the other studies before May 1999. Therefore please send me the following:... These simple studies are so full of information, you need to read once again in order to digest everything. I pray Jesus to give you power to go and help as many as possible get ready to meet Jesus and face the crisis ahead of us. May God be with you! Keep the faith till the end!” *Finland*



“I would very much like to receive your Present Truth publication. Thank you.” *Washington*

“I am just elated with my new understanding concerning the relationship between God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ. I can’t begin to explain the feeling I have concerning this. In the past, the Father has always been, to me, distant, always in the background, never been too involved in my redemption, even though, I have known, read, memorized John 3:16. The Father did not give us an angel or an acquaintance, as you said in your e-mail, to die for our sins, but He gave us His Only Begotten Son, something that’s a part of Him. The Father has given to us Heaven’s costliest Gift when He gave us His Son.

“This concept is more endearing than anything that I have ever known. Thinking of my own relationship with my son—I love him so dearly, I want to give him the best that life has to offer—I would do anything to protect him from harm and danger. When he was small, oh, I had the mother-bear instinct when other children try to hurt him. I was there to protect him, to love him, to soothe him when hurt. I love other children, but in a different way. There’s something different and special about loving your own child.

“I think of the two mothers during King Solomon’s time—Who was the real mother? Oh, what love she had for her baby that she would give him up in order to spare his life. Enoch’s love for his child caused his love for God to deepen even further. He walked and talked with God until he was no more for God took him. I also think of the emotions that must have gone through the mind and heart of Abraham as he prepared to offer Isaac for a sacrifice unto God. Perhaps Abraham’s story was recorded for us so that we can catch a glimpse of what God went through in offering up His Only Begotten Son.

“...I try to imagine in my mind the scene that transpired between Jesus and His Father back in the days of eternity when Jesus offered to die in behalf of man—the emotions that must have come to play with both of them realizing the risks that were involved—that Jesus could have sinned and, therefore, be eternally separated from the Father. It must have been a heart-breaking event. With this new understanding, Gethsemane now takes on a different and special meaning. I tell you, we cannot begin to fathom all that was involved for our redemption, can we? When we contemplate all this, it gives us a deeper love for God and a desire to hate and put away SIN from our lives. That’s what it’s all about, isn’t it?

“Last Sabbath at church, we talked about how we are to be so established in our beliefs that nothing can move us. We talked about how the truths that we hold as a denomination would be picked apart by the greatest of minds out there. Unless we are thoroughly grounded in the Word of God, did our research, etc. we risk the chance of coming up wanting—not really knowing what we believe in....

“I want our little group here in Jacksonville to KNOW what we believe in and be ready to give an answer for our faith. I gave an assignment at Prayer Meeting on how to harmonize our church’s beliefs of the trinity and the relationship of the Father and Jesus His Son with the various points that you presented in your e-mails to me. I know that after they have researched it out, contemplated/meditated on it, asking the Holy Spirit to help them, they would come up on their own with the inevitable conclusion that we, as a church, have believed wrongly regarding these two very important points of doctrine. I appreciate the information you have shared with me, and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. My prayer is that we will all continue to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, whom to know is LIFE ETERNAL. May God bless you richly.” *Florida*

“Last time I received letter from a brother in Zambia He wants me to send him many papers and brochures to his door to door ministry. I sent to him some but not too much. I ask you please send to him some papers with *Present Truth*.” *Poland*

“I want to thank you for the subscriptions you have sent me. Please keep up the good work. I’ve learned so much. I’m sending a donation to help out the ministry.” *California*

“I would like to say thank you very much for the pamphlets, back issues of *Present Truth*, ‘A Time to Choose,’ and the books you sent me. They are very informative. Thank you for showing me the truth through your literature.

Present Truth

The information on the trinity is very well appreciated. I never believed in the trinity but I recently found out that my father does and he doesn't understand why I don't. It's kind of hard for me to explain my reasons why I don't. The June 2000 issue of *Present Truth* I feel explains it pretty good. If it is possible, could you please send my father an issue of the June 2000 *Present Truth*. Thank you very much." *Ohio*

"Except for one person (she was out of town visiting with the brethren in Orlando this past Sabbath) all in our group concurred with the correct teaching of the Holy Spirit and the relationship of God, the Father, and Jesus, His Son. They felt the same way I did—that it makes perfect sense and that it totally changes the way we view our Heavenly Father. Our next move is to present this 'new' understanding to our brethren at Headquarters. They should be open about things like these, and they should prayerfully investigate, research, study for themselves and come up with a decision regarding the stand that the church should take." *Florida*

"My name is _____. I'm an inmate at _____. Another inmate has just recently let me borrow a couple of your *Present Truth* newsletters. I just read the July 2000 issue and it has a list of back issues. If it is possible could you send me all the back issues and current issues. He also told me to ask for the pamphlets on Hell, God, Satan's lies, etc., 'A Time to Choose,' the mini books 'America in Prophecy'

and 'Shelter in the Storm' by E.G. White. Thank you very much for your time." *Ohio*

"Thank you for the information about your Sabbath beliefs. I will mention a few thoughts that you might consider about this controversial subject. You refer to Jesus' statement, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.' You apparently have not yet noticed that, 'Love is the fulfilling of the law.' Jesus fulfilled the law." *Missouri*

(It is true that Jesus fulfilled the law by keeping it perfectly, yet if this application of the text means that the law is done away with, then it would not be possible for a man to sin because "*sin is the transgression of the law.*" (1 John 3:4) "*Where no law is, there is no transgression.*" (Romans 4:15) If there is no sin, then there is no need for a Saviour from sin and all will be saved. Obviously, it was not the mission of Christ to do away with the law. *Editor*)

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