

28 Conclusion: Jesus' Salvation Doctrine

Jesus' Gospel of Salvation

Jesus on Repentance

Jesus said you can go to heaven-maimed or hell-whole. (Mark 9:42-47.)¹ You can repent from sin, turning in abhorrence from it, or you will perish. (Luke 13:2-5.)²

Atonement: Unconditional or Conditional Covering?

You will ask: 'Can I at least depend on Christ's atonement covering me if I *believe* I am a sinner and the blood of Christ washes me?'

Jesus says *emphatically no!* Atonement is not magic. Salvation is not by verbal incantations.

Jesus taught instead you can appropriate atonement only if you first obtain reconciliation with the ones you have offended. (Matt 5:22-26.)³

Jesus' Doctrine on Justification

You are only right with God — "justified" — when you have repented from sin and are walking in full obedience, rather than walking shallowly due to ignorance of God's principles, like the Pharisees walked. Jesus said this in the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

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1. For extensive discussion, see page 45 *et seq.*
 2. For extensive discussion, see page 105 *et seq.*
 3. For full discussion, see page 1 *et seq.*

First, Jesus said it was the repentant publican who went home “justified.”



Jesus

Why did the Pharisee go home unjustified? The Pharisee was only able to tout his obedience to one written command — tithing (the lesser part of the Law) and to one command of the (unauthorized) oral law on fasting. (Luke 18:9-14.) Jesus previously faulted the Pharisees for (a) obeying only tithing from the Law, neglecting the more weighty matters of the Law (Matt. 23:23) and (b) following the oral law to the neglect of the written law. (Matt. 15:6.) The Pharisee in the parable was proud of keeping to just these two shallow and law-negating principles. Jesus means that justification is not maintained by an insufficient shallow obedience. This is why the Pharisee goes home unjustified. The Pharisee was being destroyed by his shallow *belief* in what laws applied to himself. This was precisely what God said destroyed the people in Hosea 4:6. God said in Hosea that because the religious leaders were no longer teaching the full Law, the people were being destroyed. This is the same reason why the Pharisee went home unjustified.⁴

Thus, only when your “righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees can you enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:20.) Hence, only when you keep bearing fruit (obeying) does God keep cleansing you by means of atonement. (John 15:2.) Only as you “keep walking in the light” does the “blood of Jesus keep you clean.” (1 John 1:7.)⁵

Jesus' Doctrine On Rebirth By Repentance

In fact, it is only by repentance from sin and turning back to your father that you go from being “dead and lost” to being “alive again.” (Parable of the Prodigal Son. Luke

4. For full discussion, see page 27 *et seq.*

5. For full discussion, see page 14 *et seq.*

15:17-24, *viz.* verse 24.)⁶ Repentance from sin is thus the condition for the synonymous expression that “to enter heaven” one must be “born again.” (John 3:3.)

Jesus' Doctrine on Works

Jesus said if you do not have “good fruit,” you are going to be cut down and thrown in the “fire.” (Matt. 7:19.)⁷ A branch “in me” without “fruit” is “taken away,” thrown “outside” to be “burned.” (John 15:1-6.)⁸

What kind of good fruit is required? One example Jesus clearly taught is that if you do not have charity for others, you go to “eternal fire,” but if you are charitable, you are resurrected to “eternal life.” (Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. Matthew 25:30-46.)⁹ Hence, faith avails nothing salvation-wise if you lack charity.

It was just as Jesus elsewhere said: those who do “good things” resurrect to eternal life, but those who do “evil things” go to eternal damnation. (John 5:28-29.)¹⁰

Jesus' Doctrine Of Perseverance And Completed Works

Then if you “have *endured* to the end, you shall be saved.” (Matt. 10:22.)¹¹ The only seed in the Parable of the Sower which was saved was the fourth which “kept on producing fruit with *endurance* to” completion.¹² Its endurance was in producing fruit, or synonymously, *works*.

6. For full discussion, see page 267 *et seq.*

7. For extensive discussion, see page 329 *et seq.*

8. For extensive discussion, see page 343 *et seq.*

9. For extensive discussion, see page 219 *et seq.*

10. For extensive discussion, see page 395 *et seq.*

11. For full discussion, see page 81 *et seq.*

12. For full discussion, see page 311 *et seq.*

If instead Jesus finds your “works are incomplete” (Rev. 3:1-3), then Jesus says you are spiritually dead and the Spirit is about to depart from you. (Jesus means faith without works is dead, just like His brother James said in James 2:14-17.) Jesus warns ‘repent, obey, and do your first works.’¹³

As to those whose works are “lukewarm,” because they are rich and say “I need nothing,” Jesus warns He will “spew you out of my mouth.” (Rev 3:15-18.)¹⁴ Those with lukewarm works are precisely like the third seed in the Parable of the Sower. The third seed was choked by riches. That seed had substantially more growth than the second seed which had “believed for a while” but in “time of temptation” had fallen and died. (Luke 8:13.) Hence, even though the third seed progressed much farther than the *believing* second seed, the third seed was choked later by “riches and the pleasures of this life.” It thus did not produce any mature fruit. The third seed therefore too withered and died.¹⁵ Consequently, the third seed is identical to the Christian in Revelation chapter three with lukewarm works. Jesus will “spew” that seed out of His mouth. The third seed will then die. It is lost.

The same goes for the seed which “*believes/obeys* for a while” (Luke 8:13) but produces nothing. Such a seed in the Parable of the Sower is just like the servant in the Parable of the Unprofitable Servant “who produces nothing” on the talent given him. Such an useless servant of the Lord in the parable is sent to a place of “outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.”¹⁶ In other words, the unproductive “*believing*” second seed is identical to the unproduc-

13. For full discussion, see page 401 *et seq.*

14. For full discussion, see page 403 *et seq.*

15. For full discussion, see page 311 *et seq.* The translation of *pisteuo* is arguably better as “obeyed/trusted for a while.”

16. For full discussion, see page 277 *et seq.*

tive servant of the Lord who has no good works and as a consequence is sent to hell. Jesus says this “believing” seed withers and dies due to temptation. (Luke 8:13.)

Accept the Costs Up Front to Jesus' Way of Salvation

Therefore, the Way of Salvation is clear. However, Jesus sternly warns not to embark on the path of obedience to His commands unless you already have calculated the costs of what it will take to reach the finish. Otherwise, if you do not know in advance what you need to sacrifice — all your sinful pleasures — you will be re-snatched by your enemy the devil. You will be vanquished. (Parable of Counting the Cost. Luke 14:27-35.)¹⁷

Yet, if you do suffer all the costs which the kingdom requires of you, Jesus promises you eternal life. It is a *costly* grace, for Jesus says: “And every one that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and **shall inherit eternal life.**” (Matthew 19:29.)

The Final Reward And Pleasure Of Friendship With Jesus

Your final reward of obedience is that all who obeyed Jesus' commandments “shall have the right” to eternal life and entry into heaven.

Happy [are] the ones **doing His commandments**, so that their **right** will be **to the tree of life**, and they **shall enter** by the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14)(ALT)¹⁸

If you were obedient, you also will be friends of Jesus:

17.For full discussion, see page 291 *et seq.*

18.For full discussion, see page 373 *et seq.*

Ye are my friends, if ye **do whatsoever I command [entellomai] you.** (John 15:14 KJV.)

Jesus' Doctrine on Obedience (Effect of Sin)

What kind of evil things lead to damnation?

Jesus said if His servant does an evil thing like “fail to forgive” as did the Unmerciful Servant, God will treat you precisely like the master treated that servant in the parable. That means, once God has already forgiven you, if you then do not forgive others, God will revoke your forgiveness. He will then send you to Hell and punish you in torment, making you pay forever the previously forgiven debt of your sins.

(Matthew 18:23-35.)¹⁹

Another example is what happens if you are His servant but do an evil thing like starting to “beat” your fellow servants and “eat and drink with the drunken.” Jesus says your prior service as a good servant is forgotten. Instead you will be sent “outside in darkness” to “suffer weeping and gnashing of teeth” with “unbelievers/the disobedient.” (Luke 12:41-48; Matthew 24:44-50.)²⁰ *Beating* can include any kind of *unjustified* physical or emotional abuse.

Jesus' Doctrine Of Obedience To The Law Given Moses

What must one do then to obtain eternal life? When asked that same question, Jesus said “to enter life obey the commandments,” and He rattled off nine of the Ten Commandments which I AM spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai.

(Matthew 19:16-26; Mark 10:17-31; Luke 18:18-26.)²¹

This is obviously why Jesus says those who teach you to obey the Law are the “greatest in the kingdom of heaven” but those who teach you not to follow the Law are “least in

19.For extensive discussion, see page 245 *et seq.*

20.For extensive discussion, see page 55 *et seq.*

21.For full discussion, see page 123 *et seq.*

the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:19.) You are the greatest for teaching obedience to the Law because Jesus told the young rich man this is the path of salvation. Likewise, you are the least if you deny the necessity to obey the Law because you seduce people from the path of salvation.

Clarke begrudgingly admits, as it goes against modern doctrine, that Jesus means the anti-legalist will be damned. Clarke says Jesus means by “least in the kingdom” that those who teach against keeping the Law are damning themselves thereby. It does not mean they still go to heaven but in last place. “Least in the kingdom” means they are the lost as viewed by those inside the kingdom — observers in heaven looking out at them. Clarke says this is clear from Jesus’ remarks in the very next verse: Matthew 5:20.²²

In that verse, Jesus says the Pharisees, whom Jesus repeatedly describes as anti-legalists, cannot “enter the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus explains precisely why — their lessons about the Law are shallow. The people must “exceed the righteousness of the Pharisees” to enter heaven. (Matt. 5:20.)

Jesus’ Doctrine On Salvation-Ending Heresy Of Anti-Legalism

What does Matthew 5:20 mean?

As the Protestant classic text, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (1985) at 574 says of this verse, Jesus means “those who erode the Law while supposedly protecting it will **not even enter** the kingdom.”

Jesus reiterates this elsewhere in Matthew 23:23. Alexander Bruce admits this verse means the Pharisees “care more for the little than the great commandments [Matt.23:23], [which] has no moral worth and [they are thus] **not in the kingdom at all.**”²³

Therefore, Jesus is threatening all **anti-legalists** with damnation — all who proclaim the Law is of no effect are lost. Jesus is merely repeating Isaiah 50:10-11 when the coming Messiah-Servant attacks self-righteousness — a righteousness conforming to one’s own ideas of right-and-wrong

rather than the Laws given by God. “Who among you fears the Lord and obeys His servant [Messiah]?... Watch out, you who walk in *your own light* and warm yourselves by *your own fires*. This is the reward you will receive from me [Messiah]: You will soon lie down in great torment.” (Isaiah 50:10-11 NLT.)

This no doubt is what Tyndale realized in 1530. This is why Tyndale became such an avowed legalist. (See page v *et seq.* of Preface.) Yet, today we have ignored Tyndale. We also ignored the mature Luther. He was under the obvious influence of Tyndale. In 1537, Luther strongly changed his doctrine on the Law given Moses. Luther became just as

22. See page 151. This is even more clear when one compares two of Jesus' threats of an aggravated warning of the darkest *level* of damnation. First, Jesus says one will suffer the “millstone around the neck and be thrown in the sea” in Mark 9:42 — deepest damnation — for the person “causing who one believes in me to be ensnared.” (Mark 9:42.) Second and lastly, Jesus speaks similarly in Matthew 5:19. He says those who “teach others” to violate the Law given Moses (hence ensnaring them in sin) will suffer a punishment of being “least in the kingdom of heaven.” Hence, both the one who suffers the “millstone” and the one who is “least in the kingdom” are those who SEDUCE “believers” from following the Law, causing them to fall into sin. Hence, those deemed “least” share the same quality of wrongdoing as those suffering the “millstone” in Mark 9:42. Therefore, clearly ‘least in the kingdom’ signifies a lost condition — even the meaning of darkest damnation. Then what does “least in the kingdom” mean? It means one is ‘least’ viewed by someone inside heaven — the furthest possible distance from heaven. James Blair, a famous theologian, in 1722 gave an insightful discourse which recognized this aspect to 5:19. He said: “The expression of *least in the kingdom* [must] signify to be **totally excluded** from it.” For Jesus is warning about the “corruption of others,” which Jesus puts (elsewhere) in a “higher pitch of wickedness than only transgressing ourselves.” (Note: Mark 9:42-47.) Then of course, in 5:19, there is the “second aggravation” of “doing ill things ourselves.” Such disobedience is “countermining our Blessed Savior.” Consequently, “least in the kingdom” must mean “in the day of Judgment [they shall be] accounted the **very worst** of all those who have given up their Names to Christ, and profess Christianity.” James Blair, *Our Savior's Divine Sermon on the Mount* (5 vols.) (London: 1722) quoted in Edward L. Bond, *Spreading the Gospel in Colonial Virginia: Sermons and Devotional Writings* (Lexington: 2004) at 193-196.

much of an avowed legalist as Tyndale with the publication of Luther's *Antinomian Theses*. (See Preface, page xiv.) We are upside down doctrinally today. The very doctrine Jesus condemned — anti-legalism — is now standard doctrine. Its opposing force — the Law's validity — is considered heresy in most evangelical circles. Nothing Tyndale nor Luther realized to correct this error is ever repeated today. Nothing from what Jesus ever said on the Mosaic Law's continuity and the necessity to teach it to be "greatest" in the kingdom — which obviously persuaded Tyndale and Luther — is ever repeated.

How Prophecies Of Messiah Condemn Modern Anti-Legalism

However, when we turn to Jeremiah's and Isaiah's prophecy of Messiah, it is *crucial* to recognize Jesus was a legalist. If it were any other way, Jesus would have been a false Messiah! Jesus had to proclaim the Law as still abiding, never abrogated, and applicable in the New Testament, to fulfill an essential criteria of *who* is the prophesied Messiah in the New Testament. Anything less — any derogation of the Law by Jesus — and Jesus would have been a false Messiah.

23. Alexander Bruce, *The Kingdom of God: Or, Christ's Teaching According to the Synoptical Gospels* (Scribner's 1897) at 66. Ironically, then Bruce defends the position he just said caused the Pharisees to not enter the kingdom "at all." Bruce claims that once Jesus fulfilled the Law of sacrifice that Jesus thereby "inaugurates a new time" that does not "formally" abrogate the Law, but allows it to "fall eventually into desuetude [disuse]," making Jesus the one of "greatest" worth. Thus, Jesus' fulfilling (the law of sacrifice) "may at the same time be more or less an undoing" of the entire Law. (*Id.*, at 67.) Accordingly, Bruce admits Jesus is saying anti-legalism is a damning heresy before the Cross. However, after the Cross, Bruce wants us to accept anti-legalism is saving doctrine; in fact, Bruce is saying it is necessary to adopt anti-legalism to make Jesus the one of "greatest" worth. Yet, wouldn't giving Jesus' the greatest glory be by treating His teaching on the Law's continuity as above anyone else's lesson on the Law?

Prophecies Of Messiah Require Him To Reinvigorate The Law

Upholding the Law given Moses²⁴ versus anti-legalism is God's litmus test for a true prophet. God says any would-be prophet with "signs and wonders that come to pass" who nevertheless "tries to seduce you from the way commanded you" in Torah (the Law given Moses) is a "false prophet." (Deut. 13:1-5.) Any would-be prophet, if his words "contradict" the commands in the Law or the Ten Commandments, "is in complete darkness." (Isaiah 8:20 YLT & NLT.)

Thus, the Torah (Law given Moses) is the mechanism God chose long ago to allow us to verify whether the source of new messages was from God or the devil.

What about Messiah?

Isaiah prophesied that the suffering servant (Messiah) "should increase [God's] Torah [Law] and glorify it." (Isaiah 42:21 DSSB.) Thereby, God's people will be those "who know righteousness and have my Law (torah) *in their hearts*." (Isaiah 51:7 DSSB.) It will be the job of Messiah in the New Covenant to "inscribe the Law [given Moses] on our hearts." (Jeremiah 31:31.)²⁵

"To the Law and the Testimony! [i.e., the Ten Commandments, Ex. 31:8]. If they contradict them, they are completely in the dark." Is. 8:20 YLT & NLT

24. Under the Law given Moses, God said obedience to the Law was the means by which God reckoned us as "righteous." (Deut. 6:25; see pages 33-35 *supra*.) Typically, this principle that one is justified by obeying the Law is frequently condemned today as heretical *legalism*.

25. Jeremiah 31:31-34 (ASV) reads: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah [*i.e.* Yahweh], that I will make a *new covenant* with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:... This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: *I will put my Law [Torah] in their inward parts*, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah [*i.e.*, Yahweh]; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."

The placing of the Law on our hearts in the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31 merely would fulfill God's command in the Law itself. For the Law given Moses commanded that the Law be placed "in your hearts." (Deut. 6:6-7; 10:12 and 30:6.)

Since the New Covenant simply fulfills this Old Covenant command, can it possibly be true that the principles, ordinances, and commands of the Law were to be abandoned in the New Covenant? Obviously not. Only a mind corrupted to reject God's Prophets could even suggest that idea. Rather, Jeremiah's prophecy meant the exact opposite. Messiah would put the Law in a place (the heart) where the individual would appreciate it more intimately by virtue of knowing it more *correctly* than ever before — a place "less vulnerable to violation."²⁶ In doing so, Jesus would be basing the New Covenant upon placing *correctly* the Law on our hearts, as commanded in Deut. 6:6-7; 10:12 and 30:6.

Hence, this better and more intimate proximity of the Law to our hearts would be thanks to Messiah. Through his glorifying and extolling obedience to the Law (Isaiah 42:21), the people who are listening to Him would finally fulfill the Law's command to place the Law on their "heart." (Deut. 6:6-7; 10:12 and 30:6.)

In other words, what God is saying about the New Covenant is the same in Isaiah as in Jeremiah. The New Covenant being put "on our hearts" (Jeremiah 31:31) is not something radically different from the Mosaic Law's commands of where to place the Law. By the New Covenant inscribing the Law on our hearts, it would simply fulfill the command in the Law itself to place the Law on our hearts. (Deut. 6:6-7; 10:12 and 30:6.) Messiah would personally make the prophecy of a New Covenant finally come to pass by "increasing" knowledge of the Law and "glorifying it." (Isaiah 42:21)

26. Jacob Neusner, William Scott Green, Alan Jeffery Avery-Peck, *Judaism from Moses to Muhammad: An Interpretation: Turning Points and Focal Points* (Brill, 2005) at 58.

Another New Covenant Passage in Isaiah.

Then in Isaiah, God gives us one more prophecy of Messiah's role in a New Covenant. This re-emphasizes the same point about the continuity of the Mosaic Law. Messiah will bring the people into closer obedience to the Law by ingraining its principles into his *true* followers. This makes God's point bluntly clear for all those hesitating to understand anti-legalism is the rankest heresy in a Messianic age:

(21) And as for Me, *this is my* [new] *covenant* with them [*i.e.*, the "ones who turn from transgression" v. 20] says the Lord: my spirit that is upon you and *the words that I have put in your mouth* will not depart from your mouth, or from the mouths of your children, or from the mouths of your children's children, from now on and forever. (Isaiah 59, Dead Sea Scrolls Bible.)

Hence, the "words that I have put in your mouth" are the commands delivered by Messiah. This is implied because of the preceding verse. As Henry notes: "This covenant is here said to be made with them, that is, with *those that turn from transgression*; for those that cease to do evil shall be taught to do well." Therefore, the beneficiaries of this New Covenant are the contrite about sin and obedient to God. All others are excluded. This implies the *words in your mouth* delivered as part of the New Covenant are the messages that preach these repentance-and-obedience *conditions* of salvation.

Jesus's words are precisely the kind of words that fulfill Isaiah 59:20-21. Jesus' message fits the prophetic message of a New Covenant which Isaiah necessarily implied had to be based upon turning



Isaiah scroll at Qumran

from sin. Jesus perfectly delivered the commands to be contrite and righteous — "repent or perish" and "heaven-maimed or hell-whole." Only if these commands are followed will we

be engaged in the “turning from transgression” which Isaiah 59:20-21 clearly stated was the prerequisite to be a member of the New Covenant.

The same passage in Isaiah then says these words God gives us (through Messiah) will remain forever on the hearts of *true* followers of Messiah. As Henry notes what Isaiah 59:21 means: “The word of Christ shall *always continue* in the mouths of the faithful.” Thus, Jesus’ salvation doctrine can never be replaced by another doctrine of salvation.

But are these words from Jesus on our hearts intended to cause neglect of the Law God gave Moses? Would a Christian’s obedience to the Law given Moses ever conceivably be regarded by God as cutting ourselves off from Christ, which we are often told is true? Such a notion is impossible. For the “word of Christ” which “always continues” in the heart of the faithful includes this: Jesus taught the greatness of those who uphold the Law which God gave Moses. (Matt. 5:19.) ***Jesus therefore says God has the highest esteem for those who teach what is derogatorily today called legalism.*** Jesus teaches that God’s Law given Moses continues in the New Covenant. Jesus then gave the sternest warning of damnation on those who teach against the Law’s continuity in the New Covenant. Jesus said the latter are the “least in the kingdom of heaven” — meaning the furthest possible distance from those inside the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:19.) Jesus meant anti-legalists are damned, as Clarke conceded.²⁷

Meaning of the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31

Thus, if the New Covenant does not mean to abolish the *principles* of the earlier covenant with Moses, what does *new* mean? It turns out that the Hebrew word translated *new* in the phrase *New Covenant* in Jeremiah 31:31 is inapt. It has been twisted by some to imply the old was worthless and going to be abrogated. This interpretation of *new* violates the

27. See page 555 *et seq.*

intended meaning in Jeremiah. Thus, as Dr. Kaiser points out, the Hebrew expression more appropriately and permissibly should be translated in Jeremiah 31:31 as a *renewed* or *restored* covenant rather than a *new covenant*. Dr. Kaiser says this clearly fits the context, which repeatedly emphasizes the continuity of prior principles and relations. Dr. Kaiser says such a revision in translation would prevent the contextually impossible idea that *new* means to abrogate all Mosaic legal principles that came before.²⁸

This *renewal* understanding also matches precisely how God in Isaiah and Ezekiel describes the nature of the *new covenant*. In Isaiah 54, the new covenant clearly means a re-union to an abandoned wife-Israel — a renewal of God's covenant relationship with Israel. God in anger previously expressed His intent to abandon Israel. (See Isaiah 50:1; Hosea 2:4,9; Ezekiel 16:35-40.) However, now in the new covenant, the "Holy one of Israel...Adonai has called you back *like a wife abandoned*... 'A *wife married in her youth cannot be rejected*,' says your God.'" (Isaiah 54:6 CJB.) God intends to "woo her [Israel]... I will speak to her heart." (Hosea 2:16.) "Briefly I abandoned you, but with great compassion I am taking you back." (Isaiah 54:7 CJB.) "***I am taking you back.***" (Isaiah 54:8 CJB.) Just like the promise after "Noah's flood," God says "I swear [to Israel] that... ***my [new] covenant*** of peace will not be removed." (Isaiah 54:9-10.) "Instead of being told 'You are not my people,' it will be said to them, 'You are the children of the living God.'" (Hosea 2:1.) "I will satisfy my fury against you, but after that...I will calm down and no longer be angry." (Ezek. 16:42.) This is a new covenant which God promises to the nation Israel and to no other. It is a ***renewed*** covenant relationship.²⁹ "I will not do as you have done — you treated the oath with contempt by

28. Dr. Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., in *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Zondervan: 1991) at 234 explains: "Thus the word 'new' in this context [of Jeremiah 31:31-34] would mean the 'renewed' or 'restored' covenant...." For more on Dr. Kaiser's analysis, see footnote 31 *infra*.

breaking the covenant. Nevertheless, I will **remember** the **covenant** I made with you when you were a girl, and will establish an **everlasting [new] covenant** with you....I will **re-establish my [old] covenant** with you.” (Ezek. 16:59-62 CJB.)(Bracketed text added for clarity.)

Now we can understand why Tyndale, as he worked over the translation, came to realize that the “Old and New” make “one gospel.”³⁰

Consequently, the stress in Jeremiah’s phrase “inscribe the Law on our hearts” is a promise that Messiah will *continue* the Covenant at Sinai. This covenant was based upon the Law given Israel. However, the Messiah will woo Israel by clarifying the Law, thus bringing it glory. Hence, the new covenant is a renewal of that original covenant at Sinai with Israel. This is why Messiah will put the Law from the first covenant on the heart in a new covenant. By doing so, He will put the Law in a place the Law commanded it should anyway reside. In our “heart,” the Law is more apt to be followed and obeyed. The true Messiah could never be one whose mission would be to abrogate the Law given Moses from the first covenant. Messiah can never be one to seduce anyone not to follow the Law. Thus, these prophecies in Jeremiah and Isaiah are crucial to assess the validity of any would-be Messiah — even to determine whether Jesus was Messiah.³¹

Jesus Vindicated As Messiah Due To His Position On The Law

Accordingly, we could never follow Jesus if He ever seduces us from following the Law. Yet, we can see Jesus did preach and teach obedience to the Law given Moses. The fault of thinking Jesus taught otherwise does not belong to

29. Compare most Christian doctrine is that God has divorced Israel to marry the “Church” of Christ. Such a teaching violates prophecy.

30. William Tyndale, *Tyndale’s Old Testament* (Ed. David Daniell) (Yale University Press, 1992) at xxiii (describing Tyndale’s doctrine).

Jesus. It is our fault for ignoring these passages, and highlighting only those from Paul which speak differently than Jesus' lessons on the Law. (See 2 Cor. 3:11-17.) Both Tyndale and Luther realized this, and grew up.³² They wisely chose Jesus over Paul. There is no other choice. The conflict on the Law between Jesus and Paul has no other resolution. You must pick one over the other. Take the avenue that Tyndale and the mature Luther picked. Jesus is King. Paul is not.

Therefore, it is essential to crack the books open on God's Law applicable to Gentiles. Fortunately, the Law applicable to Gentiles is a relatively short list of commands.³³ We do not have to obey commands applicable only to Jewish believers, as James' astute ruling in Acts 15 proves. This is because if we teach Israel-specific commands as binding on Gentiles, such doctrine actually violates the Law itself.

The Impoverished Modern Church's Doctrine on the Law

So, can I rely upon religious leaders of today to give me the true answers on what are God's commands? Jesus said in His day *absolutely not!*

Jesus put the Pharisees down as repeatedly minimizing the Law given Moses. They replaced it with oral teachings that made of none-effect the written law given Moses at

31. Christian commentators who have analyzed Jeremiah 31:31-34 with care concur. Dr. Walter C. Kaiser Jr. in *Toward an Old Testament Theology* (Zondervan: 1991) at 233 explains: "The structure of Jeremiah 31:31-34 was best analyzed by Bernhard W. Anderson ["The New Covenant and the Old," *The Old Testament and Christian Faith* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963) at 230 n.11]....When the **items of continuity** found in the New Covenant are tabulated in this passage, they are (1) the same covenant-making God, 'My covenant,'; (2) **the same Law, My Torah (not a different one than at Sinai)**; (3) the **same** divine fellowship in the ancient tripartite formula, 'I will be your God'; (4) the **same** 'seed' and 'people,' 'You shall be my people'; and (5) the **same** forgiveness, 'I will forgive their iniquities.'"

32. See page vii and page xiii (Tyndale); page xvii (Luther).

33. See "How Far Does The Law Apply To Gentiles" on page 182 *et seq.*

Sinai. (Matt. 15:6.) The Pharisees taught the lesser command of tithing, while neglecting all the weightier principles from the Law given Moses such as justice, mercy and faith. (Matt. 23:23.)

Yet, look how much is in common between our religious leaders of today and the Pharisees, particularly on the issue of the Law's abrogation. It is obvious that history is repeating itself. It even sounds like *some Pharisee has wormed his way into the New Testament to proclaim abrogation of the Law (except tithing)*. It is as if the religious leaders of the fourth century made this allowance of space alongside our Lord's word for a Pharisee. They apparently did not recognize the need to protect us from Pharisaistic law-negation!³⁴ But Jesus says you must not listen to such religious leaders, and their proffered voices that negate the Law. They are making you "twice the sons of hell as they are." (Matt. 23:15.) Instead, *you must do better* to enter into eternal life than the righteousness of *these shallow Pharisaical law-negating teachers!*

In fact, Jesus bluntly said you have to "have a righteousness greater than the Pharisees to enter the kingdom of heaven." (Matt.5:20.)³⁵ *Sadly, that was not a very hard challenge as Jesus describes the Pharisees.* They were extremely shallow on their doctrines from the Law given Moses.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus then outlined the virtues you must have to become a "son of God" which virtues the Pharisees lacked: be a peacemaker; do not make false oaths; do not be anxious; do not commit adultery in your heart; do not take personal vengeance; love your enemies as well as anyone in need; etc.³⁶

34.Indeed, that is one of the main theses of my prior book, *Jesus' Words Only* (2007).

35.For full discussion, see page 147 *et seq.*

36.For full discussion, see page 201 *et seq.*

Faith Alone

But you ask: 'Won't believing *alone* save me instead?'

No, it won't. If you "keep on obeying unto" Jesus, then you "should not ever ever die" (John 8:51)³⁷ and "should not perish, but should have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)³⁸

In fact, Jesus was adamant that professing belief in Him as Lord is meaningless unless you also obey Him. Jesus asked "why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' but ***do not do what I say?***" (Luke 6:46.) Such have a flawed concept of what it means to sincerely say that He is Lord. If you call Him Lord "but do not do His will" Jesus will tell you "I never knew you." (Matt. 7:21.) Jesus said those who profess to want to obey Him, but do not actually do so are lost. But those sinners who repent and obey will enter heaven instead of those who say they will obey Him but end up not doing so. (Parable of the Two Sons. Matthew 21:28-31.)³⁹

Jesus means obedience is not optional for those who call Him Lord. Salvation is gained or lost depending on actual obedience to Jesus' commands, not mere profession no matter how sincere when made.

In fact, Jesus taught one who has some wrong belief, such as a member of the Samaritan sect, still has "eternal life" when they obey God's commandments such as to save a life along the road. But those such as the Levites who presumably had correct belief in the true God and taught correctly God's commands, Jesus says in the Parable of the Good Samaritan are lost. The reason is they do not *actually* practice what they believe and teach from the Law. (Parable of the Good Samaritan. Luke 10:25 *ff.*)⁴⁰

37.For full discussion, see page 367 *et seq.*

38.For full discussion, see page 417 *et seq.*

39.For full discussion, see page 105 *et seq.*, and pages 465 *ff.*

This parable has a blunt point: salvation depends in crucial part on whether you obeyed God's commands. However, it does not mean obedience without *any* faith qualifies. Rather, it means partial incorrect faith on some matters such as the Samaritans had when combined with proper obedience does qualify. Thus, faith alone does not suffice. But one is not disqualified by merely a minor defect in faith or doctrine which God can overlook. Thank the Lord!

*Choosing A Simple Message Over A
Tortured Message*

Truly, Jesus' gospel is obvious. It is not difficult to uncover it. Nor is it hard to explain. You simply take all of Jesus' lessons in their most plain sense. It is actually far harder to explain why a follower of *Jesus* ever abandoned it to adopt faith alone doctrine. To make Jesus' match the faith alone idea repeatedly requires torturing and tormenting of His words, condensing them into a fifth of their meaning. It requires forcing faith to do it all, and necessarily so. If faith alone were true, then Jesus never had to say "repent or perish," or "heaven-maimed or hell-whole." He should have simply said "believe or perish." Instead, Jesus' words were well-chosen to convey the precisely opposite message. He gave us a warning that *repentance from sin* was an essential unwavering salvation-condition. Jesus also told us *obedience* must follow. Grace is costly, not cheap.

40. For full discussion, see page 118 *et seq.* Jesus does not mention Pharisees or Sadducees in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, whom He taught had wrong doctrine. Jesus never said the Levites had wrong doctrine. Thus, presumably the Levites taught all the Law and did so correctly. They just did not do what it required. Hence, the contrast is between the Samaritan with partially wrong doctrine (*i.e.*, they had a schismatic temple "and you worship what you don't know" John 4:22) who obeys the Law versus a Levite with correct doctrine yet who does not obey the Law.

Hence, you must stop wondering off track to others' ideas. Jesus said He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (John 14:6.) As God-Yahweh spoke from heaven at the transfiguration, "**Listen to Him!**" (Matt. 17:5.) Anyone who gives you a "different way" to salvation than Jesus laid out is "a thief and robber." (John 10:1.) Do not follow them.

Warning To Not Run Outside Of Jesus' Teachings

Do not follow even Paul. God-the-Father did not speak from Heaven and tell you to listen to Paul like God-the-Father did twice with Jesus — once at His baptism and the second time at Jesus' transfiguration. On Paul's side of the ledger, there is not a single lick of essential corroborating proof that Paul was ever even an apostle of Jesus Christ. For in all three accounts of Paul's encounter with Jesus, the Lord only appoints Paul a *witness (martus)*, not a *messenger (apostolos)*. See page 495 *et seq.* There is a huge difference.

We need to follow Tyndale's and Luther's examples in this respect.

Implicit in the sea change of both Tyndale and Luther on salvation and the Mosaic Law⁴¹ is a change in their perception of the *weight* to be given Paul. Both men after 1530 changed their shared belief in the doctrine of justification by faith alone. At about the same time (Tyndale first, Luther second), both men came to realize that such justification doctrine, if valid at all, was true only up to a certain point: the point of initial salvation. Both men recognized that the doctrine of salvation for the Christian hinges on more — it hinges upon obedience to the Law (at minimum the Ten Commandments), and repentance if transgressed. This is the doctrine of *double justification*.⁴²

41. See page v *et seq.* of the Preface.

Yet, more fundamentally, Tyndale and Luther both jointly changed their view that the Law given Moses had faded away. They must have both realized that no true Messiah could bring such a message. Both men then blatantly reversed course on this point — Tyndale first, then Luther. By doing so, both men implicitly revealed a fundamental shift on the *value* of Paul's words. For Paul's contrary doctrine no longer mattered when compared to Jesus' words and the necessity that they be unfettered by Paul. Otherwise, if Tyndale or Luther had become stuck on Paul's words, Jesus would be falsified as Messiah. Jesus did not deserve such a fate because Jesus exhorted obedience and continuity of the Law given Moses. Tyndale and Luther both implicitly realized holding onto Paul as valid any longer would have meant losing the validity of Jesus as Messiah. They knew that was not worth the price. The reformers then reformed themselves.

Tyndale made the sea change boldly clear. Luther made his change more quietly, first in the Catechisms of 1531 and then more plainly in the *Antinomian Theses* of 1537.⁴³

Thus, anyone — whether Paul, Luther or a true apostle — who “goes *beyond the teachings of Christ*...does not have God.” (2 John 1:8-11.) As the NIV puts it: “Anyone who runs ahead and *does not continue in the teaching [didache] of [Jesus] Christ* does not have God; whoever *continues in the teaching [of Jesus]* has both the Father and the Son.” (2 John 1:8-9.)

42. Double justification is essentially indistinguishable from what Jesus teaches. Yet, this formula is still not precisely Jesus' words and is potentially misleading. While the double justification formula has the virtue of melding Paul's doctrine with that of Jesus, it is a mismatch. It misleads potentially because if you tell someone that if you 'believe' you are justified, but they cut off listening to you, and do not hear the need for repentance and obedience, then they continue unjustified in the next instant. Thus, Jesus' simpler and more precise salvation formulae (which Peter uses in Acts) are the correct ones to teach.

43. See page xiii *et seq.*

Consequently, if any person transgresses Jesus' doctrines and teaches you not to follow Jesus' doctrine, you are listening to a deceiver. He could be the king, the president or even Paul. There is no immunity from this test of what is true or false doctrine. Jesus' words are a crucial *litmus test* of what is correct for New Testament believers to follow.

Personal Danger To Those Teaching Faith Alone

How severe will God deal with the deceivers who call you to another way? We have seen they are Marcionites modernized, as Scheck notes.⁴⁴ They have no compunction against twisting and torturing the words of the Lord Jesus Christ. They show Jesus utter disrespect. They love only Paul or more correctly, they only love Paul when he slackens Jesus' conditions for salvation. ***They ignore Paul just as much as Jesus when Paul agrees with Jesus' costly grace gospel.***⁴⁵ They love only the easy way. The Gospel of Cheap Grace.

But the final verdict will be extremely harsh on them. For they knew their Lord's will but excused themselves from doing it! (Luke 12:47.) They thereby caused believers in Jesus to adopt their false doctrine, often leading believers to be "ensnared" by ***lack of proper warning***.

In fact, they affirmed that the threats of Christ on His servants of weeping and gnashing for disobedience never apply to the 'true' Christian. They have reassured us incessantly that we are eternally secure based on faith alone. Or

44. Thomas Scheck aptly states he found "real and apparent similarities between certain Protestant theological formulae, especially those of Calvinism and [early] Lutheranism, and the assertions of Gnostic and Marcionite exegesis...." (Thomas Scheck, *Origen: Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Washington DC: CUA, 2001-02) at 1.23-4.)

45. See page 522 *et seq.*

that we are predestined to 100% success if we were ever a true believer regenerated by the Holy Spirit. Yet, the consequence of such a garbling of Jesus' Way will have its inevitable fruit.

Just as Jesus' conditional promises and stern warnings were designed to lead to righteous behavior for salvation-sake, we know the lopping off of Jesus' conditions to promises or the dilution of His warnings will have the opposite effect. As Reverend Jeremy Taylor said in the 1660s: "If we did believe the promises upon their proper conditions, or... that the threatenings were as really intended as they are terribly spoken,— we should not dare to live at the rate we do." (Rev. Jeremy Taylor, *supra*, at 22.)

Thus, if one "believer in [Jesus]" should be "ensnared" in sin due to the misleading nature of faith-alone salvation doctrine, it would have been better for these religious voices to have had a "millstone put around their neck and [been] thrown in the sea" than face the horrible wrath of God for the harm they caused. (Mark 9:42.) They presented a *diluted false gospel* to the masses who were seeking Christ. As the early church lamented in 413 A.D. over the Marcionites (see page 578) whose faith alone gospel still lingered on: "How long then are they to go on being deceived who of...faith [alone] promise unto themselves life everlasting?"⁴⁶

Jesus' millstone warning in Mark 9:42-47 is simply a reflection of Ezekiel's message about the watchman. If you fail to give God's warnings, and you instead dilute His conditions for salvation, the blood of all lost souls due to your teaching fall on your head. All goodness and righteousness you ever did is negated by your dereliction of giving a proper warning:

But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and **the people be not warned**, and the sword come, and take any

46. *Fide et operibus* [413 A.D.], in *Seventeen Short Treatises of Augustine* (trans. C.L. Cornish)(John H. Parker: 1847) at 59.

person from among them; he is ***taken away in his iniquity***, but ***his blood will I require at the watchman's hand***. (7) So thou, son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore hear the ***word at my mouth***, and ***give them warning from me***. (Eze 33:6-7 ASV.)

*Make A Choice to Follow Jesus' Way
Instead*

Now, if instead you don't want to fail at the judgment seat, then follow the Way Jesus spelled out. William Paley quoted Jesus' many relevant passages to you in the prior chapter. Likewise, the mature William Tyndale identified the identical path to salvation for believers we outline here.⁴⁷ Luther likewise set forth the same path in his *Catechisms* of 1531, and the *Antinomian Theses* of 1537.⁴⁸ We have also thoroughly summarized above Jesus' salvation doctrine. If you are following what Jesus taught, you are never on the wrong path. You cannot help but be saved when you obey Jesus' teachings. That's the surest way to salvation. In fact, it is the only Way.

*The Shortest Possible Synopsis of Jesus'
Doctrine*

To spell out the gospel of Yeshua (Jesus) in the most simple formula (for everyone loves a formula), it is three successive yet interconnected steps. If you fail, you repeat the

47. See page vii *et seq* of the Preface.

48. Luther did so in such a coy imperceptible manner that many Lutherans do not recognize the doctrinal implication from these documents.

steps each time. His Way assumes one already has *knowledge* of and *belief in* Jesus' work on the cross, the atonement, His perfect innocence and divinity, and that the alternatives are "hell whole" or "heaven maimed," etc. Demons know these things too, so don't stop there! Then, if you are convinced of these *facts* — I repeat! 'Don't mistake such *knowledge (gnosis)* as saving *faith!*'⁴⁹ — here are the steps to salvation:

- Repent from sin. (Luke 13:5.) Make a firm decision to turn from it and in fact turn from your sin. This includes mortify the sources of sinful acts. (Mark 9:42-47.) Repentance implies reconciling with the one you sinned against (Matt. 5:22-26), which signifies "works worthy of repentance." This brings you initial salvation. Repentance brings justification, as it did to the publican. (Luke 18:9-14.) And as Peter says, repentance "blots out sin." (Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19.)
- Trust not only that God is, but also believe He is "the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11:6.) Pray daily (or more often) in Jesus' name that God leads you from temptation. (Matt. 6:9-13.) If you seek God on this, He will give you the power to resist sin. See John 1:11-12 discussed below.
- Obey Jesus' commandments, including His incorporation from the Law given Moses. (John 3:16,36; 8:51.) This is only possible by doing step two (trust God and pray to Him for help), and only meaningful if you take step one (repent from error).

Hence, you can see each step is interconnected, and cannot be isolated from the other. It is a *synergy* — a cooperation — just as James taught. (James 2:20-24.) What then is

49. This *gnosis* or *knowledge* is everywhere today mistaken for *faith*. This is due to the influence of Paul's meaning of *faith* in Romans 10:9 (*i.e.*, 'believe Jesus rose from the dead'). This is not the meaning of *faith* when Jesus speaks. Instead, the Lord has the Hebrews 11:6 meaning in mind: you must believe God exists, and "He rewards those who diligently pursue Him." Mere *gnosis* (knowledge) is the polar opposite of *faith* in the sense Jesus means it. This is one aspect, often overlooked, to what Origen was criticizing in *gnosticism*.

the role of a true Hebrews 11:6 faith? Faith makes you lean on God in your failures, and believe He will answer your prayers for power to resist temptation in the future.

*Empowerment From God, Not Merited
Without His Work In You*

This is what Apostle John means when he says, “as many as received Him, to them He gave **power** (*exousia*) to become **sons of God**, even to them that *believe* on His name.” (John 1:11-12 KJV/Tyndale/Websters.)⁵⁰

50. Compare how Jesus makes your status as *sons of God* elsewhere contingent on *your* behavior, and then one can see the correct translation of John 1:12 as “power” is self-evident. See, Matthew 5:9 (peacemakers “shall be called **sons of God**”); Matt. 5:44-45; Luke 6:35 (“love your enemies....so that you *may* be **sons of your Father** in heaven”). Cf. Rev. 21:7, “he that **overcomes** shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be **my son**.”) The early church read John 1:11-12 as Jesus empowering us to love our enemies, to be peacemakers, etc., so as to become sons of God. The early church did not read this as your belief in Christ giving you the unconditional *right* to demand God make you a son based on faith alone. For example, Athanasius in *Discourses against the Arians* para. 766 says that “those having received the Word, have gained from Him the **power** to become the children of God....To bring this about, the Word became flesh so that He **might make man capable**” of this. (Quoted in W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (1979) at 329.) However, many modern translations tamper with the meaning, changing *power* in John 1:12 into *right*. This changes the verse from an *anti-faith alone* verse to a *pro-faith alone* verse. Those changing *power* into *right* are: ASV, NASB, NIV, and God’s Word. Due to this falsification, a faith alone advocate celebrates that “these two verses only bring forth rejoicing from Christians” because they supposedly “affirm concretely once again that salvation...is **conditional only upon receiving (believing in) Christ** as your savior.” (*Systematic Bible Studies*, <http://www.bibleone.net/sbs.html>.) Yet, this conclusion is based on a false alteration of Scripture.

This verse reveals a key relationship between *believing* and *becoming sons of God*. As the *Free Will Baptist* of January 1860 explained this verse: “This passage proves something must be done *subsequent to faith* to make us sons of God.” For it clearly says “believing on His name did not make them sons of God, but placed this honor *within reach*, gave the privilege and opportunity to become sons.” (*Id.*, at 79.)

Erasmus of Oxford (1466-1536) — a great reformer in his own right — likewise explained this verse. He was the most learned man on the meaning of ancient Greek in his day. His reading is the correct one. Erasmus said John 1:12 means we are not “suddenly” made sons of God; rather we are “empowered” to become such children of God by Jesus’ “message.”⁵¹ Hence, our obedience is never by merit. It is by empowerment infused in us by God’s answering of our prayer to resist temptation.

Obedience and Prayer Brings Empowment; Sin Takes It Away.

What exactly does John 1:12 mean by God giving us the “power to become sons of God...”?

Samson was a type of servant of the Lord who is strong while he obeys the Lord, but loses his strength once he begins to disobey. (Judges 16:1, sleeps with harlot.) Samson thereafter is too weak to resist the badgering of Delilah to know the key to his physical strength — his Nazirite vow. (This optional vow is given by God to Moses in Numbers chapter six.) By telling Delilah the secret, Samson tacitly permits Delilah to break his Nazirite vow that his hair cannot be cut. (Judges 16:17.) This disobedience leads to Samson’s blindness and imprisonment. (Judges 16:21.) When he con-

51. Erasmus pointed out this verse implies “we do not become sons of God suddenly, but first we are given the *power* which is offered us by the message of grace.” (*Hyperaspistes*, book 2, excerpted in J.K.Sowards, et al., *Controversies* (University of Toronto: 2005) at 687.)

tinues back on his original path of obedience to his Nazarite vow and prays to God for restored strength (Judges 16:22,28), God gives Samson his greatest victory.

Hence, obedience and prayer empowered Samson. Before that repentance, Samson's sin against his vow to God had taken such power away. This is what John means in 1:12 about empowerment. We are given power to become sons of God when we obey. This is what God promises to give if we pray earnestly for this power.

Empowerment Through Jesus

Jesus says we are from now on to pray to the Father in the name of Jesus (Yeshua). This is important. While Samson returned to obedience — letting his hair grow without cutting it (obeying once again his Nazirite vow), his obedience was combined thereafter with prayer. Then God gave Samson his great victory. Prayer is the connection to Jesus we need daily to have our victories. Jesus says we are to pray daily to “resist temptation.” Hence, when we obey God, it is never done on our own power *alone*. It is God answering our prayer.

Hence, the requisite obedience is never your own merit *by itself* that will lead to salvation. Rather, it is only obedience *empowered* by God that causes atonement to apply. (See page 1; Matt.5:22-26.) Jesus in the Metaphor of the Vine clearly says “the branch cannot bear fruit *by itself*...” (John 15:4.) Then as you obey Jesus, you abide in His love. (John 15:10.) This love from Jesus no doubt empowers you to further obedience.

Why Then Is Jesus' Gospel Rejected?

Jesus told us why many reject His message:

Why don't you understand what I am saying?
Because ***you cannot bear to listen to my message***. You belong to your father, Satan, and you ***want to carry out your father's desires***. From

the start, he was a murderer, and he has never stood for the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie, he is speaking in character; because he is a liar — indeed, the inventor of the lie! But as for me, **because I tell you the truth you don't believe me**. Which one of you can show me where I am wrong? If I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? (John 8:43-47 CJB.)

People do not accept Jesus' message, He says, because they want to carry out the desires of Satan. They want to break God's Law, and feel no remorse. Jesus' message insists on regret, repentance and obedience. No one can prove Jesus' message is wrong. Instead, they drive around His doctrine, exploiting out-of-context quoting, and relying upon false prophets who lie and create myths.

Final Thoughts

Once you know the true gospel from Jesus' lips, you can finally understand why His very last words on earth were:

Go ye therefore, and **teach all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to **obey** (*tereo*, diligently follow) **all things whatsoever I commanded you**, and, lo, I will be with you always until the end of the world. (Matt. 28:19-20.)

This means our job is to remain the tireless watchmen on the wall, ceaselessly giving His warnings of hell by sinning to Christians and non-Christians alike. As long as we teach *obedience* to Jesus who will judge everyone impartially, we will be innocent of the blood of those who we warned. Otherwise, if we fell silent, the guilt of their sins falls to our tally sheet as well. The Great Commission was foreshadowed in Isaiah where God declares:

I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem; they will never fall silent, neither by day nor by night. You who call on the Lord, **give yourselves no rest**; and give him no rest until he restores Jerusalem and make it a praise on earth. (Isaiah 62:6-7 CJB.)

However, the gospel of faith alone caused us to chase after instilling *beliefs alone* and not *behaviors* as of *equal importance*. As a result, Jesus' Great Commission makes no sense any more. As Bonhoeffer said, we have a "Christianity without Christ." Once we put Christ back into Christianity, the gospel can truly have its full *intended impact* by the One who paid with His blood the right to author its terms.

Post-Script: Importance of Protestants Coming to Grips with the Early Heretic Marcion's Cheap Grace Doctrine

Has the last four hundred years been a waste? Has the descent into cheap grace at odds with Jesus' doctrine all this time been an unprecedented error? No. This has been a valuable period of cleansing of doctrinal errors. However, our response to those errors ended up in over-reaction. We need to come back to Jesus. It is that simple. We can take encouragement from the fact that this very same error happened once before. Let's see how the early church escaped, and perhaps we can simply repeat the measures taken back then.

Most Protestants are utterly unaware that Paulinism, in particular faith alone doctrine, previously threatened to overwhelm Jesus' salvation doctrine and destroy it. In 144 A.D., there arose a ship-builder from Pontus named Marcion. He founded a church system that rivaled in numbers and influence that of the orthodox Christian church. By 150 A.D., Justin wrote that Marcionites had expanded "to the uttermost bounds of the earth."⁵² It required three hundred years for the orthodox church to eventually rout out the heresy of Marcion.

Marcion was not battling the Roman Catholic church. It did not yet exist. Instead, there was a large orthodox church led from Jerusalem. The Roman bishop was just one bishop among many throughout the Mediterranean. Even if Peter was in Rome at one point, there was no effort to exercise superiority from Rome until many centuries later.

What happened is that Marcion declared in 144 A.D. that Paul alone was the true apostle for the era of grace; the twelve apostles, in particular their gospel of Matthew, were tainted by legalism; the Jesus of the twelve belonged to the God of the Old Testament; and the Jesus of Paul represented the son of a loving Father who now accepted us by faith alone.

In Marcion's book known as the *Antitheses*, which exists only in fragments quoted by others, we find endorsement of everything Pauline, including faith alone. Marcion's primary antithesis involved faith and law. On one hand, there was the Law given Moses, which the apostolic twelve endorsed in Matthew's gospel. On the other hand, there was the faith alone doctrine of Paul. To solve this antithesis, Marcion invented the idea that Christ had two personages — the one of the twelve and the one presented by Paul. The Jesus of the twelve represented the Creator-God of the Old Testament. The Jesus of Paul represented the Good God or the Father of the New Testament. The *Antitheses* of 144 A.D. reads:

18. The Jewish Christ [of Matthew *et al*] was designated by the Creator [*i.e.*, the God of the Old Testament] solely to restore the Jewish people from the Diaspora; but our Christ [present in Paul's writings] was commissioned by the good God [of the new testament] to liberate all mankind.

19. The Good [God] [of Paul's Jesus] is good toward all men; the Creator [God of the Jesus of

52. B. Aland, "Marcion, Marcionites, Marcionism," *Encyclopedia of the Early Church* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. 1992) Vol. 1 at 524.

the twelve], however, promises salvation only to those who are obedient to him [*i.e.*, legalism]. The Good [God of Paul's Jesus] redeems those who **believe** in him, but **he does not judge those who are disobedient** to him; the Creator [God of the twelve's Jesus], however, redeems his faithful and judges and punishes the sinners.

29. The Christ [of the Creator God represented by the twelve] promises to the Jews the restoration of their former condition by return of their land and, after death, a refuge in Abraham's bosom in the underworld. Our Christ [of the Jesus presented by Paul] will establish the Kingdom of God, an eternal and heavenly possession.⁵³

The Jerusalem church previously replied to anti-Law and faith-alone doctrine by saying Paul was an apostate and did not represent true Christianity. As Professor James Dunn notes: "The most direct heirs of the Jewish-Christian groupings within earliest Christianity [*i.e.*, the early Jerusalem church] regarded Paul as the great apostate, an arch enemy," citing *Epistula Petri* 2.3; *Clem. Hom.* 17:18-19.⁵⁴

The Jerusalem church's response is directly reflected in our New Testament. As Augustine noted in 413 A.D. in his treatise *Faith and Works*, the epistles of James (the first bishop of Jerusalem), Jude (the second bishop of Jerusalem),⁵⁵ and Second Peter were specifically written to destroy

53. Dr. Peter M. Head (New Testament Research Fellow, Tyndale House), *The History of the Interpretation of the Apostle Paul* (2001), reprinted at http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Tyndale/staff/Head/Lent_01_Handout.htm (accessed 1/5/08).

54. James D. G. Dunn, *The Cambridge Companion to St. Paul* (Cambridge University Press, 2003) at 2.

55. On James & Jude as bishops, see "Appendix to the works of Hippolytus," *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Fathers of The Third Century* (ed. Donaldson, Roberts & Coxe) (1886) Vol. V at 255.

“faith alone” doctrine as inferred from Paul’s epistles. (See page 523n *supra*.) Second Peter even said many would fall from their “steadfastness in Christ” by relying upon “difficult to understand” passages in the writings of Paul. These passages were seen as giving a “liberty” that Second Peter said was foreign to the true gospel. (See pages 500-504 *supra*.)

Tertullian, an orthodox church member in Carthage, Africa, wrote in 207 A.D. his famous rebuttal to Marcion. In it, Tertullian threw every suspicion possible at whether Paul was truly an apostle of Jesus Christ. Tertullian even suggested Paul was a false prophet as warned of by Jesus Christ. We previously quoted this daring analysis from Tertullian. (See pages 495-500 *supra*.) In that passage, Tertullian says that Paul’s claim to apostleship is totally self-serving, and by Jesus’ standards is invalid. Scholars generally now recognize this is a valid criticism of Paul’s claims. In the end, Tertullian even suggested “[Paul] is the apostle of the heretics.” (Tertullian, *Adversus Marcion* 3.5, “haereticorum apostolus”.)

Often, Protestant historians try to obscure the real nature of Marcion’s heresy. They focus on every other dispute than the problem of Marcion’s teaching of *faith alone*. While it is true that Marcion said there was a different God for the new versus the old testaments, and this claim was battled vigorously by Tertullian, they ignore what was at stake. ***Marcion’s goal behind that argument was to justify two different salvation doctrines.*** Once he divided salvation into two dispensations — the old and the new, Marcion could defend the new is by faith alone and the old one is by obedience. Marcion hence was trying to rationalize Paul’s doctrine of faith alone as belonging to a distinct dispensation of Paul’s Jesus. Thereby, it could be valid despite contradicting Jesus’ salvation doctrine in the gospel of Matthew and John (properly translated). As Arthur Cushman McGiffert, in *A History of Christian Thought* (C. Scribner’s Sons: 1949) at 59 explains:

For the gospel of the free grace of God and salvation by ***faith alone*** had been substituted [by the twelve apostles in their gospels], so Mar-

cion believed, [by] a legalism of a genuinely Jewish character.

Hence, to destroy the significance of the different salvation doctrine in the twelve apostles' gospels, Marcion claimed Paul had the right to proclaim a superseding one.

Thus, Marcion represented a vigorous effort to erase any role of repentance and obedience in the Christian doctrine of salvation.

Marcion expounded his main position in a work entitled *Antitheses*....[The God of the New Testament] was the God of grace who offered salvation to all by **faith alone**;.... (T. Alec Burkill, *The Evolution of Christian Thought* (Cornell University Press, 1971) at 42.)

After Simon Magus, it was Marcion above all whom the Fathers regarded as the arch-heretic:... the law is discarded and salvation depends on **faith alone**. (Hans Kung, *The Church* (Image Books: 1976) at 316.)

Tertullian in rebuttal to Marcion conceded that the ceremonial law of the old testament was abrogated, but the moral commandments in the Law remained. To this end, Tertullian taught repentance and obedience remained absolutely essential to salvation.⁵⁶

When I encountered this history, I was shocked and in disbelief. David Bercot, a Protestant attorney like myself, was as equally startled by encountering Marcion as I was. After Bercot did a comprehensive survey of the doctrines of the early Church in his exhaustive 705 page *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs* (1998), he wrote *Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up* (1999). In that work, Bercot admits he discovered that the early church, in "contradiction to many of my own theological views," taught doctrines that universally rejected teachings which we all recognize as part of modern

56. See my prior work, *Jesus' Words Only* (2007) at 405-425.

accepted Pauline teaching. When Bercot discusses Marcion, he expresses the same shock I experienced when I first read what Marcion taught:

As surprising as all of this may be to you, ***what I'm about to tell you is even more bizarre.*** There was a religious group ***labelled as heretics*** by the early Christians, who strongly disputed the church's stance on salvation and works [*i.e.*, that salvation depended on works]. Instead, they [*i.e.*, the heretics] taught man is totally depraved. That we are ***saved solely by grace.*** That ***works play no role in salvation.*** And that ***we cannot lose our salvation once we obtain it....***" (*Will The Real Heretics Please Stand Up, supra*, at 66.)(Emphasis added.)

It is obvious that Marcionism has revived. Many Protestants likewise today argue a dispensational division exists between old and new, so that Jesus' contrary salvation doctrine to Paul's doctrine can be *honestly* dismissed as *irrelevant*. (See dispensationalist claims on pages 209-210 *supra*.)

Jesus and the early church had a solution to prevent Paul's teachings from overturning those of Jesus. They were:

- The release of the epistles of James, Jude and Second Peter;
- The release of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, with its heavy emphasis on works required for salvation, including a re-affirmation of James' principles in Revelation 3:1-3; and
- Tertullian's brilliant examination in 207 A.D. of the lack of authenticity to Paul's claims of apostleship and even Tertullian's suggestion that Paul was a false prophet predicted by Christ.

These various attacks on Paulinism were vigorous and well-sustained. They succeeded. These critical analyses must be revived and re-published for a new generation. For four hundred years, we have been entrapped within revived Marcionism. Because Christ's words were so powerful, Christian-

ity lived on despite this albatross hanging on, weighing down His words in the wrong direction. Yet, by our dereliction of duty, Christ's message is obscured. How did this happen?

What took place in the early Protestant Reformation is that this history about Marcion was forgotten. It was primarily Erasmus and Tyndale who initially realized that the reformation had made a significant major mistake. It had treated Paul's doctrines regarding 'faith alone' as a necessity to follow even when at odds with the salvation doctrine of Jesus Christ. These two men bravely changed course. They even obviously caused Luther to change course. He too adopted *double justification* (i.e., salvation begins by faith but requires works and obedience for final salvation) which essentially matches Jesus' doctrine.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, Luther's heroism of 1517-18 was not matched by a later bold declaration that he realized this error. Luther tried to make this change quietly, through an ecumenical conference with the Catholic Church in 1541. Upon Luther's death, he left it to Melancthon to continue this effort. Melancthon did so, causing the Lutheran church to adopt double justification as an official doctrine. It lasted until a short while after Melancthon's death. And thus the true gospel expired from being present in any major Protestant denomination. It survives primarily only in the Pentecostal and Mennonite churches.

Consequently, we need spiritual and historical revival. The first step is we need to repent of the heresy of 'faith alone.' The second is we need to study in more depth how the early church combatted and defeated this particular heresy.

57. See "A Parade of Witnesses Includes Tyndale and Shockingly The (Mature) Luther Too" on page iv *et seq.*