

Justification By Faith

Jeff Smelser

Text: Gal. 2:15-3:14

Introduction:

- I. I've been asked to discuss Paul's teaching concerning justification by faith
- II. In this study, we will explore how Paul uses the key terms "grace," "faith," and "works"
- III. We will also address other pertinent questions:
 - A. Are we saved by our faith or Christ's faith[fulness] (Gal. 2:16)?
 - B. Is faith a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-10)?
 - C. Why are we not saved by works (Gal. 3:10-14)?
 - D. How should Paul and James be harmonized?

Body:

I. Justification by Faith

- A. Does Galatians 2:16 say we *are* justified of works through faith?
 1. $\square\square v \mu\square$, like $\epsilon\square \mu\square$, is *if not*, often = *except* (see e.g., Robertson, Word Pictures, on this passage)
 2. Therefore we might be inclined to translate: "*A man is not justified by works of law, except by faith of Jesus Christ*"
 - a. This would seem to say we *are* justified by works of law, but only through faith.
 - b. If this were the correct translation, we might think of Rom. 8:4, "*that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us.*"
 3. Grammatical explanations for not taking the passage to mean "we are justified of works through faith" (Skip to the next section to see the easy contextual response!)
 - a. **Alford's explanation:** Alford saw an elliptical expression, "a man is not justified by works of law, [a man is not justified] *except* through faith..."
 - 1) But no other instance of such an elliptical construction with $\square\square v \mu\square$ is found in the NT.
 - 2) Alford cited Mt. 12:4 and Rev. 9:4 as examples of such an elliptical construction with $\epsilon\square \mu\eta$ (not $\square\square v \mu\eta$).
 - a) Mt. 12:4, "which was not permitted to him to eat neither to those with him, [it was not permitted] *except* to the priests only."
 - 1] Without understanding the elliptical "it was not permitted," we would have only, "was not permitted to him *except* to the priests only," which makes no sense.
 - b) Rev. 9:4, "and it will be said to them that that they might not hurt the grass of the land nor any green thing nor any tree, [they might not hurt] *except* the men who do not have the seal of God upon the foreheads."

- 1] Again, to say “they might not hurt the grass of the land nor any green thing nor any tree, *except* the men” makes no sense unless we understand an elliptical “they might not hurt.”
- b. **Zerwick’s explanation:** Zerwick simply takes $\epsilon\ \mu$ as equal to “but” in an adversative sense (*i.e.*, = $\kappa\lambda\acute{\alpha}$), citing Gal. 1:7 where $\epsilon\ \mu$ = “but” (Zerwick, Grosvenor: Analysis of the Greek New Testament).
- 1) Though the English translation of H.A.W Meyer on Galatians uses the word “except,” Meyer seems to be construing $\epsilon\ \mu$ as did Zerwick, citing Mt. 12:4 (advanced by Alford as an example of an elliptical construction).
 - 2) Meyer also cited Rom. 14:14, “nothing is defiled of itself, but [$\epsilon\ \mu$] to the one who accounts something to be defiled, to that man it is defiled.”
 - 3) Notice that the word *except* does not work in Romans 14:14, for if $\epsilon\ \mu$ were truly to be reckoned as *except*, this would mean that some food is defiled of itself to the man who accounts it defiled.
 - 4) $\epsilon\ \mu$ for *but* ($\kappa\lambda\acute{\alpha}$) factors into the discussion of whether or not James is counted as an apostle in Gal. 1:19.
 - a) The text reads, “Other of the apostles I did not see, $\epsilon\ \mu$ James, the brother of the Lord.”
 - b) “The strict sense of $\epsilon\ \mu$ implies that Paul regards James as an apostle; but this conclusion cannot be drawn with certainty, because $\epsilon\ \mu$ may be used instead of $\kappa\lambda\acute{\alpha}$.” (Zerwick, *Biblical Greek*, p. 158, §470)
- c. **My thought:** There is a clue in the use of $\epsilon\ \mu$ rather than $\epsilon\ \mu$ that has been overlooked, and it points to the same conclusion Zerwick reached, that the meaning is not a true *except*, but is rather adversative *but*.
- 1) $\epsilon\ \mu = \epsilon + \mu$, and this form, rather than ϵ , is what we should see with a subjunctive mood verb.
 - 2) The fact that $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\tau\alpha\iota$ is indicative argues against Alford’s elliptical theory, for if the repetition of the indicative mood $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\tau\alpha\iota$ were to be inferred, we should see $\epsilon\ \mu$, not $\epsilon\ \mu$.
 - 3) Similarly, if Paul intended “if not” = “except” we should also expect $\epsilon\ \mu$ inasmuch as the indicative $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omicron\tau\alpha\iota$ still rules the clause, the exceptive clause being a dependent clause.
 - 4) But if we follow Zerwick’s theory, that in fact, Paul uses $\epsilon\ \mu$ as equivalent to $\kappa\lambda\acute{\alpha}$ (adversative “but”)...
 - a) Then the clause in question becomes an independent clause with its own implied verb, and that implied verb should be inferred to be subjunctive by the introductory $\epsilon\ \mu$
 - b) The implied subjunctive would function much as does the subsequent subjunctive, $\delta\iota\kappa\alpha\iota\omega\theta\mu\epsilon\nu$. The text would be understood to say, “*knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, but [he may be justified] through faith in Jesus Christ; even we believed in Christ that we might be justified by faith...*”
 - c) Thus we account for the use of $\epsilon\ \mu$ as opposed to $\epsilon\ \mu$ which the foregoing explanations did not do.

4. A Contextual Response
 - a. We don't have to go far in the context to see that Paul is not saying we are justified by works but only if through faith, as 2:16 continues, "*in order that we might be justified by faith of Christ and not by works of law.*"
 - 1) It's not one *through* the other
 - 2) It's one *not* the other
 - b. And 2:16 concludes, "because no flesh shall be justified by works of law."
 - 1) Paul speaks of justification as a legal act, and argues that under law, justification would not be the outcome.
 - 2) Furthermore, he argues that justification of the seed is connected with the promise, and the law which came 430 years after the promise does not qualify or nullify the promise.
 - 3) So when Paul says, "man is not justified by works of law □□ν μ□...", in the words of H.A.W. Meyer, this is "not a compromise between justification by works and justification by faith."

B. "Christ's Faith" or "Faith in Christ?"

1. Some translations read, "faith of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16a) and "faith of Christ" (Gal. 2:16b). See also Gal. 2:20 and 3:22 as noted below.
 - a. In 2:16, the KJV has "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."
 - 1) This does not necessarily mean the KJV translators espoused the view that Christ's faithfulness, or Christ's own faith, is in view.
 - 2) So Macknight at Gal. 2:16, "According to Chandler, *the faith of Jesus Christ, is the gospel of Jesus Christ*. But I rather understand the apostle as meaning, *the faith which Jesus Christ hath enjoined as the means of men's justification*. For this is the genitive not of the object, but of the agent." (p. 123)
 - b. Darby Translation and Douay-Rheims 1899 American Edition have "faith of Jesus Christ," "faith of Christ," at Gal. 2:16, leaving the meaning ambiguous.
 - c. The Common English Bible (CEB) translates the phrases in Gal. 2:16, "the faithfulness of Jesus Christ" and "the faithfulness of Christ," and in Gal. 2:20 the CEB has "the faithfulness of God's Son."
2. Over the past half century, the idea that several passages translated "faith in (him/Jesus/Jesus Christ/Christ/the Son of God)" actually speak of Christ's faith rather than our faith in him has been increasingly promoted in the theological journals.
 - a. Wright describes the proliferation of writings on the subject saying, "What began as a question, then an initial proposal, has become a substantial industry, generating more debate than one would have believed possible. The debate has now been pressed down and sprinkled together, and is threatening to nest in every tree." (p. 836)

3. In Paul's writings, there are eight occurrences of "faith of Christ" or something equivalent.
 - a. Galatians 2:16a, πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 - b. Galatians 2:16b, πίστεως Χριστοῦ
 - c. Galatians 2:20, πίστει... τὸ ὑπομένει τὸ θεοῦ
 - d. Galatians 3:22, πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 - e. Romans 3:22, πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 - f. Romans 3:26, πίστεως Ἰησοῦ
 - g. Philippians 3:9, πίστεως Χριστοῦ
 - h. Ephesians 3:12, πίστεως αὐτοῦ.¹
4. The significance of the Genitive case
 - a. In Galatians 2:16, the words "in Jesus Christ" represent genitive case Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
 - b. Apart from any context, the phrases in question would most often be translated using the word "of" (e.g., "of Jesus Christ"), the genitive case being thought of as the "of" case.
 - 1) Rather than saying it is the "of" case, it is more precise to say the genitive case, which includes ablatives (indicating source from which) as well as true genitives (indicating kind), is the case of *kind* or *source*.
 - 2) The word "of" happens to be useful in translating many genitives because it can often be used to indicate either kind (*sky of blue*) or source (*man of noble birth, fruit of the ground*).
 - c. In Galatians 2:16, as well as in the other passages where a similar phrase occurs, the genitive probably indicates *kind*, the *Christ-kind of faith*.
 - 1) That can mean the faith that is the kind that has to do with Christ ("faith in Christ"), or it can mean the faith that is the kind that Christ had ("Christ's faith").
 - 2) You may be familiar with this distinction expressed in terms of "objective genitive" vs. "subjective genitive."

¹ With reference to Eph. 3:12 specifically, among those who have argued that the genitive is subjective: Gabriel Hebert "Faithfulness' and 'Faith'" *Theology* 58.24 (Oct. '55), 373-79; George Howard "On the 'Faith of Christ'" *HTR* 60 (1967), 459-484, and *ExpTims* 85 (p. 212f); Luke Timothy Johnson, "Romans 3:21-26 and the Faith of Jesus," *CBQ* 44 (1982) pp. 77-90; Morna Hooker, *NTS*, 35 (1989), p. 322; Sam K. Williams, "Again Pistis Christou," *CBQ*, 49, p. 432. C.F.D. Moule ("The Biblical Conception of Faith," *ExpTim* 68 [February 1957]:157) did not think highly of this interpretation. Arland Hultgren ("The Pistis Christou Formulation in Paul," *NovTest* 22, (1980) p. 248-263) argued that in the various passages of Paul's letters where πίστις is followed by a genitive referring to Christ, the meaning is "faith in Christ." But Hultgren did not discuss Eph. 3:12 inasmuch as he considered Ephesians to have been written by someone other than Paul. Thomas Torrance tried to have it both ways, interpreting the genitives subjectively as speaking of Christ's faithfulness, but also "suggesting the answering faithfulness of man" (Torrance, "One Aspect of the Biblical Conception of Faith," *ExpTim* 68 (January 1957):113.) In the standard grammars, there is a tendency to come down on the side of the objective genitive, though with some caveats. See Robertson, p. 499-501. BDF, p. 90. Turner, p. 210-212. BGAD, p. 663.

- a) Familiar passages where we may have encountered this issue include Acts 2:38 (gift of the Holy Spirit) and 2 Jn 9 (doctrine of Christ).
- b) If genitive ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is understood as being objective, that is, Jesus Christ is the object of the faith, the meaning is equivalent to “faith in Jesus Christ.”
- c) But if genitive ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ is understood as being subjective, that is, *Jesus Christ* is the one who had faith, then *faith of Jesus Christ* would mean “Jesus Christ’s faith.”
- 1] Compare Rom. 4:12, τῆς... πίστεως τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἀβραάμ, *the faith...of our father, Abraham.*
 - 2] Clearly that means Abraham’s faith, not faith in Abraham (but just as clearly, Paul speaks of our walking in the faith of Abraham, in other words, having a similar faith and living thereby).
- 3) There is no suggestion that an objective meaning (Christ is the object of the faith, i.e., “faith in Christ”) is a grammatical impossibility.
- 4) With reference to Gal. 2:16, though he argues for understanding Χριστοῦ as a subjective genitive, Wright allows that “it is true that the phrase as it stands in its present context could go either way” (p. 857)
- 5) D. W. B. Robinson has argued that usage argues against an objective meaning in the absence of an introductory preposition (ἐξ or ὑπὸ).²
- 6) While the use of the genitive to mean *faith in Christ* does seem a bit odd, we see essentially the same use in 1 Thess. 1:3...
- a) τῆς ἐλπίδος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.
 - b) Surely this means our hope in Christ rather than Christ’s hope.
5. Romans 3:22 as Ground Zero
- a. Romans 3:22 serves as the starting point for several who argue the passages in question should be taken to mean Christ’s faith or faithfulness.
 - b. They argue that Romans 3:22 is made redundant by understanding it to mean faith in Christ
 - c. They suppose that in that passage, if we reckon the expression διὰ πίστεως ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ to mean faith in Jesus Christ, we are at a loss to understand why Paul in that passage would redundantly add ἐξ πάντας τοῖς πιστεύοντας (to all that believe).³
 - d. This perception of a difficulty in Romans 3:22 is misguided.

² Robinson, RTR, p. 78.

³ Herbert, Johnson, and Hooker all argued from the idea that an objective genitive in Rom. 3:22 would make the relevant phrase redundant. Though D. W. B. Robinson (p. 72, “Faith of Jesus Christ”—a New Testament Debate,” (p. 72, *The Reformed Theological Review*, 29 (1970) pp. 71-81) did not ultimately pronounce a verdict on the meaning in Eph. 3:12, he also cited the seeming redundancy in Rom. 3:22 as a factor in the evolution of his thinking about the expression πίστεως Χριστοῦ.

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- 1) In Romans 3:22 Paul's εἰς πάντας τοὺς πιστεύοντας (*unto all who believe*) is not at all redundant even if we understand ἡσοῦ Χριστοῦ objectively.
 - 2) The phrase διὰ πίστεως ἡσοῦ Χριστοῦ affirms that the righteousness of God is through faith in Christ, and then, in keeping with the theme of the immediate context as well as the whole letter, the words *unto all that believe*, with emphasis on *all*, are added to make clear that this is true of both Jews and Gentiles.
6. Theological Implications among those taking Christ/Jesus/Him subjectively
- a. **Imputation of Christ's Faith, Imputation of Christ's Righteousness**
 - 1) Meyer, who took ἡσοῦ Χριστοῦ in Gal. 2:16 as an objective genitive, saw the potential for imputational mischief in the context: "... we have here neither *justification by the works*, which are done by means of faith (the Catholic view), nor *Christ's* fulfilment of the law, which is *apprehended* by faith. The former is not Pauline, and the latter has only its indirect truth (for the N.T. nowhere teaches the imputation of Christ's obedience to the law), in so far as the atoning work of the Lord completed on the cross, which is the specific object and main matter of justifying faith, necessarily presupposes His active, sinless obedience (2 Corinthians 5:21), of which, however, nothing is here said." (p. 114)
 - 2) But an article at www.askelm.com/ citing Gal. 2:16 says...
 - a) "It is not our own faith that makes us perfectly righteous in God's eyes. It is Christ's faith!" (<http://www.askelm.com/essentials/ess013.htm>)
 - b) Earlier in the same article, the writer says, "But whose faith really counts in granting us salvation? Is it our faith? Is it our own belief? Paul said it is not our own faith that gives salvation. It is the faith of Christ." (<http://www.askelm.com/essentials/ess013.htm>)
 - c) Ian Potts at the blog, "The Gospel of God," writes "the sinner is justified by having the very righteousness of God imputed to him," and goes on to argue that we are justified by Christ's faith, citing among other passages, Gal. 2:16 as well as Rom. 3:22. (<https://thegospelofgod.wordpress.com/2007/11/14/the-faith-of-jesus-christ-romans-321-22/>)
 - d) R T Kendall
 - 1] "Scottish theologian T. F. Torrance, arguably the most famous Barthian in the world, wrote that we are not saved by our faith but 'by the faith of Christ'." (<https://rtkendallministries.com/the-faith-of-christ>)
 - 2] "According to T. F. Torrance (whom I knew fairly well – and admired), all people are already saved for this reason: Jesus believed for all and we are saved by Jesus' faith." (<https://rtkendallministries.com/the-faith-of-christ>)
 - 3] "We believe IN Jesus Christ in order to be saved by the faith OF Jesus Christ." (<https://rtkendallministries.com/the-faith-of-christ>)
 - 4] "The reason, then, that Paul said that the righteousness of God is "from faith to faith" (Rom. 1:17) is because our faith must be ratified by His faith – or we will not be saved." (<https://rtkendallministries.com/the-faith-of-christ>)
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5] “Jesus did everything for us – he was baptized for us, kept the Law for us, believed for us, died for us. But until we believe all He did is of ‘no value’. (<https://rtkendallministries.com/the-faith-of-christ>)

e) Jefferis Kent Peterson

1] “Because it is not our faith in Jesus which justifies us, but the faith of Jesus Christ in us which justifies us. In other words, it is his faith at work in us and in our hearts which produces righteousness and the God kind of life. And what is most important about this is the implications it has for us and our faith. First of all, it explains why faith is a gift and why we are saved through faith by grace and not as a work of our own.” (<http://scholarscorner.com/didache/faithofjesus>)

2] As do some others, Peterson connects Rom. 1:17 with this transitive idea (<http://scholarscorner.com/didache/faithofjesus>)

f) N.T. Wright’s view

1] Wright translates Galatians 2:16a, “But we know that a person is not declared ‘righteous’ by works of the Jewish law, but through the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah.” (p. 856)

2] Wright explains, “his faithfulness here, as becomes clear in 2.20, denotes his faithful, loving, self-giving to death.” (p. 856)

3] Once again, the impetus for so interpreting is Romans 3. Wright says, “The phrase about ‘the faithfulness of Jesus the Messiah’ in verse 16a could of course be translated ‘faith in Jesus the Messiah’. I regard the line of thought in Romans 2.17-20, 3.1-4 and 3.22, discussed above, as constituting a strong *prima facie* case for taking it as ‘the Messiah’s faithfulness’...” (p. 857)

a] Wright’s explanation goes beyond the alleged tautology of Romans 3:22.

b] But even as Wright argues for the subjective genitive from a comprehensive theory, he too says, Romans 3:22 “otherwise would be a tautology” (p. 839).

4] Wright’s overall view is that the key aspect of Jesus’ Messianic role is to serve as the “faithful Israelite” (p. 839), “Israel’s representative,” (p. 836) whereby God could bless the world through Israel as promised.

a] Inasmuch as Israel failed to faithfully serve as the conduit for the oracles with which it was entrusted (Rom. 3:2), there remained a need for a faithful Israelite such that the faithfulness of God could be vindicated.

b] “Abraham’s family fail [sic] to pass on the ‘oracles’, in other words, to be the ‘light to the nations, the guide to the blind’ and so on that they were supposed to be (2.17-20); how is this God then going to keep his promises through Israel to the world? If the person responsible for delivering the mail has proved untrustworthy, how can I keep my promises to send you a letter by the same mail system?” (p. 838)

- c] I think a flaw in Wright's scheme is that he too narrowly interprets the unbelief of the Jews (3:3) as being specifically unfaithfulness in delivering the message to the world.

b. Universalism

- 1) T. F. Torrance leaned in the direction of universalism, though he denied universalism...
 - a) "God has taken the great positive decision for man, the decision of love translated into fact. But because the work and the person of Christ are one, that finished work is identical with the self-giving of God to all humanity which he extends to everyone in the living Christ. God does not withhold himself from any one, but he gives himself to all whether they will or not — even if they will not have him, he gives himself to them, for he has once and for all given himself, and therefore the giving of himself in the cross when opposed by the will of man inevitably opposes that will of man and is its judgement. As we saw, it is the positive will of God in loving humanity that becomes humanity's judgement when they refuse it." (Thomas F. Torrance, *Atonement*, 188-89 as quoted at <https://growrag.wordpress.com/2011/09/09/torrance-universalism-and-the-limited-atonement/>)
- 2) If that sounds like universalism, Torrance seems to say the problem is you're trying to look at this too rationally, too logically...
 - a) Here we see that man's proud reason insists in pushing through its own partial insight into the death of the cross to its logical conclusion, and so the great mystery of the atonement is subjected to the rationalism of human thought. That is just as true of the universalist as it is of those who hold limited atonement for in both cases they have not yet bowed their reason before the cross of Christ. (*Atonement*, 187-88 as quoted at <https://growrag.wordpress.com/2011/09/09/torrance-universalism-and-the-limited-atonement/>)
- 3) Torrance seemed to say that because Jesus died for all, and limited atonement is false, and inasmuch as Jesus "believed for us, was faithful for us" (ExpTim 68 p. 114), the conditions have been met for the salvation of all. But goes on to say in essence, we must recognize that salvation is a mystery and we don't really know for sure what is going to happen if some people get to the day of judgment and at that time simply decline the salvation that has already been achieved from them—whether God saves them or not, we just don't know.

7. A Rebuttal:

- a. Apart from considerations of the overall message in Paul's discussions of justification, it would be difficult to prove with absolute certainty that the genitive "of Jesus/Christ/him" is objective, or on the other hand, subjective.
- b. With either interpretation, the phrases in question can be understood without doing violence to everything else Scripture teaches.
- c. Certainly Christ's faithful obedience was necessary for our salvation (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 3:1-2; 5:7-9; 12:1-2).
- d. This is not the same as saying his faith, or his righteousness, counts as ours.
 - 1) The conclusion that Jesus' faith is imputed is demonstrated to be false in the letter that most especially develops the doctrine of justification by faith:

- 2) Our justification by faith is developed in Romans 3.
 - 3) In Romans 4, Abraham, *whose own faith* was credited to him for righteousness, is the prototype for our justification on the same basis.
- e. But we probably have the clue as to which way we should understand “faith of Christ,” *et al.*, in the passage that gave rise to the subjective interpretation, Romans 3:22.
- 1) But it turns out to be an argument for the objective interpretation, “faith in Christ”...
 - 2) “In Romans where Paul has argued that justification is by faith using the phrase in question twice (Rom 3:22, 26), he goes on in chapter four to set forth Abraham as the prototype of justification by faith. Clearly there, he is talking about Abraham’s *own faith*. Paul’s point is that *we are justified the same way Abraham was*. Therefore in Romans 3, we should understand that Paul has in mind our faith, not Jesus’ faith.” (Smelser, p. 161, emphasis added)

II. Word Study: “Grace,” “Faith,” “Works”

A. **Grace** (Grk., *charis*) **Charm** (a false cognate, that is, not etymologically related to *charis*; however, absent the magical connotation of the word, especially because of the phonetic similarity to *charis*, *charm* is a useful English synonym.)

1. Comparing *charis* and true cognates
 - a. *chairō*, rejoice
 - b. *chara*, joy
 - c. *charis* “is what delights” (TDNT)
2. Meanings
 - a. **Charm**
 - 1) BDAG’s attempt to give more than a gloss is, “a winning quality or attractiveness that invites a favorable reaction, *graciousness, attractiveness, charm, winsomeness*.”
 - 2) In Euripides’ *Hippolytus*, Theseus speaks to his dying son, Hippolytus: οὐδέ μοι **χάρις** βίου, “*There is no charm of life to me*,” i.e. “*Life has no charm for me*”
 - 3) Col. 4:6: “*Let your speech be always with grace (ἐν χάριτι), seasoned with salt.*”
 - 4) BDAG puts Lk. 4:22 in this category: “*And all bore him witness, and wondered at the words of grace (ἐξ χάριτος) which proceeded out of his mouth.*”
 - a) I’m skeptical, wondering if perhaps the definite article (they were marvelling at the words of **the** grace (ἐξ χάριτος) that proceeded from his mouth”) points to the proclamation of specific acts, *viz.* release, recovering of sight, liberty. In other words, they were not merely marvelling because his words were charming, but because his words announced particular pleasing actions that constituted grace.

- b) Of course, words announcing pleasing actions would for that reason be charming (gracious).
- c) The question is the precise function of **χάριτος**: Is it used in apposition to *λόγοις* (*words*), such that the words were the grace (cf. το ναο το σώματος, “*the temple of the body*” Jn. 2:21, ...ο κία το σκήνου “*the house of the tabernacle*” 2 Cor. 5:1), or is the genitive used here descriptively (cf. μέρα σωτηρίας “*day of salvation*” 2 Cor. 6:2), *i.e.*, words about, or pertaining to grace?
- 5) I wonder if we perhaps should include 2 Pt. 3:18 here, “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,*” so as to see the nouns as attributes of Jesus just as are those in 2 Cor. 10:1, and to see the exhortation as similar to Phil. 2:5.
- a) If indeed this were correct, we should understand the “knowledge of our Lord” to be in contrast to that which is falsely called knowledge, the Gnosticism which is in view in 2 Pt. 2.
- b. ***A Favorable Disposition (on the part of one for another)***
- 1) Plutarch, Demosthenes 7.1 “At another time, too, they say, when he had been rebuffed by the people and was going off homewards disconcerted and in great distress, Satyrus the actor, who was a familiar acquaintance of his, followed after and went indoors with him. Demosthenes lamented to him that although he was the most laborious of all the orators and had almost used up the vigour of his body in this calling, he had no favour with the people (**χάριν** ο κ χει πρ ς τ ν δ μον), but debauchees, sailors, and illiterate fellows were listened to and held the bema, while he himself was ignored.”
- 2) In the LXX, *one finds favor in the eyes of another* (Gen. 6:8; 30:27; Ex. 3:21; 1 Bas. 16:22; 2 Bas. 14:22; Ex. 33:13, 16; 2 Bas 15:25)
- c. ***An Act of Kindness, i.e. a Favor***
- 1) Lysias 31.24, repay **favours** (*χάριτας*) for deeds done⁴
- 2) Favorable things, Prov. 18:22 “*He who found a good woman found favours*”^{5c}
- d. ***The Sentiment or Motivation Behind an Act of Kindness***– Lysias 14.40, “Wherefore you ought now to condemn this man as one whom you have judged to be a hereditary enemy of the city, and to set neither pity nor forgiveness nor any favour (*μήτε λεον μήτε συγγνώμην μήτε χάριν μηδεμίαν*) above the established laws and the oaths that you have sworn.”
- e. ***A Response, viz. Thanksgiving, to an Act of Kindness*** (2 Cor. 2:14)
3. The following is a partial listing of usage categories given in LSJ
- a. In objective sense, *outward grace, beauty*

⁴ σωφρονέστερον γάρ στιν στερον π σι τ ν ργων τ ς χάριτας ποδιδόναι· δειν ν γ ρ μοιγε δοκε ε ναι ε ξ ν μ ν δη μάρτηκε μηδέποτε τιμωρηθήσεται, ξ ν δ μέλλει ε ποιήσιν δη τετιμήσεται

⁵ ς ε ρεν γυνα κα γαθήν, ε ρεν χάριτας

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- b. In subjective sense, *grace or favour felt*
 - 1) On the part of the doer, *grace, kindness, goodwill*
 - 2) On the part of the receiver, *sense of favour received, thankfulness, gratitude*
 - 3) In concrete sense, *a favour done or returned, boon*
 - 4) *Gratification, delight in or from a thing*
 - 5) *Homage due*
 - 4. Grace in the NT
 - a. Not always the favor of forgiveness in Christ Jesus:
 - 1) Eph. 3:7
 - 2) Eph. 3:8
 - b. Not necessarily “unmerited” favor
 - 1) Luke 2:40, 52
 - a) I do not at all mean to suggest we merit God’s grace.
 - b) Truly, we do not merit the favor God has bestowed on us in Christ Jesus. (Rom 11:5-6)
 - c. Not necessarily unconditional
 - d. God’s favor toward us in Christ
 - 1) Eph. 1:6, τῆς χάριτος ἀποδοῦς χάριτωσεν ἡμῶν τὸ αγαπημένον
 - a) From my commentary on Ephesians: We may say, “his grace, **with** which he graced us” or “his grace, which he bestowed **on** us,” or “...gave **to** us.” Perhaps the English wording that would be most true to the Greek *structure* is “his grace, which he gave us,” but *gave* hardly suffices to convey fully the thought of χάριτωσεν. χάριτωσεν, from χαριτόω and obviously cognate to χάρις (*grace, favor*), occurs in the New Testament only here and in Lk. 1:28 where Mary is addressed as the one who has been favored. Not only was the adoption of ourselves accomplished through Christ, but it was a work of God’s grace, grace he bestowed on us, with which he favored us, in the Beloved, that is, in Christ.
 - 2) The favor God extends to us in Christ Jesus is conditional
 - a) In a word, that condition is ***faith***
 - b) And in fact, ***faith (properly understood) only*** (James 2 notwithstanding; see below)
 - 5. **Grace in Ephesians 1-2**
 - a. 1:2: χάρις ἡμῶν καὶ ἐπιρῆνη πᾶσι θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου ἡσοῦ Χριστοῦ.
 - b. 1:6: ἐπεὶ ἡμῶν δόξης τῆς χάριτος ἀποδοῦς χάριτωσεν ἡμῶν τὸ αγαπημένον
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- 4] Is. 53:12
 - b) Substitution (illustrated and foreshadowed in Gen. 22:13)
 - 1] Is. 53:5
 - 2] Is. 53:8
 - 3] Is. 53:11a
 - c) Justice
 - 1] Is. 53:10
 - 2] Is. 53:11
 - 3] Cf. Rom. 3:24-26
6. Grace as a motivation for good works
- a. Eph. 2:8-10
 - b. Chapters 1-3, wherein Paul explains God's great grace, followed by "therefore walk worthily" (chapters 4-6)
7. The concept of grace was not intended to be a theological football, nor even a theological complexity. It is presented in the Bible as a simple fact: a gracious God chose to extend mercy to sinful man by means of a substitutionary, *i.e.*, vicarious, punishment of man's sin in the death of Jesus. For the most part, the emphasis is on God's generosity and not on abstract theology. Save for the explanation of how God's mercy can be reconciled with his justice, it is practical, not theoretical. It is not abstractly pondered, but is concretely demonstrated in Jesus Christ.

B. Faith (Grk. πίστις)

1. Used in a variety of ways, but for our purposes in this discussion, the usage of πίστις in the sense of "trust" is germane.
 - a. Thucydides 4.86
 - 1) "And therefore I claim not only that you be not jealous of me (especially having given you so good assurance [πίστεις γε διδοῦς τῶς μεγίστας]), or think me unable to defend you, but also that you declare yourselves boldly with me." (trns. by Thomas Hobbes)
 - 2) "I think that you ought not to doubt my word when I offer you the most solemn pledges (πίστεις γε διδοῦς τῶς μεγίστας), nor should I be regarded as an inefficient champion; but you should confidently join me." (trns. by Benjamin Jowett)
 - b. Demosthenes 8.215, Demosthenes speaking to the Athenians about their reception by the Thebans, "when they put into your power what they, like all other men, were most anxious to safeguard, namely their wives and their children, they exhibited their confidence (πίστιν) in your sobriety." My translation of the last part: "having acted reasonably toward you, they showed that they had confidence (πίστιν) concerning you."
 - c. Polybius 1.43.4 In an account of the 2nd century B.C. siege of Lilybaeum on the western most cape of Sicily, the Carthaginian general who held the city learned that some of the officers in charge of his mercenary force snuck out by night and conspired with the attacking Romans to turn the city over to them. One Alexon,

an Achaean, got wind of this and informed the Carthaginian general, Himilco. Himilco responded by promising those officers still loyal to him great rewards if they would remain loyal. When they agreed, he sent them to secure the loyalty of their subordinate troops. And he also sent Alexon with them διὰ τὴν παρ' αὐτοῦ πίστιν, “on account of his reception and trustworthiness with them,” or “on account of his reception with them and his trustworthiness.”

- d. We see πίστιν used in a sense somewhat similar to Paul’s use of πιστός (“faithful is the saying”) at Polybius 4.33.1, ὁ δὲ λόγος οὗτος ἔχει μὲν ὅσως καὶ διὰ τὴν πάλαι γεγονότων πίστιν, “And this assertion perhaps has trustworthiness (πίστιν), having come through the ancients.”
- e. Xenophon, Hiero, 4.1 “Next take **confidence** (πίστεως). Surely he who has very little of that is stunted in a great blessing? What companionship is pleasant without mutual **trust** (πίστεως)? What intercourse between husband and wife is delightful without **confidence** (πίστεως)? What squire is pleasant if **he is not trusted** (ἄπιστούμενος)? [2] Now of this **confidence** (πιστῆς) in others despots enjoy the smallest share. They go in constant suspicion even of their meat and drink; they bid their servitors taste them first, before the libation is offered to the gods, because of their misgiving that they may sup poison in the dish or the bowl. [3] Again, to all other men their fatherland is very precious. For citizens ward one another without pay from their slaves and from evildoers, to the end that none of the citizens may perish by a violent death.”⁶

2. The verb, πιστεύω

- a. “πιστεύω (only from the 7th cent.), derived from πιστός, means ‘to trust,’ ‘to rely on.’” (TDNT, Vol. 6, p. 177)
- b. “From a purely formal standpoint there is nothing very distinctive in the usage of the NT and early Chr. writings as compared with Gk. usage. As in Gk.... πιστεύειν means ‘to rely on,’ ‘to trust,’ ‘to believe.’” (TDNT Vol. 6, p. 203 -Rudolf Bultman)
- c. In the NT as well as in ancient Greek generally, the verb πιστεύω can mean merely “believe.”
 - 1) Especially when followed by ὅτι (believe *that*...)
 - 2) Bultman argued that the use equivalent to our “believe” arose from the fundamental meaning, “trust” when used in regard to words: “Since words can be the obj. of πιστεύειν, it can also mean ‘to believe,’ and in this sense it can have a personal obj. (dat.) or a material obj. (acc).” (TDNT, Vol. 6, p. 178)

3. But it is *trust*, not mere belief, that is the condition of salvation.

- a. Jms. 2:19

⁶ ἄλλο μὲν καὶ πίστεως ὅστις ἄλαχιστον μετέχει, πῶς οὐχὶ μεγάλου ἄγαθοῦ μειονεκτεῖ; ποία μὲν γὰρ ξυνουσία ἢ δεῖα ἢ νευ πίστεως τῶς πρὸς ἀλλήλους, ποία δὲ ἢ νδρὶ καὶ γυναικὶ τερπνὸν ἢ νευ πίστεως ἢ μιλία, ποῖος δὲ θεράπων ἢ δὲς ἢ πιστούμενος; [2] καὶ τούτου τοίνυν τοῦ πιστῆς πρὸς τινὰς ἔχειν ἄλαχιστον μέτεστι τυράννῃ: ἴπότε γε οὐδὲ σιτίους καὶ ποτοῦς πιστευῶν διάγει, ἄλλο καὶ τούτων πρὸν ἰπάρχεσθαι τοῦ θεοῦ τῶς διακόνους πρὸν τον κελεύουσιν ἰπογεύεσθαι διὰ τὸ ἰπιστεῖν μὲν καὶ ἰν τούτοις κακὸν τι φάγωσιν ἰπίωσιν:

- b. Ac. 19:15
- c. Heb. 3:12, 19
- d. Jn. 3:16ff

C. Works

1. We are not saved by works
 - a. Rom. 3:21-4:8
 - b. Ephesians 2:8-9
2. We are created for good works (Ephesians 2:10)
 - a. “Works” here is about godliness, conduct, Eph. 4-6, cf. James 2 (helping the poor, speech that edifies, working with one’s hands, etc.).
 - b. Such “works” are not the condition of initial justification, but are the response to grace.
 - c. If baptism is deemed a “work” and therefore unnecessary, which sort of work is it?
 - 1) Surely it is not the sort of work such that the reward would be reckoned as a debt, eternal life being owed.
 - 2) Nor does it seem appropriate to suppose it is the sort of thing Paul had in mind when he spoke of our being created for good works.
3. Faith works (trust complies), and our salvation is conditioned upon faith.

III. Some Conclusions

- A. All men who will be saved, before and after the cross, are saved by grace through faith.
 1. Romans 3:25f
 2. Abraham’s justification is the prototype of our own; Romans 4.
 3. The blessing of righteousness that we have is that which Abraham received, is that which David received; Romans 4.
 4. OT pictures of deliverance and reward are meant to demonstrate the reliability of the God who promises us our deliverance and reward, and to provide a foretaste of our salvation
 - a. Joshua leads Israel into the promised land
 - b. His very name, YHWH saves
 - c. He is a prototype, a shadow of Jesus.
 - d. He leads Israel to their rest (Ps. 95), which foreshadows our rest (Heb. 4)
 - e. They were not to think their victories were of their own doing (Judges, Gideon)
 - f. They conquer the land by faith (Heb. 11:30)
 - g. But obviously, that faith involved them doing something, e.g., marching around Jericho.
 - h. This is a picture of how we are saved.

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- B. Salvation by Grace through faith excludes boasting (Rom. 4, Eph. 2, Gideon)
1. Illustrations by Scott Smelser
 2. The 5 step presentation, especially when presented as a stair step, can be misleading.
 3. Subtracting baptism makes it no less so.
- C. Reconciling Necessity of Works & Salvation by Grace (The following are not mutually exclusive)
1. The edited works view (Scott's PowerPoint)
 - a. Saved by grace (not of works) (Eph. 2:8, Titus 3:5)
 - b. Judged according to works (Rev. 20:12; 1 Pt. 1:17; Rom. 2:6)
 2. The working faith view
 - a. Faith is the condition of Salvation by Grace (Eph. 2:8, Rom. 3:24-26)
 - b. John 3:16-21, that faith is a trust that comes to the light, does the truth.
- D. James 2 and Romans 4
1. I have always thought Paul and James are using "faith" in different senses.
 2. I notice now that they use "grace" differently also. Whereas Paul often speaks of grace with specific reference to the forgiveness available through the sacrifice of Jesus, James uses "grace" (*charis*) only twice, both times in 4:6, where it is probably the less soteriological and less specific notion of "favor."
 3. I think it is fair to say when Paul talks about grace and faith, he is talking about the scheme of redemption, whereas when James talks about grace or faith, he is talking about less pregnant ideas.
 - a. In James, faith (at least hypothetically) can be discussed as independent of works, independent of obedience. It can mean mere "belief," as in 2:19, far short of trust.
 - b. In Paul, faith clearly means trust (Ro. 1:5; 1 Thess. 1:8; 3:5) and is roughly equivalent to James' non-dead faith. An exception in Paul is when he talks about a specific conviction, as *e.g.*, to eat meat (Rom. 14:2, 22).
 4. Paul and James use "works" differently.
 - a. Paul speaks of "works" in a comprehensive sense, the totality of one's doings.
 - 1) He affirms that to one who so "works," the reward would be a debt rather than a favor (Romans 4:4). The only man who could claim the reward as owed to him would be the man whose works are totally righteous, the man who has never sinned.
 - 2) Thus even those who do good things, *e.g.* Abraham & David, fall into the category of "him that worketh not" (Rom. 4:5), because it cannot be said that every work of theirs was righteous.
 - 3) Thus Paul can speak of the man who is justified "apart from works" (Rom. 4:6). He is a man whose justification is not predicated on a sinless life. He is a man whose life is tainted by sin. The totality is tainted by sin. Therefore his justification will have to be on some basis other than his works.
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- 4) Such “works” are not only not required, they are an impossibility the moment one has sinned.
- b. James speaks of “works” in a practical sense. His epistle, the most Jewish in the New Testament, hues closely to the message of the OT prophets who combatted an empty, formal religion.
 - 1) As did the OT prophets, James urges practical application of God’s law, *e.g.*, consideration of the fatherless and the widows.
 - 2) As did the OT prophets, James rebukes a preoccupation with the trappings of wealth while neglecting the poor.
 - 3) Such “works” are not only required, they are a part of the life of faith that is the condition of justification.
- E. Our initial justification truly is not conditioned upon works in any sense other than that of Jn. 6:29.
 1. Certainly not in the sense of Romans 4:5.
 2. Nor in the sense of James 2 and Ephesians 2:10.
- F. But our ultimate salvation is conditioned upon faith, or faithfulness, *i.e.*, trust, and trustworthiness, and a trust in God that is not manifested as a life conformed to his will is no trust at all.

Conclusion:

- I. In Galatians, the contrast between faith and works is the contrast between Christ and the Law. The Law had its role, but that role didn't include providing justification. Christ is our justification. We put our faith in Him, not in works of the Law. That was Paul's message to the Galatians.
- II. Today, we too are justified by faith, and should not be reluctant to say so, with no qualifiers. When we do so, we are not talking about a mere intellectual faith, the sort the demons have. We are talking about a faith that is a trust—not merely a trust that God exists but a trust in what God says, a trust in the atoning death of Christ, a trust that includes being crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), that is, a trust that includes obedience. We don't need to add, “and baptism,” to be correct. Being baptized into Christ's death is a part of this.

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