

**Romans (61):**  
**What the Law teaches about Faith and Works**

Last Lord's Day we sought to give attention and emphasis to the centrality of faith to our Christian life. Faith is not only the instrument by which God justifies sinners, but faith is the instrument by which God sanctifies His saints. As Paul wrote in **Galatians 2:19ff**:

“For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and *the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God*, who loved me and gave Himself for me. I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.” (Gal 2:19ff)

The righteousness we needed and received freely in our justification was not obtained by our own effort, and the righteousness we need in our sanctification will not be attained by through our own effort apart from God's enabling grace. We are to call upon our Savior Jesus Christ to subdue in us and for us the forces of sin that are too great for us. We are to ask Him to give us the Holy Spirit to enable us to live before Him. He must do it. He must enable it, or we will not be successful.

As we return to our study of Romans we arrive to the paragraph of Romans 10:5-13. [This may take us two Sundays to work through the issues that arise as we consider God's truth and the current state of evangelicalism.] The apostle had just set forth the failure of Israel to attain righteousness through the law even while the Gentiles had attained righteousness (though they had not the law). The reason for the failure of one and the success of the other was due to the matter of faith. The Gentiles had embraced Jesus Christ in faith but “Israel”, that is, most Jewish people, had failed to believe on Jesus Christ. Israel's failure was in spite of the fact that they had the law that was directing them to believe in Jesus Christ, who was promised to come to save His people from their sins. In the paragraph now before us the apostle shows the scriptural (i.e. Old Testament) reason and evidence for God bestowing salvation upon the Gentiles but not upon Israel. Here is **Romans 10:5-13**:

<sup>5</sup>For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that “the person who does the commandments shall live by them.”<sup>1</sup> <sup>6</sup>But the righteousness based on faith says, “Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’” (that is, to bring Christ down)<sup>7</sup> or “‘Who will descend into the abyss?’” (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). <sup>8</sup>But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart” (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); <sup>9</sup>because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup>For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup>For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup>For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup>For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

Paul shows Israel's culpability for having failed to believe on Jesus Christ by showing that God's law had clearly taught them that they were to seek God through faith rather than through the works of the law. Paul quotes a number of verses from the Old Testament to demonstrate that God had revealed the truth of

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<sup>1</sup> Interestingly the ESV does not designate the quotation in verse 5 with quotation marks. I would guess that they translated it as though Paul were paraphrasing Moses rather than quoting him. I supplied the quotation marks in this block quote of Romans 10:5 from the ESV, as the translators of The New King James Version did so in their translation.

this matter to them. Paul cited these verses to demonstrate that the Scriptures plainly taught Israel the way of faith: Leviticus 18:5, “You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD”; Deuteronomy 30:12, “It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend to heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’”; and Deuteronomy 30:14, which reads, “But the word is very near you. It is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it.”<sup>2</sup> He then cited other Old Testament verses to describe the faith that brings salvation. He quoted Isaiah 28:16, “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Behold, I am the one who has laid as a foundation in Zion, a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation: ‘Whoever believes will not be in haste.’” He also quoted from Joel 2:32, which reads, “And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” And so, in this single paragraph of Romans 10:5-13 the apostle cited five different Old Testament Scripture passages. The first two (actually three), Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:12 and 14, describe the law of God given at Mount Sinai from the perspective of one attempting to keep the law for righteousness as well as for trusting God for the gift of righteousness through faith alone. And so we see that “Moses speaks of the righteousness which is of the law and defines what it is and he also speaks of the righteousness of faith.”<sup>3</sup>

Now, when one considers the context of *the first verse that Paul cited, Leviticus 18:5*, it does not appear to fit the context of Moses’ teaching. In other words, when Moses originally writing this verse, he was not advocating what salvation by works looks like, rather, he was simply describing the fact that God would bless those who kept his law. **John Murray**, a reformed 20<sup>th</sup> century scholar and commentator of Romans, wrote of the paradox of Paul’s use of the verses that Paul quoted:

But there are difficulties connected with the particular passages quoted, especially in the application Paul makes.

The difficulty with the first (Lev. 18:5) is that in the original setting it does not appear to have any reference to legal righteousness as opposed to that of grace. Suffice it to say now that the formal statement Paul appropriates as one suited to express the principle of law-righteousness. It cannot be doubted but that the proposition, “The man that doeth the righteousness of the law shall live thereby”, is, of itself, an adequate and watertight definition of the principle of legalism.<sup>4</sup>

Biblical scholars are not universally agreed that when the New Testament writers quoted from the Old Testament that they followed the context of the Old Testament writers.<sup>5</sup> But I believe that it has been demonstrated that it is the case that generally the New Testament writers were careful to maintain the context of the Old Testament passages they cited. But this instance of Leviticus 18:5 is a difficult one. This was so much so that John Murray treated the matter in one of 6 appendices in his Romans commentary.<sup>6</sup> There he explained how one should understand this statement used by Paul. Here is a summary of his comments, which I believe are correct.

There does not need to be any question but Paul in Romans 10:5 makes allusion to Leviticus 18:5 more directly than to any other Old Testament passage.<sup>7</sup> He places the principle stated in Leviticus 18:5 in opposition to the righteousness which is of faith and calls it “the righteousness which is of the law”. The problem that arises from this use of Leviticus 18:5 is that the latter text does not appear in a context that deals with legal righteousness as opposed to that of faith. Leviticus 18:5 is in a context in which the

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<sup>2</sup> These citations are all from **The English Standard Version** (ESV).

<sup>3</sup> John Murray, *Romans* (Eerdmans, 1965), vol. 2, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. In Thomas Schreiner’s commentary he describes other efforts to explain Paul’s use of Lev. 18:5 in Rom. 10:5 other than Murray’s proposal, which he dismisses through a number of good arguments. Although Schreiner believed that a slightly different explanation than that of Murray is to be preferred, it would seem to me that Murray’s explanation and treatment is legitimate. See Thomas Schreiner, *Romans* (Baker Academic, 1998), pp. 551-556.

<sup>5</sup> A thorough treatment of this matter from different perspectives may be found in Greg Beale, ed., *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?* (Baker Books, 1994.) 440pp.

<sup>6</sup> Murray, pp. 245-268.

<sup>7</sup> Apparently the ESV translators did not think so for they did not even place Paul’s words in quotation marks!

claims of God upon his redeemed and covenant people are being asserted and urged upon Israel. In this respect Leviticus 18:1-5 is parallel to Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21. The preface is “I am the Lord Your God” (Lev. 18:2) and corresponds to the preface to the ten commandments (Exod. 20:2; Deut. 5:6). The whole passage is no more “legalistic” than are the ten commandments. Hence the words “which if a man do, he shall live in them” (vs. 5) refers not to life accruing from doing a legalistic framework but to the blessing attendant upon obedience in a redemptive and covenant relationship to God. In this respect Leviticus 18:1-5 has numerous parallels in the Pentateuch and elsewhere (cf. Deut. 4:6; 5:32, 33; 11:13-15, 26-28; 28:1-14; Ezek. 20:11, 13). It is the principle enunciated in the fifth commandment (cf. Exod. 20:12; Eph. 6:2, 3). Thus the question is: could Paul properly have appealed to Leviticus 18:5 as an illustration of works-righteousness in opposition to that of faith? In order to answer the question it is necessary to deal with the three distinct relationships in which the principle “the man that does shall live” has relevance.

Here Murray makes mention of this principle illustrated in the fifth commandment, which reads: “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you” (Exo. 20:12). Here God’s blessing is promised upon obedience, but it need not, even should not be regarded as reflecting blessing earned through works-righteousness. The fifth commandment promises God’s blessing upon the child’s obedience to the commandment to honor his father and mother. ***This is not a blessing bestowed due to the merit of obedience, but due to the manifestation of a just God for awarding righteous behavior with the blessings of life.*** This is very important to understand and acknowledge. If this is understood, it will result in becoming a corrective to classical dispensational teaching that permeates evangelicalism. Let me explain.

This principle that Murray sets forth is indeed biblical, but it is one that classical dispensationalists did not and still do not recognize or acknowledge.<sup>8</sup> They assume wrongly that whenever God’s blessing was contingent on obedience, then it must be only due to the works-righteousness principle. Therefore, they conclude that any and all such commands are legalistic and do not apply to the New Testament believer. They believe that any and all works mentioned in the Bible are assumed to be meritorious. This leads them to think in only two categories, grace and meritorious works. Any and all commands that demand obedience in order to obtain God’s blessing are viewed as legalistic and should not be applied to the Christian. Here are the words of **Lewis Sperry Chafer**, the founder of Dallas Theological Seminary:

When any work is undertaken for God by which it is hoped thereby to gain favor, that work is wrought of necessity on the basis of pure law. On the other hand, when any work is undertaken for God because it is recognized that divine favor and blessing already have been received, it is wrought in harmony with pure grace. Thus the highest ideal of grace if prostituted by the motive of securing divine favor, takes on the character of law.<sup>9</sup>

Here is a more extended statement of the dispensationalist’s hermeneutic as articulated by Chafer:

The second major distinction between the teachings of the law and the teachings of grace is seen in the varying order between divine blessing and the human obligation. This variation is found to exist when the principle of grace is compared with the principle of the law in any form of the law whatsoever. (Note the absoluteness of this statement-Lars) It is equally true of the law of Moses, the law of the kingdom (here is referring to his teaching of a future Jewish millennium-Lars), or, when legally stated, of the larger conception of the law as being the whole revealed will of God. When the human obligation is presented first, and the divine blessings made to depend on the faithful discharge of this obligation it is of and in conformity

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<sup>8</sup> By the term “classical dispensationalists” we are referring to old school men like C. I. Scofield, Lewis Sperry Chafer, John Walvoord, Charles Ryrie, and a host of others. Progressive dispensationalists, such as John MacArthur, have corrected the error that is set forth here, nevertheless, lingering effects are seen by them from time to time. They continue to view only those OT verses repeated in the new Testament as authoritative for Christians.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis Sperry Chafer, ***Grace*** (Zondervan Publishing House, 1922, 1950), p. 106.

with law. When the divine blessing is presented first, and the human obligation follows, it is of and in conformity with pure grace. The varying orders under law and grace may be stated in the words “do and live”: or “live and do.” In the case of the law, it is *do* something with a view of being something; in the case of grace, it is be *made* something with a view to doing something. Is the Christian under grace saved and kept *by* good works? The law said, “If you do good, I will bless you”; grace says, “I have blessed you, now do good.” Under the law, man lives well to *become* accepted of God; under grace man lives well since it *becomes* one to live well who is already accepted. The law presents first a human work to be *done*: grace always presents first a divine work to be *believed*. Law begins with the question as to what man ought to *do*; grace always presents first a divine work to be *believed*. Law begins with the question as to what man ought to *do*; grace begins with the question as to what God has already *done*. Every word of the law revelation is thus made to be a conditional covenant of *human* works: while every word of the grace revelation is made to be an unconditional covenant of *divine* works.<sup>10</sup>

The result of this hermeneutical principle is that all works demanded of God in order to receive His blessing were to be seen as meritorious works, in other words, which is by definition legalistic. This results in the classical dispensationalists picking and choosing what portions of Scripture apply to New Testament Christians. The outcome of this thinking is that whole portions of the Word of God are practically excluded from the Christian canon. Chafer wrote:

The teachings of grace, it will be found, comprise all of the teachings of the Epistles, the Acts, and also certain portions of the Gospels apart from their mere historical features...

In discovering the fact and scope of the teachings of grace, it will be noted that, (1) The Christian’s daily life is to be directed only by teachings of grace, (2) The law is excluded from the grace teachings of Christ, (3) The law is excluded from the teachings of the Apostles, and (4) the life and service of the Apostle Paul is an illustration of a life which is lived under grace.<sup>11</sup>

Here we see how classical dispensationalists advocated only some of Scripture to be the authoritative Word of God to New Testament Christians. This hermeneutical principle is extended to the teachings of Jesus Christ in the gospels also. Only “grace” teachings of Jesus are to be understood as having authority for the Christian. The “legalistic” teachings of Jesus were to the Jews that He was addressing who were still under the law of Moses. And so, dispensationalists cautioned Christians not to regard all of Jesus’ teachings as authoritative instruction to them. Chafer wrote,

There is a dangerous and entirely baseless sentiment abroad which assumes that every teaching of Christ must be binding during this age simply because Christ said it. The fact is forgotten that Christ, while living under, keeping, and applying the law of Moses, also taught the principles of His future kingdom, and, at the end of His ministry and in relation to His cross, He also anticipated the teachings of grace. If this three-fold division of the teachings of Christ is not recognized, there can be nothing but confusion of mind and consequent contradiction of truth.<sup>12</sup>

The informed (and reformed) Christian almost reels under the blow of the absurdity of these words. Again, the point that we are making is that they fail to understand that ***the Bible does speak of God’s blessing upon ones who are obedient but that God does not do so because He regards that obedience as meritorious.*** It is simply a just thing for God to bless obedience and conformity to righteousness; obedience need not be viewed as always meritorious.

The classical dispensationalist would have to argue from his perspective that the fifth commandment is not directly applicable to the New Testament Christian because it promises blessing only upon and due to obedience. One major problem with this view is that to apply their principle of interpretation to the fifth

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, pp. 183f.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, pp. 86f.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp. 179f.

commandment in Exodus 20:12, renders one incapable of justly dealing with Paul's quotation and application of the fifth commandment to the Christians at Ephesus. Ephesians 6:1 and 2 read, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

Another example of God promising blessing contingent upon obedience but it is not according to a legalistic principle is Paul's quotation of Leviticus 26:12 and its application to the church at Corinth. We read in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 these words.

<sup>14</sup>Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? <sup>15</sup>What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? <sup>16</sup>What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said,

"I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them,  
and I will be their God,  
and they shall be my people.

<sup>17</sup>Therefore *go out from their midst,*  
and *be separate from them,* says the Lord,  
and *touch no unclean thing;*  
*then* I will welcome you,

<sup>18</sup>and I will be a father to you,  
and you shall be sons and daughters to me,  
says the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. 6:14-18 ESV)

Here is a New Testament passage in one of Paul's epistles in which God promises blessing conditioned upon obedience. The classical dispensationalists have a principle of hermeneutics that they claim to follow and by which any and all Scripture should be interpreted. If they were consistent, they would have to also declare that Paul is here guilty of legalism

But if what Chafer and other dispensationalists say about their understanding of law and grace, then the risen Lord Jesus also lapsed into the error of legalism when he addressed the churches of Asia Minor in Revelation 2 and 3. For example, He said to the church at Philadelphia:

<sup>10</sup>"Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. <sup>11</sup>Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. <sup>12</sup>He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. <sup>13</sup>He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." (Rev 3:10-13)

We also read his conditional blessing for the church at Laodicea:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne." (Rev 3:20 NKJ)

Here, the blessing of fellowship with Jesus Christ is conditioned on the Christians in the church at the church of Laodicea opening the door as well as overcoming. If the principles of dispensationalism were applied consistently, then the Lord Jesus was being legalistic, for He assured and promised His blessing upon them conditioned on their obedience to His commands. The point is this: not all works that God holds forth as necessary to receive His blessing are to be regarded as meritorious. He makes the demands. His grace enables His people to obey. But their obedience is not meritorious.

In his appendix on how Paul used Leviticus 13:5 in Romans 10:5 Murray described three principles, which may be summarized as follows: ***First, this principle describes God's just dealings with people who exhibit righteousness in their lives.*** Wherever God sees righteousness, it is fitting and right for Him to grant life and blessing. Just as sin deserves God's wrath, so obedience to God warrants God's blessing.

“Perfect righteousness must elicit God's favour or complacency and with this favour goes the life that is commensurate with it. This would have obtained for Adam in sinless integrity apart from any special constitution that special grace would have contemplated.”

In other words, Adam would have deserved God's blessing of life had he not sinned and it would not have been a result of God's grace but the result of God dealing justly with a righteous man. But after the fall of man into sin, this principle could no longer be applicable to us, for all that we do is tainted by sin. Even our acts of righteousness are sinful.

But we are all like an unclean thing,  
And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;  
We all fade as a leaf,  
And our iniquities, like the wind,  
Have taken us away. (Isa. 64:6)

A ***second principle*** reflected is reflected in these words in the light of man's sinfulness: ***It “must be regarded as totally inoperative within the realm of sin.”***<sup>13</sup> Justification before God by doing something is not a viable possibility for fallen mankind. The only way of justification before God is by God's grace in that He grants the gift of righteousness through faith alone apart from works.

The ***third principle*** follows from the second, “***this do and thou shalt live' can have no validity in our sinful state as the way of justification and acceptance with God.***” If this were not the case, there would be no need for the gospel. This principle negates and repudiates all other religions but that which adheres to salvation through the gospel of Jesus Christ alone. The teaching that people are saved through what they do rather than what they believe is at the heart of most heresy. It is the common difference between true Christianity and all other religions.

And yet, although “the person who does the commandments shall live by them” is not a way of salvation, it is the way in which people with salvation are to live. The salvation that God's grace brings to His people through Jesus Christ enables them to live by the commandments. Paul made that very clear that this was God's work of sanctification in His people whom He has justified.

<sup>3</sup>For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. (Rom. 8:3ff)

And so, obedience to the law of God is the way of life for the one whom God justifies by grace through faith alone.

The new life is one of righteousness in obedience to the commandments of God (cf. 6:13, 14, 16, 17, 22; 8:4). In a word, it is obedience (cf. 13:8-10). So Paul can say in the most absolute terms, “f ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live” (8:13). In the realm of grace, therefore, obedience is the way of life. He that does the commandments of God lives in them. It could not be otherwise. The fruit of the Spirit is well-pleasing to God and the fruit

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<sup>13</sup> Murray, p. 250.

of the Spirit is obedience... The witness of Scripture to the necessity and actuality of this in the redeemed, covenant life of believers is persuasive. It is this principle that appears in Leviticus 18:5 and in other passages from the Old Testament cited above. "Fear the Lord, and depart from evil: it will be health to thy navel, and arrow to his bones" (Prov. 3, 7, 8).<sup>14</sup>

Whereas Paul cited Leviticus 13:5 to describe the righteousness of the law, which no sinner can attain, he cited Deuteronomy 30:12 and 14 in Romans 10:6 and 7 in order to describe the gift of righteousness that is received through faith.

<sup>6</sup>But the righteousness based on faith says, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down)<sup>7</sup> or "'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead).

In contrast to one who thinks that to be right with God requires great effort by keeping God's law, Paul shows that true righteousness before God is based on faith. What Paul was saying is that through faith the blessings of God are readily accessible, even easily obtainable. Paul adds a parenthetical explanation suggesting the effort would be an impossible task for it would necessitate doing something that only Jesus Christ could do and has actually done.

That Paul shows from these verses in Deuteronomy that righteousness is through faith not through works suggests to us the nature of the Mosaic covenant within the nation of Israel related with God. It would seem that Paul cited these verses from the law of Moses in a manner that reveals the covenant that God had established with Israel at Mount Sinai was primarily a covenant of grace, not a covenant of works. This requires some explanation.

We should first understand that any relationship that mankind may have with the one true God must be based upon a covenant between them, one which is initiated and made by God and extended toward man. The reason for this is because God is so greatly distant from man whom He has created. God is infinite in all of His attributes; man is finite in his person and in all of his abilities. Yet God has purposed to know and to maintain a relationship with him. Man is incapable of approaching and knowing God through his own limited abilities and efforts. If God and mankind are to know one another, God must condescend to reveal Himself and take the initiative to establish the grounds, the means, and the terms of that relationship. Our confession states the need for a covenant in order for us to have a relationship with God.

The distance between God and the creature is so great, that although reasonable creatures do owe obedience to him as their creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he hath been pleased to express by way of covenant.<sup>15</sup>

God has always dealt with human beings on the basis of covenant. ***A covenant is like a contract, by which God establishes the terms and conditions upon which He and mankind may relate with one another. A covenant is an agreement between two parties upon which a relationship is established.***

Broadly speaking, God relates to people based upon **two covenants**, which are very distinct in nature from one another. Reformed theologians have described these by the terms, ***the covenant of works*** and ***the covenant of grace***. Paul's contrast in Romans 10:5-7 between the righteousness through the law and the righteousness through faith reflect these two kinds of covenants. It is very important to understand the nature of these two covenants, for herein lies the reason that we are in need of salvation from our sin and the manner in which we may receive salvation through Jesus Christ.

The covenant of works is grounded on man's ability to keep God's law; the covenant of grace is grounded on Jesus Christ keeping God's law on behalf of believers and paying for their sins. When man relates with God based on the covenant of works, it only results in condemnation and eternal punishment; when man relates with God based on the covenant of grace, it will most certainly result in the forgiveness of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>15</sup> *The Baptist Confession of Faith of 1689*, art. 7, par. 1.

sins, the gift of righteousness, and the blessing of everlasting life. People are damned for failing to keep the covenant of works; people are saved from sin through believing the Gospel, the manner in which the benefits of the covenant of grace are obtained.

All of God's dealings with all people through all of history may be seen and understood according to the principles and God's administration of these two covenants. Although the story of the Bible unfolds through two Testaments, with many centuries transpiring from the beginning of history to its consummation, and although the Bible records God's dealings with many various peoples in many various lands, and the Bible records several different covenants that God enacts with man through history, the entire Bible may be understood in the administration of these two covenants that God has made. Through these two covenants God glorifies Himself by bringing His judgment upon His enemies and bringing salvation to those He loves.

Now commonly people view the Mosaic covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai as a covenant of works. However, Paul argued in Romans 10:5-7, by citing these passages from Leviticus and Deuteronomy, that the Old Testament taught that righteousness was through faith, not works. Paul was arguing that God had established a covenant of grace through the Mosaic Covenant. The people should have responded in faith. But rather, they relied upon their works of the law assuming that this merited God's favor toward them. The bottom line is this, when the people of Israel failed to believe and trust in God's grace toward them and viewed the law in a legalistic fashion, the law acted as a covenant of works for them. But when they were taught by the law to see their sinfulness and helplessness to remedy their guilt and pollution but looked to God's provision alone, the law was to them a manifestation of God's covenant of grace to them.

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Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen. (Heb. 13:20f)