

Refutation Of Romans 4 Teaching Faith Alone

6th Edition

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We cannot come up with our own private interpretations of Scripture which neglect the context in order to usurp the truth with our own ideas. Scripture cannot contradict the broad context of all of Scripture. But context is also more than just what the next few verses, chapters, a whole book, or even all of the books say. It's also the historical settings, the languages, the idiomatic expressions, and etc. We need to first and foremost ask, what did this mean to those in the time of the writings. One thing that is important to understanding Scripture is to know Hebraic culture and idiomatic expressions. Even the Greek NT is full of Hebraisms. We also cannot ignore Assembly history right after and close to the Apostles' time. I firmly believe we should not come up with interpretations which contradict the broad context of Scripture, but should be in harmony with it, and with the character of God, and our interpretations must not be sinful ones that are damaging to righteousness. True doctrine is according to piety (1 Timothy 6:3; Titus 1:1).

This is why I do not believe that what the biblical writers (especially Paul) also seem to literally say, according to what one might get at face value from the literal meanings of words (Hebrew, Greek, etc.), and their grammar, is what they always actually mean. This is especially true with Paul. For those who accept 2 Peter, chapter 3 has Peter warning the flock that some of Paul's letters, or some things in Paul's letters are difficult to understand, that are easily distorted by the unlearned to promote lawless doctrine, while seemingly confirming that Paul is speaking the same things as him and rest of the Apostles are speaking. And in 2 Corinthians 11:6 Paul admits the possibility that he might be an *idiotes* (an *idiot/ignoramus/unearned one/common person*; I'm betting this Greek word is where we get the English word *idiot* from) in *logos* (*word or logic*). Meaning that he admits of the possibility that he sometimes has a hard time getting his point across by use of words in his writings, or he has a hard time always using solid logic and reasoning skills. But he confirms to them that even if this is true, he is not an *idiotes* (an *idiot/ignoramus/unearned one/common person*) in the knowledge [of the Truth], but he makes himself manifest in every way, and in all things—meaning, “if you want to know what I believe and preach, look at my walk,” which we see his walk clearly when we read the history of his deeds in Acts; he was a faithful Torah-abiding Israelite (all over Acts we see him keeping it according to the Spirit), who didn't believe in Faith Alone, but taught that it's repentance and faith proven by deeds for salvation (Acts 26:20). So now knowing this, when reading Romans 4:4-8, reading it literally according to the Greek grammar we might get the impression that this is saying that we can be justified/made righteous by faith alone without works; that while we are “not working” we can freely be forgiven and made righteous. But this contradicts the doctrine of Jesus which is according to piety which we cannot contradict (1 Timothy 6:3). We must first repent/change our mind—which is a work, and believe—which is a work (John 6:29), and do works worthy of that to be in the right with God (Isaiah 55:7; Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8-14; Acts 26:20; Zacchaeus “earning his salvation”: Luke 19:4-10). Because the one DOING

what is righteous is righteous EVEN AS HE is righteous (1John 3:7). To think otherwise is to be deceived. So check out a commentary by my friend on Matthew:

*“Matthew 20:1-16 ”20 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to **hire laborers** for his vineyard. 2 Now when he had agreed with the **laborers for a denarius a day**, he sent them into his vineyard. 3 And he went out about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, 4 and said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went. 5 **Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise.** 6 **And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here idle all day?’** 7 **They said to him, ‘Because no one hired us.’** He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, **and whatever is right you will receive.**’ 8 “So when evening had come, the owner of the vineyard said to his steward, ‘**Call the laborers and give them [their] wages, beginning with the last to the first.**’ 9 And when those came who [were hired] about the eleventh hour, **they each received a denarius.** 10 But when the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and **they likewise received each a denarius.** 11 And when they had received [it], they complained against the landowner, 12 saying, ‘These last [men] have **worked [only] one hour, and you made them equal to us who have borne the burden and the heat of the day.**’ 13 But he answered one of them and said, ‘**Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?** 14 **Take [what is] yours and go your way. I wish to give to this last man [the same] as to you.** 15 **Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with my own things?** Or is your eye evil because I am good?’ 16 So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.””*

And so you see that this parable proves that salvation is the WAGES we receive for our works! But here's the key: The Messiah chose to hire those who had sinned, but He didn't have to. Choosing those who had sinned to be His laborers, because they repented (forsook their sinful idleness), He hired them and gave them their JUSTLY EARNED WAGES!!! This is works salvation and is entirely consistent with grace! For it was by grace that you were hired and remained in your job. Your works was not what got you hired. Your repentance is what gets you hired. But if you do not do the good works you were hired for, and if you return to your sinful/idle ways, you will be fired and not hired again, not trustworthy for the job anymore. And they all agreed to work for the same wage of salvation! But notice the denarius (that is, salvation) they were only allowed to receive if they had WORKED. The last workers worked one hour, but they STILL WORKED. Death bed repentance does not involve any work, and therefore is a major lie.” [End of quote.]

I believe this is the key to what Paul is talking about in Romans 4:4-8. Even though Paul literally said that the faith of the one “not working” is counted as righteousness (present tense; Romans 4:5). I don't think he actually means that the person is not currently working, but WAS not working WHILE he was hired. The [Old & New Testament Greek Lexical Dictionary developed by Jeff Garrison for StudyLight.org](http://Old&NewTestamentGreekLexicalDictionary.developedbyJeffGarrisonforStudyLight.org) says:

“The present tense represents a simple statement of fact or reality viewed as occurring in actual time. In most cases this corresponds directly with the English present tense.

Some phrases which might be rendered as past tense in English will often occur in the present tense in Greek. These are termed "historical presents," and such occurrences dramatize the event described as if the reader were there watching the event occur. Some English translations rendersuch historical presents in the English past tense, while others permit the tense to remain in the present." [End of quote.]

I'm no expert on Greek grammar but this seems to be the case here. Just like the wretched man of Romans 7, which seems like it's talking about Paul in his present converted state, but according to context couldn't be, and if Paul did mean that (which is what most modern day mainstream churches believe today, and use as an excuse to keep on sinning, and believe they are saved and justified) he would be a huge idiot. But I'm convinced Paul was saying the same thing my friend is saying in his commentary, that those who haven't been idle/not obeying God's commandments/not doing righteousness/sinning, but have been working/obeying God's commandments/doing righteousness/not sinning the whole day/their whole life receive their pay/justification/salvation as a reward. But those who have been idle/not obeying God's commandments/not doing righteousness/sinning, who have not been working/obeying God's commandments/doing righteousness/not sinning receive their hire/entrance into God's Covenant to start serving him as a free gift of grace (they didn't deserve it) which results in the same pay/salvation as those who have been working/obeying God's commandments/doing righteousness/not sinning the whole day/their whole life. After getting hired they receive the same wage (everlasting life) as those who have been working. This confusing passage, which has been used as a proof text for Sola Fide/Faith Alone, must mean, according to context, what I'm saying. To further prove this, look at what else it says in Romans 4:5, "[...] *but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, [...]*"—*KJV*. This seems to be saying that God justifies those who are currently ungodly. But this contradicts his character in all the other Scriptures. God says he will not justify the wicked (Genesis 4:3-7; 18:17-32; Exodus 23:7; Nahum 1:3; Ecclesiastes 8:10-14). So as we have seen above, those who God gave grace to, were idly ungodly at the time they were undeservingly hired, so that they could receive the same wage of salvation as those who had been working, and had worked the whole day/their whole lives, were no longer idle/ungodly at the time of, and after they were hired/justified/set right. Thus righteousness/credentials/experience is credited to them that have not been working/do not have the credentials/experience so that they can be hired to receive the wage of eternal life. And thus those who are reckoned by the Judge as ungodly criminals, because of their criminal record of past ungodliness, are now once hired reckoned righteous by freely having their slate of past crimes wiped clean, and being forgiven (Romans 3:24-25; 4:7-8). Paul quoting David in Romans 4:7-8 when looked at it in context actually does damage to those who presuppose that the passage in question is about being justified by faith alone while still a practicing sinner. When we look at the example of David's repentance for committing adultery with Bathsheba and murdering Uriah, we see that it was a very long process of pious sorrow, regret, anguish, changing of the heart, turning from sin, and begging God in prayer and fasting before he could be restored to favour with God. But this little passage that Paul quotes of David is used out of context by Protestants to prove justification by faith alone, as if David just committed adultery and murder and then immediately said, "God forgive me, I'm a sinner." And then God immediately declared him righteous and they were buddies again, just like that. But it's clear when looking at the whole story this was not the case. David's process of repentance probably took at least a year of pious sorrow, regret, anguish, changing of the heart, turning from sin, and

begging God in prayer and fasting (REPENTANCE PROVEN BY DEEDS) before he was right with God again. And then there's the fact that the Hebrew word translated in the *KJV* as 'impute', A.K.A. to be reckoned/credited as (though it doesn't always have this sense in every instance), is not necessarily used in this sense in such a way as to impute something to someone to whom it doesn't at all belong (Genesis 15:5-6; Proverbs 27:14; Genesis 50:20; Deuteronomy 2:10-11, 20; Lamentations 4:2; 2Samuel 19:19; Psalms 32:2; Jonah 1:4). Moreover, David after saying, "[32:1] Blessed [is he whose] transgression [is] forgiven, [whose] sin [is] covered. [32:2] Blessed [is] the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, [...]" he says, "**and in whose spirit [there is] no guile,**" which Paul leaves out of his quote in Romans 4:7-8. David could **not** be speaking of someone who is "saved" in his sins, while still a practicing sinner; someone who God forgives of his sin while he is still willfully disobeying him, because there would still be guile in him then! So there is further reason to dismiss this passage as proving that we can be justified/called righteous by God, while we still don't do righteousness but do unrighteousness.

So while isolating the passage and taking the literal Greek grammar at face value it would appear that this passage is teaching justification by faith alone. But when looking at the whole context of the Bible and Jesus' doctrine of justification, Paul cannot be teaching this here. If he is, he is a false teacher. However, as far as I can tell, all of the earliest orthodox, Ante-Nicene Christians accepted Paul as true, yet just like I mentioned with the case of the Romans 7 wretch, that they never believed this was talking about Paul in his converted state, or any other saint under grace, neither did any of them believe in Justification by Faith Alone, as per the Magisterial Reformation—not even in Double Justification, where you upon conversion get justified by faith alone, and then after you prove your faith/salvation by your works, but in the end you get saved according to your works of faith.

To get technical here, the only faith alone that justifies, according to even the heretical and retarded Galatians forgery, is the faith that IMMEDIATELY/AT THE SAME TIME WORKS by love (Galatians 5:6); the faith of Hebrews 11, which is not a faith by itself.

And also let's not forget the linguistic context too. Like how Tim Warner's *LGV* version of Romans when commenting on 'pistis,' the Greek word for faith, says it is better translated as trust in our modern English, of which we should also remind ourselves carries with it a sense of trustworthiness/faithfulness/fidelity. And then there's the Hebrew word for faith/belief. It cannot ever mean faith alone. The Hebrew understanding of faith is firmness/steadfastness/trustworthiness/faithfulness/fidelity/trust. How can something that means this also mean faith alone? It's absurd. But people will do, believe, and say absurd things when they want to defend and justify their sinful man-made doctrines that defend and justify their sin. Everybody wants a free ride and a pie in the sky when they die. Modern mainstream "Christianity" seems to have developed its own language, and the rules of usage, and grammar, and context to match its sinful pagan theology.

Now, Genesis 15 does not say that Abraham was a lost sinner at the time that he was accounted righteous for believing the promise, like many of the Faith Alone camp make it out to be. He had already repented from being a pagan and walked faithfully with God for years. Now Abraham was indeed saved by God from deception of worshipping false gods along with his family without him having done anything to bring it about. God called Abraham while he was

yet a sinning pagan. God didn't call Abraham out because he was a perfect guy who did everything right and earned the right to be called in such a special way. Now Abraham's faith made him IMMEDIATELY OBEY God's instructions to leave his family and homeland behind and follow him. If Abraham had trusted in God being the true God and way of salvation and received him as such but not actually obeyed God's instructions would he still have been right with God and saved and received the promise? I think the answer is obvious. To say that he still would have been right with God and saved and received the promise is ludicrous! Using Abraham as an example of Faith Alone is so silly. But it indeed is a powerful example of salvation by grace through faith! (NOT Faith Alone) Abraham indeed has nothing to boast about for God calling him out of paganism. He didn't do anything to truly deserve it and bring it about. It was all by God's divine will. He was just doing his normal sinful thing when suddenly God called him out of darkness into light by his glorious Gospel, and Abraham's life changed after that forever!

Abraham was saved by grace through faith (NOT Faith Alone which is the faith of demons: James 2:14-26 specifically 2:24) not mere dead faithless hypocritical works of outward conformity to a law (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 32:10; Habakkuk 2:4; Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 21:1-4; Hebrews 6:1; 9:14; Romans 2; 1Corinthians 7:19). He was not saved by the fake gnostic Augustine, Luther and Calvin gospels, which have no power to save, but are only great swelling words of emptiness (2Peter 2:18-19; Jude 1:16). Faith OPERATES through LOVE (Leviticus 19:17-18; Deuteronomy 11:13). It PURIFIES heart and soul by OBEDIENCE to the TRUTH (Acts 15:9; 1Peter 1:22; Psalm 119:142; John 14:6). It doesn't leave you a filthy rags sinner with a desperately wicked heart (Jeremiah 17:9 Masoretic Text vowel pointed version; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 7:10). No, it overcomes the world; it escapes the corruption that's in the world through lust (2Peter 1:4; 1John 5:4-5). It's not a constant failure, the Romans 7 wretch, still in bondage to sin because it obeys it (John 8:32-34; Romans 6:16; 7:13-24; 2Peter 2:19). It has victory over sin because it rules over it (Genesis 4:7; John 8:35-36; Romans 6; 7:1-12, 25; 8). And this happens in actuality not by some magic cover of a foreign righteousness accredited to one's account (1John 3:3, 7). God doesn't see Jesus' imputed righteousness instead of our sin while we still live in sin; he sees us for what we are as we are (Revelation 2:2, 9, 13, 19, 23; 3:1, 8, 15).

The case of Abraham's justification through faith:

*“[4:16] Therefore [it is] of faith so that [it might be] according to grace; for the promise to be made sure to all the seed, not only to that which is of the Law, but to that also which is of [the] faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all [4:17] (as it has been written, "I have made you a father of many nations") --before God, whom he believed, who makes the dead live, and calls the things [which] do not exist as [though they] do exist. [4:18] [For he] who beyond hope believed on hope for him to become the father of many nations (according to that which was spoken, "So your seed shall be"). [4:19] And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body already dead (being about a hundred years old) or the deadening of Sarah's womb. [4:20] **HE DID NOT STAGGER** [not doing something which takes doing something else] at the promise of God through unbelief, but was **STRONG** [you have to do something to make yourself strong] in faith, **GIVING GLORY** [doing something] to God [sinning doesn't give glory to God], [4:21] and **BEING FULLY PERSUADED** [doing something] that what God had promised, He was also able to perform. [4:22] And **THEREFORE** it was imputed to him for*

righteousness.”—Romans MKJV

“[11:8] **BY FAITH** Abraham **OBEYED** [doing something] when he was called **TO GO OUT INTO** [doing something] a place which he was afterward going to receive for an inheritance. And [he] **WENT OUT** [doing something], **NOT KNOWING** where he went [doing something by going to some place which who knows what could be there].”—Hebrews MKJV

Abraham’s faith was working right from the start to the finish. He didn’t just have a mental assent and believe first, and then after get justified by God while still being a double-minded sinner, and then after a while of God working on him he finally started obeying partially, but even then he was a constant failure before God, and he needed to be covered with a magic cover so God wouldn’t see his sin but instead some nonexistent imputed righteousness. This is consistent with what the whole of the rest of Scripture teaches:

“[37:3] Trust in [YHWH], **AND do good**; [THEN] you shall dwell in the land, and you shall be fed on truth. [...] [37:27] **Depart from evil and do good**; and [THEN] live forevermore.”—Psalm MKJV

O wow, somebody needs to tell David it's not of works, only faith alone by itself. Peter too:

“[1:5] And beside this, giving all diligence, **ADD TO YOUR FAITH** virtue; and to virtue knowledge; [1:6] And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; [1:7] And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. [1:8] For **IF THESE THINGS BE IN YOU**, and abound, **THEY MAKE [YOU that ye shall]** neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [1:9] >>>But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.<<< [[[This guy has been saved before seeing that he was purged from his former sins before, but now he has fallen away and become blind.]]] [1:10] Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to **MAKE YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE: FOR IF YE DO THESE THINGS**, [which would be impossible if Faith Alone, OSAS and Unconditional Election were true] [[[THEN]]] ye shall never fall: [1:11] **FOR SO** an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—2Peter KJV

Let's get real. Faith and (TRUE) obedience are synonymous as the Scripture teaches:

“[1:1] Blessed [is] the man who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the way of sinners, and has not sat in the seat of the scornful. [1:2] But his delight [is] only in the Law of [YHWH]; and in His Law he meditates day and night. [1:3] And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivulets of water that brings forth its fruit in its seasons, and its leaf shall not wither, and all which he does shall be blessed. [1:4] The wicked [are] not so, but [are] like chaff which the wind drives away. [1:5] Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. [1:6] For [YHWH] knows the way of the righteous; but the way of the ungodly shall perish.”—Psalm MKJV

Compared with:

“[17:7] Blessed [is] the man who trusts in [YHWH], and [YHWH] is his trust. [17:8] For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters; [it] sends out its roots by the river, and [it] shall not fear when the heat comes, but its foliage shall be green; and he is not worried in the year of drought, nor will it cease from yielding fruit.”—Jeremiah MKJV

Having faith in YHWH and turning from sin and keeping the Law of YHWH are SYNONYMOUS! Keeping the Law OF GOD out of fidelity (not out of a mere robotic works checklist mindset, that is). You can't separate them!

Even believing in Jesus itself is a work, a deed required of one to be saved:

*“[16:30] And leading them outside, he said, Sirs, **what must I DO that I may be saved?** [16:31] And they said, **Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.**”—Acts LITV (Notice they didn't say, “You don't have to do anything to be saved except believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.”)*

Even a work of the Law, a work that is commanded by the Law:

“[18:18] I will raise up to them a prophet of their brethren, like thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them as I shall command him. [18:19] And whatever man shall not hearken to whatsoever words that prophet shall speak in my name, I will take vengeance on him.”—Deuteronomy Brenton LXX

“[3:22] For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. [3:23] And it shall come to pass, [that] every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”—Acts KJV