

# Romans 3:27-28 Commentary

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**Romans 3:27** [Where then](#) is [boasting](#)? It is [excluded](#). By [what kind](#) of [law](#)? Of [works](#)? [No](#), but by a [law](#) of [faith](#). ([NASB: Lockman](#))

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**Greek:** Pou oun e kauchesis; exekleisthe (3SAPI). dia poiou nomou; ton ergon; ouchi, alla dia nomou pisteos

**Amplified:** Then what becomes of [our] pride and [our] boasting? It is excluded (banished, ruled out entirely). On what principle? [On the principle] of doing good deeds? No, but on the principle of faith. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**NIV:** Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith. ([NIV - IBS](#))

**Phillips:** What happens now to human pride of achievement? There is no more room for it. Why, because failure to keep the Law has killed it? Not at all, but because the whole matter is now on a different plane - believing instead of achieving. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** Where then is the glorying? It was once for all excluded. Through what kind of a law? Of the aforementioned works? Not at all, but through the law of faith

**Young's Literal:** Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. On what principle? On that of observing the law? No, but on that of faith.

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans 3:21-5:21	Romans 6:1-8:39	Romans 9:1-11:36	Romans 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	God's Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " <a href="#">Jensen's Survey of the NT</a> "				

## WHERE THEN IS BOASTING: Pou oun e kauchesis:

- Ro 3:19; 2:17,23; 4:2; Ezek 16:62,63; 36:31,32; Zeph 3:11; Lk 18:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; 1Co 1:29, 30, 31; 4:7; Ep 2:8, 9, 10
- Romans 3 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

### Spurgeon comments...

Boasting is sure to be somewhere handy, ready to creep in if it can, for we are all prone to it; it is the common sin of our race: "Where is boasting then?"

Where is it? It is to be found in a great many people. It is common enough; but where ought it to be? Where does it get a footing? It is shut out/ There is no room for boasting in the heart that receives Christ. If a man were saved by works, he would have whereof to glory; boasting would not be shut out. But as salvation is all of grace, through faith in Christ, boasting is barred out in the dark, and faith gratefully ascribes all praise to God.

Faith's empty hand receives the free gift of grace, and that very fact excludes all boasting.

By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles, also: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.

Whether Jews or Gentiles, there was no salvation for them by the works of the law; the only way in which the circumcised or the uncircumcised could be justified was by faith. This principle does not make void God's law; on the contrary, it establishes it, and sets it on the only right and solid foundation. The gospel of the grace of God is the best vindication of his law.

Writing to the Corinthians **Paul** asks...

who regards you as superior? And what do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you **boast** as if you had not received it? (1Cor 4:7)

just as it is written (in Jer 9:23, 24) "LET HIM WHO **BOASTS**, **BOAST** IN THE LORD." (1Cor 1:31)

**Boasting** (2746) (**kauchesis** from **kauchaomai** = to boast) refers to the act of boasting about something. It expresses the idea of self-congratulation with or without sufficient reason. To boast means to speak of or assert with excessive pride, to express pride in oneself or one's accomplishments and often suggests ostentation or even exaggeration. In the present context **kauchesis** denotes the assertion of a claim upon God on the ground of one's works.

**Gilbrant** - This noun, related to **kauchaomai** and **kauchēma**, appears in classical Greek since 300 B.C. Its primary meaning is the "act of boasting" and by implication the "object of boasting." David's "boasting" of God is translated as "praise" in 1 Chronicles 29:13. The Septuagint also uses this term when referring to old age as a cause for boasting (Proverbs 16:31). Other examples of **kauchēsis** as the act or cause of boasting are found in God's answer to Jeremiah about the boasting of Israel (Jeremiah 12:13) and of the fact Israel was God's recipient of His crown (Ezekiel 16:12). The New Testament speaks of Paul's "glorying" in Jesus Christ (Romans 15:17), of Paul's "boasting" over the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:31; 2 Corinthians 7:4,14; 8:24) and Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 2:19), his "rejoicing" about a clear conscience before God (2 Corinthians 1:12), and "boasting" of the privilege of preaching the gospel without charge (2 Corinthians 11:10). The New Testament also speaks of James' warning that his readers not "boast" about tomorrow (James 4:16). "The emptiness of **kauchēsis** is revealed by the rhetorical question in Romans 3:27: 'What then becomes of boasting?' Through the law of faith all human glory is made of no account" (Hahn, "Boast," Colin Brown, 1:228). ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Kauchesis** - 11x - boasting(7), exultation(1), proud confidence(1), reason for boasting(2).

Rom. 3:27; Rom. 15:17; 1 Co. 15:31; 2 Co. 1:12; 2 Co. 7:4; 2 Co. 7:14; 2 Co. 8:24; 2 Co. 11:10; 2 Co. 11:17;  
1 Thess. 2:19; Jas. 4:16

**Kauchesis** in the **Septuagint** -

1 Chr. 29:13; Prov. 16:31; Jer. 12:13; Ezek. 16:12; Ezek. 16:17; Ezek. 16:39; Ezek. 23:26; Ezek. 23:42; Ezek. 24:25

Who does Paul have in mind? First, note that the definite article ("the") marks this boasting as something which is specific and presumably well known. With this in mind, it seems clear that Paul has in mind the religious position and opposition of the Jews (and by way application the mindset of any "religious" person).

In **Ephesians** Paul has a parallel statement writing that...

by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should **boast**. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

**Wiersbe** explains that...

If salvation is through the Law, then men can boast; but the principle of faith makes it impossible for men to boast. The swimmer, when he is saved from drowning, does not brag because he trusted the lifeguard. What else could he do? When a believing sinner is justified by faith, he cannot boast of his faith, but he can boast in a wonderful Saviour. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

**Newell** notes...

As one has quaintly said, "The Feast of Mercy was on, and the damsel Grace was at the door, admitting everyone who came on the ground of mercy alone. Old Mr. Boasting, in a high hat and fine suit, presented himself. 'Oh, 'said Grace, as she quickly shut the door in his face, 'There is no room for you here! The people here are feasting on the free gifts of God.' So Mr. Boasting was shut out!" ([Romans: Verse by Verse](#))

Paul immediately answers his rhetorical question about boasting...

**IT IS EXCLUDED: exekleisthe (3SAPI):**

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**Excluded** (1576) (**ekkleio** from **ek** = out + **kleio** = to shut) means literally to shut out. For example in secular Greek we find the

following uses -- "be excluded from one's home city" or "be shut outside the door of the tower". **Ekkleio** means to eliminate, to not allow, to exclude from a thing. **Ekkleio** is used here figuratively to describe making something impossible.

Boasting in works as a means of justification is completely shut out or banned. There is no room for man's boasting in God's plan of salvation. If God is saving by faith in Christ and not by our merit or our works, then what can we boast in? The aorist tense indicates the completeness of the act -- the exclusion referred to has been accomplished once for all.

The Amplified Version puts it plainly that boasting is "banished, ruled out entirely". Man has no "bragging rights" in this area!

The only other use of **ekkleio** is by Paul to describe a withdrawal of fellowship or association...

They (false teachers/Judaizers eagerly seek you, not commendably, but they wish to **shut you out**, (they desired to exclude the Galatian Gentiles from God's gracious salvation) in order that you may seek them.  
(Galatians 4:17)

**Vincent** writes that this is...

A peculiarly vivid use of the aorist tense. It was excluded by the coming in of the revelation of righteousness by faith.

Paul's point is that there is absolutely no room in one's salvation for boasting since salvation is, from beginning to end, a work of God on behalf of totally depraved and helpless people.

Do you attempt to bargain with God, making promises in an attempt to manipulate him? Do you secretly keep track of your good works, expecting that God will feel obliged to reward you in some manner? Have you lapsed into thinking God owes you health, prosperity, and happiness? Be careful, lest the only thing you really deserve is rebuke.

**Godet** - That glory (boasting) which man derives from his self-righteousness, and which the law had already foreclosed, has been finally excluded. And by what means? By a rule of works? Certainly not, for such a means would rather have promoted it, but by that of faith (Ro 3:26.) The apostle thus reaches the striking result that the rule of works would contradict the law, and that the rule of faith is that which harmonizes with it.

**Calvin** - "Paul is not here disputing merely concerning ceremonies, or any external works, but comprehends all works of every kind and degree. Boasting is excluded without all doubt, since we can produce nothing of our own that merits the approbation or commendation of God. And here he is not speaking of limitation or diminution of merit, since he does not allow the least particle of it. Thus, if boasting of works be removed by faith, so that it takes away from man all praise, while all power and glory are ascribed to God, it follows that no works whatever contribute to the attainment of righteousness." ([Romans 3: Commentary](#))

**Kent Hughes** writes that in this verse Paul presents "a call for humility, and humility paves the way for the exhilarating, infinite grace of God to deluge our bankrupt human hearts and bring us life. This is where all who are without Christ must begin. They must put down their pride and boasting and come with empty hands that they might receive this radical, true righteousness. ([Hughes, R. K. Romans: Righteousness from heaven. Preaching the Word. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books](#))

**Augustus Toplady** phrases it this way in his famous hymn [Rock of Ages](#)...

Not the labor of my hands  
Can fulfill Thy law's demands;  
Could my zeal no respite know,  
Could my tears forever flow,  
All for sin could not atone;  
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to the cross I cling;  
Naked, come to Thee for dress;  
Helpless look to Thee for grace;  
Foul, I to the fountain fly;  
Wash me, Savior, or I die.

**William Newell** writes that "In view of this new gospel-revelation of the finished work of Christ, who did the whole work for us on Calvary, and that by God's appointment, everything is seen to be of God, and not at all of man. Therefore, even the Jews, to whom the Law had been given, had their mouths completely stopped, "because there was no work done, " and no ground for boasting! ([Romans: Verse by Verse](#))

As **one** has quaintly said "The Feast of Mercy was on, and the damsel Grace was at the door, admitting everyone who came on the ground of mercy alone. Old Mr. Boasting, in a high hat and fine suit, presented himself. 'Oh, 'said Grace, as she quickly shut the door in his face, 'There is no room for you here! The people here are feasting on the free gifts of God.' So Mr. Boasting was shut out!" (from William Newell. Romans Verse by Verse).

**BY WHAT KIND OF LAW OF WORKS? NO, BUT BY A LAW OF FAITH: dia poiou nomou ton ergon; ouchi, alla dia nomou pisteos:**

- Ro 9:11,32; 10:5; 11:6; Ga 2:16) (Ro 7:21,23,25; 8:2; Mk 16:16; Jn 3:36; Ga 3:22; 1Jn 5:11,12
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Paul is asking rhetorically on what basis has boasting been banished? Is it on the basis of works? No way. The more we think about those things we feel we have merited or earned, the prouder we become, not the more humble!

**Spurgeon** writes that...

whenever we think that we have been performing any good works, we begin to boast at once.

**Law** ([3551](#)) (**nomos**) is etymologically something parceled out, allotted, what one has in use and possession; hence, usage, custom. "**Law**" is used in this context not as a reference to the Mosaic law but in the sense of **apinciple**.

**Godet** explains "**law**" in this context writing...

In these two questions the term **law** is taken in a general sense. This word is often used by Paul to denote a mode of action which is imposed on the individual, a rule to which he is subject, a principle which determines his conduct. Sometimes when thus understood it is taken in a good sense; for example, Ro 8:2: "the **law** of the spirit of life which is in Jesus Christ;" again it is used in a bad sense; so Ro 7:23: "the **law** which is in my members;" or, again, it is applied in both ways, good and bad at once; comp. Ro 7:21. As Baur well says, the word law denotes in general "a formula which serves to regulate the relation between God and man."

And so the **Amplified Version** translates this question as

On what principle? [On the principle] of doing good deeds? No, but on the principle of faith.

**Works** ([2041](#)) (**ergon**) means a deed or action in contrast to inactivity. It speaks of toil or effort in which one exerts strength or faculties to do or perform something. Works are the **result** of and never the **means** of salvation.

**Faith** ([4102](#)) (**pistis**) (Click more detailed study of pistis) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything. In Scripture **pistis** usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it.

**Law of faith** is another way of saying the principle of faith. In other words, God has not put the human race on a merit system based on keeping or not keeping the law, but on a faith system so that the basis of justification is simply believing what He has done for undeserving (except for hell!) sinners. This mercy filled, grace laden truth completely shuts the door on human boasting in regard to our humanity, our goodness, our ability to love God, etc (cp Jer 9:23,24).

The appropriate attitude of one who believes is shown by the humble tax-gatherer in the Temple who

was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God be merciful (hilaskomai = make reconciliation for, be propitious, be satisfied, be gracious, be favorably inclined - see study of related word hilasterion) to me, the sinner!' (Lk 18:13).

**John MacArthur** points out that "The greatest lie in the world, and the lie common to all false religions and cults, is that, by certain works of their own doing, men are able to make themselves acceptable to God. The greatest error in that belief is its sheer impossibility. But the greatest evil of that belief is that it robs God of His glory. ([MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

**William Newell** - "Law" in this instance is rule or plan. This "law, " or principle, of faith, applies not only to our justification, but to every aspect of the believer's life thereafter, -"building up yourselves on your most holy faith." (Jude 1:20, 21) "That life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God." (Gal 2:20-note; ) ([Romans: Verse by Verse](#))

In other words, if boasting is going to be excluded from justification, then justification has to be not only by faith, but also **apart from**

**works of Law.** If you try to mix works with faith as a means of justification, you undermine God's purpose to exclude all boasting. Stated another way, if salvation were by **works**, that would allow room for all kinds of self-congratulation. But when salvation is on the principle of faith, there is no room whatsoever for boasting. The justified person rightly says, "I did all the sinning and Jesus did all the saving." True faith disavows any possibility of self-help, self-improvement, self-salvation, looking only to Christ as Savior (cp Isa 45:22 [KJV has "Look unto Me and be ye saved"], Isa 45:23, 24, 51:1, 2).

**Romans 3:28** [For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law.](#) ([NASB: Lockman](#))

**Greek:** logizometha (1PPMI) oun pistei dikaiousthai (PPN) anthropon choris ergon nomou

**Amplified:** For we hold that a man is justified and made upright by faith independent of and distinctly apart from good deeds (works of the Law). [The observance of the Law has nothing to do with justification.] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

**Phillips:** believing instead of achieving. We see now that a man is justified before God by the fact of his faith in God's appointed Saviour and not by what he has managed to achieve under the Law. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

**Wuest:** for our reasoned conclusion is that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law.

**Young's Literal:** For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

**FOR WE MAINTAIN THAT A MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH: logizometha (1PPMI) oun pistei dikaiousthai (PPN) anthropon**

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**For** ([3767](#)) (**oun**) introduces a logical result or inference from what precedes. This verse, then, is a confirmation of what has been said before: "Boasting is excluded, for we maintain, that is, we are sure," etc.

Notice that Paul says **we**, this plural pronoun emphasizing that this is not just his personal opinion. He doesn't tell us specifically who has applied similar reasoning but salvation by faith not works is the resounding message one encounters from Genesis through the Revelation.

**Maintain** ([3049](#)) (**logizomai** from **logos** meaning reason) (Click in depth study of logizomai) is an interesting verb which Wuest says means "our reasoned conclusion". It conveys the idea of confident assurance and thus Paul is confidently assured that sinners are declared righteous only one way -- by faith.

The idea of **logizomai** is to think about something in a detailed and logical manner and to draw a conclusion based on this process of reasoning. In other words, Paul had studied and even practice (as a Pharisee of Pharisees) the alternative - man's attempt to achieve righteousness by his own effort without God's intervention. Solomon although not referring specifically to justification by faith nevertheless would have agreed that justification by works is the "Vanity of vanities". (Ecclesiastes 1:2)

**Man** ([444](#)) (**anthropos**) stands, not for man in distinction from other beings, but for anybody of the human race, whether Jew or Gentile, without reference to sex or nationality.

**Justified** ([1344](#)) (**dikaioo** from **dike** = expected behavior or conformity, not according to one's own standard, but according to an imposed standard with prescribed punishment for nonconformity) (**Click** more discussion of **dikaioo** in Ro 3:20) (**Click** another discussion of **dikaioo**) means to show or declare the rightness of something or someone. As used in this passage **dikaioo** means to be declared righteous before God or to be justified, the process being referred to as justification.

To be (note **passive voice** passive voice indicates action is conferred from an outside source) justified means that the believer is viewed in Christ as righteous, and is treated as such by God. The righteousness of our position in the Lord Jesus is increasingly manifested in our condition, as we

"grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (see **note 2** Peter 3:18).

As **Paul** reminds the saints at Corinth

no man should **boast** before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and **righteousness** and sanctification, and redemption. that, just as it is written (Je 9:23,24), "LET HIM WHO **BOASTS**, **BOAST** IN THE LORD." ([1Corinthians 1:29-31](#))

Since **justification** is in Christ and not in ourselves, it is a truth of position, not condition. We receive justification in the Lord Jesus by faith in the Word. It is a fact believed, not an experience received. It has nothing to do with our condition, but everything to do with our position. However, as we rest in our justified position, our spiritual condition is affected. We experience something of the new-found peace and joy of the Lord, and His love for us.

I have heard **justified** defined by some as "*Just as if I never sinned*". It sounds good because it somewhat rhymes but it's not a doctrinally sound definition. (See more discussion of "Justified-Is "Just-As-If-I'd" Never Sinned" Biblical?)

**C H Spurgeon** agrees that it is not an accurate statement writing that "I said that clothed in the righteousness of Christ, we are accepted **as if we had never sinned**. I correct myself—had we never sinned, we could only have stood in the righteousness of man. But this day by faith we stand in the righteousness of God himself. The doings and the dying of our Lord Jesus Christ make up for us a wedding dress more glorious than human merit could have spun, even if unfallen Adam had been the spinner."

**Righteousness** is frequently misunderstood often being associated with one's behavior. In other words, if people are behaving in a right (righteous) way, we say that they are "behaving righteously". But in the book of Romans **righteousness** does not directly touch on behavior. It is not what you **do** but in fact it is what you **are**! What you **are** is more important, because right behavior (righteous in practice) stems from what you are (righteous in position). The gift Paul is talking about, the gift from God, is that of a perfect, eternal, **righteous standing**. Justification is an event (a declaration by God) that occurs only once (when one initially believes upon or in Christ) but praise God is "valid" for all eternity.

Nothing before, nothing behind,  
The steps of faith  
Fall on the seeming void, and find  
The rock beneath.- Whittier

**Faith** (4102) (**pistis** - word study) means a firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness. Saving faith is not just mental assent but firm conviction, surrender to the truth and conduct emanating from that surrender. In sum, faith shows itself genuine by a changed life.

For more discussion of genuine/saving/justifying faith study James 2:14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 - then study the verse by verse notes on this vitally important topic - Jas 2:14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 26

The well-known Bible expositor **John MacArthur** adds that...

**Faith**, like grace, is not static. Saving faith is more than just understanding the facts and mentally acquiescing. It is inseparable from repentance, surrender, and a supernatural longing to obey. None of those responses can be classified exclusively as a human work, any more than believing itself is solely a human effort. ([The Gospel According to Jesus](#))

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It's easy to say to someone "**Simply trust.**" But as a devotional from **Our Daily Bread** says, simply trusting...

is one of the most difficult concepts to communicate to non-Christians. They have a hard time understanding that they can't do anything to earn God's favor. Jesus paid the penalty for all their sins when He died on the cross. To receive God's forgiveness and eternal life, and to have a right relationship with Him, all we need to do is cast ourselves on His mercy and trust Him to save us. The apostle Paul put it this way:

To him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness (see **note** Romans 4:5).

A person who understood this truth wrote,

For 30 years I had assumed that to swim I must constantly struggle to keep from sinking. One day an expert swimmer watched me for a few minutes and then shouted, 'Stop fighting the water and trust it to hold you up!' Under his direction, I lay flat in the water without moving. To my delight, it held me up. Why didn't someone tell me that years ago!

The writer then concluded,

So many people constantly struggle to become Christians. If they would only trust Christ, they would realize that He does the saving.

Have you been attempting to save yourself? If so, then stop trying and start trusting! —R W De Haan [Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)



We cannot earn our way to heaven  
By word or work or worth;  
But if we trust in Christ to save us,  
We will receive new birth. - Branon

**Salvation is a gift, not a paycheck.**

#### APART FROM WORKS OF THE LAW: *choris ergon nomou*:

- Ro 3:20, 21, 22,26; 4:5; 5:1; 8:3; Jn 3:14, 15, 16, 17, 18; 5:24; 6:40; Acts 13:38,39; 1Co 6:11; Ga 2:16; 3:8,11, 12, 13, 14,24; Php 3:9; Titus 3:7
- Romans 3 Resources - multiple sermons and commentaries

**Sola Gratia**  
**Sola Fide**  
**Soli Deo Gloria**

The **KJV Commentary** writes that justification by faith apart from works...

is the same conclusion which came to the heart of Martin Luther and spawned the Protestant Reformation. When this concept grasps our hearts we too come to the conclusion that salvation is ***sola gratia, sola fide, soli Deo gloria*** (by grace alone, through faith alone; to God alone be the glory). ([Dobson, E. G., Charles Feinberg, E. Hindson, Woodrow Kroll, H. L. Wilmington: KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson](#))

Faith and works of law, as a ground of justification, are mutually exclusive as Paul stated again in Galatians writing that...

nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. ([Galatians 2:16](#))

**Comment:** Morris states that "Some have argued that James contradicts Paul at this point, saying that Abraham and Rahab, for example, were "justified by works" (Jas 2:21-note, Jas 2:25-note). However, they were not justified by the "works of the law." Abraham lived before God gave the Mosaic law, and Rahab lived in a culture that had not heard of it. As a matter of fact, they were justified by faith in the eyes of God (Jas 2:23-note; Hebrews 11:31-note) and justified by works in the eyes of men (James 2:18-note) (**Ed note:** In other words their works demonstrated that they were already justified by faith). There is no contradiction, for genuine saving faith is inevitably demonstrated before men by "works of righteousness" (Titus 3:5-note; Ep 2:8, 9-notes, Ep 2:10-note). In any case, Paul makes it clear to the Galatians, and to us, that no one can ever be justified by keeping the law; James himself makes it plain that no one can keep the law fully (James 2:10). ([Morris, Henry: Defenders Study Bible. World Publishing](#))

**Apart from** ([5565](#)) (**choris** from **chora** = room, space of territory) means at a space from and so apart or separate from. **Choris** is a marker of dissociation, indicating a distinct separation from something, in this case the distinct separation of faith and works in regard to justification.

**Works** ([2941](#)) (**ergon**) refers to toil as an effort or occupation. Good works are acceptable unto God **only** through God's grace activating one's heart and are always the result of salvation and not the means of salvation. (See study of Good Deeds) The person who has no faith demonstrates by his evil works his separation from God.

This statement, in context with Romans 3:29,30, brings to a conclusion what Paul has been arguing and prepares the reader for the Old Testament example of Abraham to come in Romans 4.

God never gave the Law to be **aladder** by which we climb to Him and earn His acceptance. Instead God gave us the Law to be an **x-ray** to expose the extent of our sin and guilt, so we would see our need for his grace.

Paul is saying, "Justification is apart from works of the Law" because if it were based on the deeds of the Law, then the Gentiles who don't have the Law would be at a disadvantage and God would appear to be partial to the Jews (cp Dt 10:17, 2Chr 19:7, Ro 2:9, 10, 11-notes, Acts 10:34, 1Pe 1:17-note). He would not appear to be the God of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews. But, in fact, that is not the case, as [Ro 3:30-note] then makes plain



Since indeed God, who will justify the circumcised (Jews) by faith and the uncircumcised (Gentiles) through faith, is one.

In other words, there is one God over all peoples and nations (Gentiles) and over the Jews. There not many gods. In the similar way, there is only one way of getting right with this God; namely, by faith.

**Works of Law** are anything one does (besides faith "Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the **work of God**, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." Jn 6:29) to obtain a right standing with God (justification, God's declaration of righteousness). Many sinners vainly seek to earn their way to heaven by performing "good" works (in fact every other religion or cult other than Christianity has some form of works based salvation plan). But before a depraved sinner can do genuine good works for God (cp Jn 15:16, one day even our motives will be weighed! - 1Co 4:5), they must first believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:31, 1Jn 5:13), in Whom such works have been prepared (in eternity past) and by which they are empowered (by His Spirit, cp Jn 15:5, Ep 2:10-notes, Col 1:10-note). Good works do not precede salvation; they follow it (cp Jas 2:17-note). The only good work a sinner can do is to confess his sins, believe and receive Christ as Lord and Savior (Jn 6:28, 29, cp 1Jn 3:23). If you try to do anything (no matter how "good") besides trust the Gospel of grace (Acts 20:24) and peace (Eph 6:15) in order to get right with God, you are doing a "work of Law" - and you are still in the grip of sinful human pride that still thinks it can do something to please a perfectly holy God. Boasting is not excluded by "works of Law," but only by faith.

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.  
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;  
All other ground is sinking sand  
([Play hymn](#))

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**It's Too Late!** An Englishman by the name of Ebenezer Wooten had just concluded a preaching service in the village square. The crowd had dispersed, and he was busily engaged in loading the equipment. A young man approached him and asked, "Mr. Wooten, what must I DO to be saved?" Sensing that the fellow was trusting his own righteousness, Wooten answered in a rather unconcerned way, "It's too late!" The inquirer was startled. "Oh don't say that, sir!" But the evangelist insisted, "It's too late!" Then, looking the young man in the eye, he continued, "You want to know what you must DO to be saved. I tell you it's too late now or any other time. The work of salvation is DONE, completed, finished! It was finished on the cross." (Jn 19:30 - verb for finished = tetelestai = "Paid in full" - see note below) Then he explained that our part is simply to acknowledge our sin and receive by faith the gift of forgiveness. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

"'Tis finished!" on the Cross He said,  
In agonies and blood;  
'Tis finished! now He lives to plead  
Before the face of God.

'Tis finished! here our souls can rest,  
His work can never fail;  
By Him, our Sacrifice and Priest,  
We enter through the veil.

Within the holiest of all,  
Cleansed by His precious blood,  
Before Thy throne Thy children fall,  
And worship Thee, our God.

Boldly our heart and voice we raise,  
His Name, His blood, our plea;  
Assured our prayers and songs of praise  
Ascend by Him to Thee.  
by James G. Deck

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**PAID IN FULL** - When someone had a debt in ancient times and it was paid off, they would write **"TETELESTAI"** on the certificate of

debt to signify that it was '**PAID IN FULL**'. These were the exact words Jesus uttered just before dying. (cp Mk 10:45 "ransom", 1Pe 1:18-note). the concept of **tetelestai** is unfamiliar to most modern readers of the Bible, but it was used by various people in everyday life in the first century. For example, a servant would use it when reporting to his or her master, "I have completed the work assigned to me" (cp Jesus' words in Jn 4:34 with Jn 17:4) where verb teleioo is used with the same idea. Jesus had brought to completion all the Father had desired for Him to accomplish as the God Man (cp "made perfect" in Heb 5:8-note; He 5:8-note). In another usage, when a PRIEST examined an animal sacrifice and found it faultless, the word **tetelestai** would be used. Jesus, of course, is the perfect Lamb of God, without spot or blemish (cp Jn 1:29, 1Pe 1:18, 19-note). When an artist completed a picture, or a writer completed a manuscript, they might declare, "It is finished!" (tetelestai). Indeed, the death of Jesus on the cross "completes the picture" that God the Father had been painting from before the foundation of the world, as well as the old, old story that He had written in His Word, centuries before. Perhaps the most meaningful secular usage of **tetelestai** was by merchants, who wrote across the bill "*The debt is paid in full!*" When Jesus gave Himself on the cross, He fully met the righteous demands of a holy law and thus paid the sinners' debt (Ro 6:23-note) in full. None of the Old Testament sacrifices could take away sins, but could only cover sin. Only the Lamb of God's shed blood, for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant (Heb 9:15-note) could take away the sins of the world (Jn 1:29; Heb 9:24-note, He 9:25, 26-note, He 9:27, 28-note). In one final secular use of **tetelestai**, when a Roman citizen was convicted of a crime, the law of that day resulted in him being confined to prison. A so called "Certificate of Debt" was prepared that listed all the crimes he was convicted of and this certificate was nailed it to his cell door for all to see. The certificate of debt remained nailed there so all would be assured that the prisoner served his full sentence, and "paid in full" the penalty for his crimes. The very word that Jesus shouted from the Cross, "Tetelestai", was the same word that would be stamped across the prisoner's Certificate of Debt after he had completed his prison term. The idea was that the prisoner had "Paid in Full" for all his crimes. Then the criminal was given the certificate. He would be able to produce it to show that his crimes were "paid in full." He could never become a victim of "double jeopardy." (cp the same assurance believers have - 1Jn 5:13).

## Righteousnes Without Works

**William Newell** asks an interesting question...

If God announces the gift of righteousness apart from works, why do you keep mourning over your bad works, your failures? Do you not see that it is because you still have hopes in these works of yours that you are depressed and discouraged by their failure? If you truly saw and believed that God is reckoning righteous the ungodly who believe on Him, you would fairly hate your struggles to be "better"; for you would see that your dreams of good works have not at all commended you to God, and that your bad works do not at all hinder you from believing on Him, -that justifieth the ungodly!

Therefore, on seeing your failures, you should say, I am nothing but a failure; but God is dealing with me on another principle altogether than my works, good or bad, -a principle not involving my works, but based only on the work of Christ for me. I am anxious, indeed, to be pleasing to God and to be filled with His Spirit; but I am not at all justified, or accounted righteous, by these things. God, in justifying me, acted wholly and only on Christ's blood-shedding on my behalf.

Therefore I have this double attitude: first, I know that Christ is in Heaven before God for me, and that I stand in the value before God of His finished work; that God sees me nowhere else but in this dead, buried, and Risen Christ, and that His favor is toward me in Christ, and is limitless and eternal.

Then, second, toward the work of the Holy Spirit in me, my attitude is, a desire to be guided into the truth, to be obedient thereto, and to be chastened by God my Father if disobedient; to learn to pray in the Spirit, to walk by the Spirit, and to be filled with a love for the Scriptures and for the saints and for all men.

**Yet none of these things justifies me!** I had justification from God as a sinner, not as a saint! My saintliness does not increase it, nor, praise God, do my failures decrease it!" ([Romans: Verse by Verse](#)).