

Faith and Good Works Are Necessary for Salvation

James 2:24

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”



The overwhelming majority of Protestants believe that the Bible teaches that people are justified (put into a state in which they will be saved) by *faith alone in Jesus* – i.e., apart from a consideration of their actions, deeds or sins. Most of them also believe in “Once Saved Always Saved” or eternal security: that a man who believes in Jesus cannot lose his eternal salvation. These ideas are false and completely contrary to the teaching of the Bible. Let’s look at the proof.

Almost all of the quotations in this section come from the 1611 King James Version of the Bible, a famous Protestant translation.

[Unless otherwise noted, all Bible citations were from the 1611 King James Version of the Bible, a famous Protestant translation. This version was chosen to prove the point to Protestants using a Protestant Bible.]

JESUS SAYS THAT MEN MUST RADICALLY
CUT OFF OCCASIONS OF SIN TO AVOID HELL,
NOT JUST BELIEVE

In Matthew chapter 5, we find the parable about cutting off one's hand or eye to avoid Hell.

Matthew 5:29-30

“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee... And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”

This parable, which obviously refers to cutting off occasions of sins – things in life that will drag people into offenses against God – only has a meaning if sins and works are a part of determining whether one attains salvation. By cutting off sinful things and bad works, one will save his soul. Man's sins and works are therefore a part of his justification. If man were justified by faith alone, this parable would not make any sense whatsoever.

NOT ALL WHO SAY “LORD, LORD” ENTER HEAVEN,
BUT HE THAT DOES THE WILL OF GOD

Matthew 7:21-23

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Here we see that he who “doeth” the will of God will enter Heaven, not all who consider Jesus to be the Lord. Then Jesus emphasizes the point by stating that you must do what He says to be His.

Matthew 7:24-27

“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock... And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”

How clear does it have to be? It’s a matter of whether you hear His words and do them. It’s not by faith alone.

YOU MUST PERSEVERE TO THE END TO BE SAVED

Matthew 10:22

“And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.”

This totally contradicts the Protestant view of “once saved always saved.” Also see Mark 13:13 for the same message.

ST. PAUL SAYS THAT HE COULD BECOME A CASTAWAY

1 Corinthians 9:24-27-

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

St. Paul says that he fears he could become a “castaway.” The word "castaway" (in 1 Cor. 9:27) is translated from the Greek word *adokimos*. *Adokimos* is translated as "reprobate" in 2 Timothy 3:8 and in Romans 1:28. It describes lost

souls, mortal sinners, apostates, and those who are outside the state of justification and/or outside the faith of Jesus.

In 2 Timothy 3:8, it is used to describe evil people who “*resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith*” (King James Version). These are obviously not people who are in a state of justification or on the road to Heaven.

In Romans 1:28, *adokimos* is used to describe people who have been given over to abominable sins – once again, people who are not on the road to Heaven. *Adokimos* is also found in other passages, including Titus 1:16, Hebrews 6:8 and elsewhere. In each case, it signifies people who are not on the road to Heaven, but outside the state of justification and/or the true faith.

By declaring that he could become a castaway or a reprobate (*adokimos*), there is no doubt that St. Paul is saying that he could lose his salvation and be damned along with the other reprobates. Was St. Paul a true believer who had been justified? Of course he was. The Bible thus teaches that true believers are not assured of salvation. This passage completely refutes the idea of eternal security or “once saved always saved.”

MORTAL SINNERS, INCLUDING FORNICATORS, DRUNKARDS, ADULTERERS, ETC., WILL NOT INHERIT HEAVEN

Galatians 5:19-21

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

Before moving on, it should be noted that, according to St. Thomas Aquinas, the sin of “uncleanness” or “effeminacy” (which excludes one from Heaven, according to the above verses) is the mortal sin of masturbation (*Summa Theologiae*, Pt. II-II, Q. 154, A. 11.).

These passages pose big problems for those who believe in justification by faith alone and/or eternal security. The Bible teaches that mortal sins (grave sins) destroy the state of justification. It teaches that grave sins put people in a state in which they will be excluded from the Kingdom of God. This coincides with the Catholic teaching that a believer *can lose the state of justification* and be damned if he or she commits a mortal sin (e.g., fornication, drunkenness, looking at pornography, etc.) *and dies in that state*.

Now, in light of these passages, Protestants have a problem. If all who commit mortal sins lose their justification, faith-alone Protestants would have to say that no true believer commits mortal sins. This response doesn’t work, however, as we will see. There are millions of supposed “Christians” who say they have been “saved” by faith in Jesus. A countless number of them get drunk, fornicate, cheat, steal, etc. In other words, they commit clear mortal sins which the Bible says destroy the state of justification.

Since the Bible clearly says that mortal sins destroy justification, faith-alone Protestants are forced into arguing that all those “believers” who commit mortal sins were not true believers. They must admit that the “assurance” of justification/salvation which those people thought they had by “faith alone” was an illusion, a deception. They didn’t really have *true “saving” faith*, according to them, even though they thought they did.

However, this response – that a “REAL” believer cannot commit the mortal sins which the Bible says exclude from salvation – is refuted by the next verse we will see. It proves that people who definitely had true “saving” faith and were justified *could also commit* those mortal sins. If they did, they would lose justification.

EPHESIANS 5:5-8
PROVES THAT IT'S POSSIBLE FOR TRUE BELIEVERS TO
COMMIT MORTAL SINS AND LOSE THEIR SALVATION FOR
SUCH SINS – THIS DEMOLISHES THE IDEA OF JUSTIFICATION
BY FAITH ALONE AND ETERNAL SECURITY

Ephesians 5:5-8

“For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.”

This is a fascinating passage.

St. Paul first mentions a number of mortal sins, and states that those who do such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God. We saw this above with the passages in Galatians 5 and 1 Corinthians 6:9. As stated already, the common (and only possible) Protestant response to this is that no true believer could commit such sins which destroy the state of justification.

Well, the above passage clearly teaches that justified believers could commit those grave sins. St. Paul warns them in Ephesians 5:7 to *“Be not ye therefore partakers with them”*! Therefore, the believers could be partakers with the mortal sinners! And if there is any doubt that he is including authentic believers in that warning, he speaks of them as those who are now “light in the Lord” (true believers).

Therefore, those who are “light in the Lord” could be “partakers” with the mortal sinners and in the mortal sins which destroy justification. This without any doubt refutes justification by faith alone and “once saved always saved.” Let no man deceive you with vain words such as “justification by faith alone”!

MEN CAN FOLLOW THE WAY OF JESUS AND THEN TURN BACK AND BE OVERCOME

2 Peter 2:20-22

“For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

This verse indicates that people who are justified can lose their justification through sins. It's a clear proof of the Catholic teaching on justification. Some might try to argue that he's simply speaking here of people who've heard of the Gospel, not those who *really* believed it. That doesn't hold up. The verse says that these people have “known the way of righteousness” and “escaped the pollutions of the world.” One doesn't escape the pollutions of the world by simply hearing of the Gospel. His language describes someone who is walking the justified path and then turns away. That's why 2 Peter 2:23 compares this man to a sow (a pig) who has been washed (i.e. justified) and then returns to the mud! That's also why, earlier in the same chapter, a reference was made to the angels who sinned and lost their justification. St. Peter was really driving the point home.

THE ANGELS, ONCE JUSTIFIED, LOST THEIR JUSTIFICATION THROUGH SIN

2 Peter 2:4

“... God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”

The angels were created in justification; but they sinned mortally, lost their justification, and were cast into Hell. These passages completely contradict the Protestant view of justification.

GOD IS THE AUTHOR OF ETERNAL SALVATION TO ALL WHO “OBEY” HIM

Hebrews 5:9- “And being made perfect, he [Jesus] became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.”

It’s not by faith alone.

BELIEVERS CAN FALL AWAY – PERIOD!

Hebrews 6:4-6

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”

This passage clearly shows that people who are believers, who “were partakers of the Holy Ghost,” can fall away from the state of justification. The reference to it being “impossible” for such people to be renewed again to that state refers to the original grace of baptism, by which they were first cleansed from sin. They cannot be baptized again, but even grave sins can be forgiven in confession (John 20:23). This passage obliterates – totally demolishes – the once saved always saved Protestant theology.

BELIEVERS CAN BE DAMNED FOR THEIR SINS AFTER KNOWING THE TRUTH – THUS DISPROVING FAITH ALONE!

Hebrews 10:26-27

“For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, thereremaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.”

In the same book and in the same vein as the above warning (Hebrews 6:4-6), this passage says that those who have the faith – St. Paul speaks of “we” – can lose salvation as a result of willful sins.

WITHOUT HOLINESS, NO MAN SHALL SEE THE LORD

Hebrews 12:14

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

This verse teaches that the justification necessary for salvation is a sanctification: a true holiness possessed by the person. It is not, as Protestants contend, the righteousness of Christ being imputed (i.e. applied) to a person, even though he remains interiorly unholy.

Explaining the Protestant view of the justified man, Martin Luther said that a justified man is like a mound of dung covered over with snow. The man remains sinful and iniquitous on the inside; but, as soon as he believes, the righteousness of Christ is applied to him as a covering and a cloak. This enables a dirty and iniquitous man to be saved, according to Protestant doctrine. He can be saved, even though he doesn't possess holiness in himself, but remains a dung of sin on the inside.

We can see how this view contradicts the teaching of the Bible, which is that a justified man is actually and truly holy by God's grace. He is sanctified and changed interiorly; he must possess this interior holiness to see the Lord.

It should also be pointed out that what God says happens. If He pronounces someone just, that's because that person is truly just, not fictitiously just or cloaked over.

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER – MEN CAN BELIEVE FOR A TIME AND THEN FALL AWAY

Matthew 13:18-22

“Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side. But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon [presently] with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.”

Here we see that a man can believe “for a while,” and then fall away. The versions of this parable in Mark and Luke bring out the point even more clearly:

Mark 4:17

“... And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.”

Luke 8:13

“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.”

Jesus says clearly in Luke 8:13 that these people believe “for a while.” The Protestants might say this refers to people who do not truly believe. One cannot say that, for Jesus Himself says that they believe for a time.

This entire parable refutes – and has no meaning in – the false Protestant view of justification. It not only teaches us that one can believe and then fall away, but that sins, temptations, worldly concerns, efforts to overcome the world and its snares and its cares (Mt. 13:22), all are part of one’s justification and salvation. It’s a striking confirmation of the Catholic teaching on justification, and a striking refutation of the Protestant position.

Luke 8:15- “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

Those who bring forth fruit unto eternal life are those who hear the word and “keep it” or practice it.

THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS: IF YOU DO NOT PRODUCE THINGS FOR GOD, YOU WILL BE DAMNED – SO MUCH FOR JUSTIFICATION BY “FAITH ALONE”

The Parable of the Talents completely refutes the Protestant view of justification by faith alone.

Matthew 25:15-30

“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said

unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:

Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

In this parable we see that the person is condemned for sloth, for laziness and failing to do things with the talents he has received. He was condemned because he didn't work with his talents to gain more talents! This parable completely contradicts justification by faith alone. What's extremely interesting about this is that it says the Lord “reaps where He has not sown.” In other words, the Lord expects us to do and to produce our own works, done with His grace. If we do not cooperate with His grace to produce such works – and are not able to present such supernatural works before Him at the Judgment – we will be cast into Hell. This parable confirms Catholic teaching on works, while completely refuting Protestant views.

JESUS WILL RENDER TO EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS

Matthew 16:27

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.”

We will see the same teaching in the Book of Romans and in the Book of Revelation (the Apocalypse).

JESUS SHALL CAST INTO HELL THOSE WHO DO INIQUITY

Matthew 13:41-42

“The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

God will condemn people to Hell based on whether they do iniquity.

EACH PERSON WILL RECEIVE REWARD OR PUNISHMENT BASED ON WHAT HE OR SHE HAS DONE IN THE BODY

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

“... Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

We read that one must labor to be accepted by Christ. Further, we see that men will receive in the next world a reward or a punishment based on what they have done in the body, “whether it be good or bad.” The things which a man has done (his deeds) are seen as integral to his salvation or damnation.

ONE COULD HAVE ALL FAITH AND IT COULD PROFIT HIM NOTHING

1 Corinthians 13:1-2

“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.”

According to Protestant doctrine, *faith alone* grants salvation. Thus, one who has all faith would be saved. But the Bible teaches otherwise: one could have all faith and it could still profit him nothing. Justification is not by faith alone.

WHAT MUST ONE DO TO BE SAVED? JESUS SAYS: KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS, NOT JUST BELIEVE

Matthew 19:16-21-

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments... and come and follow me.”

To the question of what he must do to be saved, Jesus says one must keep the commandments and follow Him.

A RICH MAN SHALL HARDLY ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Matthew 19:23-24

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”

Here we see that what one does with his money will also affect his salvation.

JESUS SAYS WATCH, LEST HE COMES WHEN YOU ARE NOT DOING WHAT YOU SHOULD AND ARE COMMITTING SIN

Mark 13:35-37

“Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh... Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.”

The version of this parable in Luke’s Gospel brings out the necessity of works and doing things for salvation even more clearly:

Luke 12:38, 43

“And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants... Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”

Here’s another interesting passage on this point from Luke 21:

Luke 21:34-36

“And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.”

In this interesting passage we see that a failure to do things – a failure to avoid sins such as surfeiting (which means indulgence or gluttony) and drunkenness – can cost one one’s salvation. This should show us again why justification by faith alone is completely contrary and foreign to the true Gospel.

HE THAT SAVES HIS LIFE SHALL LOSE IT

Luke 9:24

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.”

We see that what one DOES, in giving up sinful things that the world offers in this life, will determine whether one has salvation. It's obviously not by faith alone.

YOU MUST BEAR YOUR CROSS TO BE HIS DISCIPLE

Luke 14:27, 33

“And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

Salvation is not attained by faith alone in Jesus, but by faith and carrying the cross and prioritizing all one possesses, making salvation in Jesus Christ's religion the top priority.

MAN MUST KEEP THE SAYING OF JESUS TO NOT SEE DEATH

John 8:51

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.” Those who keep His words, not just believe, will not see death.

ONLY THOSE WHO DO FORGIVE ARE FORGIVEN

Matthew 6:14

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.” One is only forgiven if he forgives. It's not by faith alone.

MEN ARE JUSTIFIED AND CONDEMNED BY THEIR WORDS, NOT JUST ON THE BASIS OF WHETHER THEY BELIEVE

Matthew 12:36-37

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

But I thought the Protestants said that justification was by faith alone? No, your words, your actions, your works shall justify you or condemn you, in addition to whether you believe. Man will have to account for all of his actions and all of his words on the Day of Judgment. A similar parable is given in Luke 19.

SIMON MAGUS BELIEVED AND THEN FELL AWAY

In Acts 8, we read about Simon Magus.

Acts 8:13

“Then Simon himself believed also: and... was baptized...”

But just a few verses later, we find out that he fell into grave sin:

Acts 8:18-21

“... when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.”

FELIX WAS TERRIFIED WHEN PAUL PREACHED TO HIM THE GOSPEL
AND CHASTITY, OBVIOUSLY BECAUSE
ONE MUST AVOID IMPURITY TO BE SAVED

In Acts 24, we find another interesting passage that is relevant to this topic.

Acts 24:25

“And as he [Paul] reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

The Catholic version of this verse reads:

“And as he treated of justice, and chastity, and of the judgment to come, Felix being terrified, answered: For this time, go thy way: but when I have a convenient time, I will send for thee.”

Felix was terrified when Paul spoke about the Gospel’s teaching on chastity, obviously because Paul informed him that sins in this regard exclude one from Heaven. Felix was terrified only because Paul did not preach to him the false gospel of justification by faith alone.

WORK OUT YOUR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING

Philippians 2:12

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Work out salvation with “fear and trembling,” obviously because men can lose their salvation through grave sin at any time.

THE BOOK OF ROMANS CLEARLY INDICATES THAT WORKS ARE A PART OF JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION

FOR A REFUTATION OF THE OBJECTION CONCERNING
ROMANS 3:28 AND THE “WORKS OF THE LAW” PHRASE
– A COMMON PROTESTANT MISCONCEPTION –
SEE THE RESPONSE TO THAT OBJECTION AT THE END OF THIS SECTION

The Protestant theology, which says that man is justified by faith alone, is contradicted near the beginning of the Book of Romans by Paul’s discussion in Chapter 2 of how people will be condemned for what they do. It is also contradicted when Paul says in Romans that God will render to each man according to his WORKS, and that eternal life is for those who work unto good. It’s very interesting that these passages come at the beginning of Romans. This was God’s way of removing any misunderstanding about the necessity to do things and avoid sins for salvation which might arise from heretical misinterpretations of later passages, which were written to emphasize that man is not justified by works of the Old Law.

Romans 2:2-3

“... the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?”

What things is he talking about? At the end of chapter 1, he gave a list of mortal sins, including fornication, covetousness, wickedness, etc.

Romans 2:5-6

“... the righteous judgment of God; Who will render to every man according to his deeds.”

He will render to every man according to his works or deeds, not on the basis of faith alone. He continues:

ETERNAL LIFE IS FOR BELIEVERS WHO
CONTINUE IN PATIENT WELL DOING

Romans 2:7

“To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”

ETERNAL DEATH IS FOR THOSE WHO
DO NOT OBEY THE TRUTH AND DO EVIL

Romans 2:8-10

“But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”

Eternal life is given to those who truly believe and do what is good. Eternal death is for every man, including believers, who do evil or commit grave sins and die in that state. It's not by faith alone.

THE HOLY GHOST IS POURED INTO THE HEARTS
OF THE JUSTIFIED: INTERIOR SANCTIFICATION

Romans 5:5

“And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”

Here we see that for those who are justified, the love of God is poured into their hearts. This is the Catholic view of justification: that the justified are truly interiorly sanctified.

IF BELIEVERS LIVE AFTER THE FLESH, THEY SHALL ETERNALLY DIE

Romans 8:12-13

“Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.”

Speaking to “brethren,” that is, believers, he says that if they commit grave sins of the flesh they will die eternally: be damned. That totally contradicts justification by faith alone, once saved always saved, etc.

IF BELIEVERS DON’T CONTINUE IN GOODNESS, THEY WILL BE CUT OFF

In Romans chapter 11, we come to a verse which devastates Protestant theology.

Romans 11:20-22

“Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

Romans chapter 11 clearly speaks of the Jews being cut off because of unbelief. And then in verse 22, St. Paul says that you believing Christians will also be cut off unless you continue in goodness. This destroys the ideas of justification by faith alone and once saved always saved.

A BELIEVER WHO TAKES THE EUCHARIST UNWORTHILY EATS AND DRINKS DAMNATION TO HIMSELF

1 Corinthians 11:28-29

“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.”

St. Paul says that those who eat of the Eucharist unworthily are guilty of grave sin against the body and blood of the Lord. They drink damnation to themselves. He's talking to believers, of course, as he made clear in 1 Cor. 5:12. This is also clear from the fact that only believers would be partaking in the Eucharist. Obviously, therefore, believers can be damned for grave sins, such as a sacrilegious reception of the Eucharist. This passage refutes the Protestant idea of justification by faith alone and confirms Catholic teaching.

1 COR. 7 DESTROYS JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE, BY TEACHING THAT IT'S BETTER FOR CERTAIN BELIEVERS TO MARRY THAN TO BURN

St. Paul makes it clear in 1 Corinthians that he is speaking about the problems that can befall those within the Church.

1 Corinthians 5:12-13

“For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

This becomes very significant in chapter 7:

1 Corinthians 7:1-9-

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the

wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.”

There are a number of extremely significant things in this passage. First, we see the clear and repeated teaching that the celibate state is superior to the marital state. This confirms Catholic teaching. The Catholic Church teaches that the married state is not a bad state, but a state that is inferior to the celibate state. Jesus teaches the same in Matthew 19:12, but He says that not all can make a commitment of their whole lives to God. This biblical teaching on celibacy is why the Catholic Church’s religious and priests of the Roman Rite take a vow of celibacy.

Now to the main point in regard to the Protestant idea of justification by faith alone. We just established that in 1 Corinthians 5:12, St. Paul makes it quite clear that he is talking to believers. Speaking to believers, St. Paul says that “it is better to marry than to burn” (1 Cor. 7:9). This clearly indicates that even true believers who fall into grave sins can lose their justification and burn in Hell. He is telling them that it’s better to marry than to burn, obviously because some of them would fall into mortal sins of the flesh if they did not get married. This completely refutes the Protestant religion and confirms Catholic teaching on justification.

SANCTIFICATION AND JUSTIFICATION HAPPEN AT THE SAME TIME

1 Corinthians 6:11

“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

This verse speaks of those who have been justified as “sanctified” before it mentions that they have been justified. This proves that sanctification and justification happen at the same time. It contradicts the Protestant view of justification, which is that justification and sanctification are not one and the same thing. Protestants hold that man is declared justified, but remains interiorly unsanctified.

HEAVEN IS ONLY FOR BELIEVERS WHO “OVERCOME”

Revelation (Apocalypse) 2:7

“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.”

The Bible says that only those who overcome will get to Heaven. The passage is about believers, as is made clear in chapter 2 verse 10. Therefore, it’s false to say that everyone who believes necessarily overcomes. This refutes justification by faith alone. This theme is repeated numerous times in this chapter.

ONE MUST KEEP JESUS’ WORKS “TO THE END”

Revelation 2:23-26

“... all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works... But that which ye have already hold fast till I come. And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.”

This verse speaks for itself. It completely refutes the Protestant view.

ONE WHO BELIEVES MUST “HOLD FAST” SO THAT HE DOESN’T LOSE HIS CROWN

Revelation 3:11-12

“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.”

In Revelation chapters 13 and 14, we read about the mark of the beast and that those who receive it will not be saved. This also demonstrates that what you do will determine whether you are saved or damned.

THE DEAD ARE JUDGED ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS

In Revelation chapter 20, we read about the final judgment.

Revelation 20:12-13-

“And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.”

This verse constitutes absolute proof that the Protestant view of justification is unbiblical.

Revelation 22:12

“And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.”

Revelation 21:8

“But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

Revelation 22:19

“And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

This is just another verse which shows that what you do can exclude you from salvation.

THE RIGHTEOUS OR JUST MAN WILL SCARCELY BE SAVED

1 Peter 4:17-18

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?”

It says that the “righteous” will scarcely be saved. Other translations have it as “the just man.” There is no doubt that St. Peter is speaking about a justified man in the Church because he speaks here of judgment beginning with the “house of God,” which is the Church.

There are two ways of understanding this verse, and they both contradict the ideas of justification by faith alone and eternal security. The first is that the just or the righteous in the Church shall scarcely, as in rarely, be saved; because most of those who are at one time justified fall away and don’t persevere to the end. They become (grave) sinners. That coincides with the traditional Catholic understanding that even most Catholics are lost because they don’t care enough or don’t do what they need to do to be saved. Hence, they lose their justification at some point and die in the state of mortal sin.

The only other interpretation that could be advanced is that “scarcely” means with difficulty: that it’s hard for a just man to be saved. That is to say, the justified man must make a great effort to be saved; he is not ensured of his salvation by faith alone or a one-time decree as soon as he believes.

A WOMAN IS SAVED BY CHILD-BEARING, IF SHE CONTINUES IN THE FAITH

1 Timothy 2:15

“Notwithstanding she [woman] shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

This obliterates the Protestant view of justification and salvation. It indicates that people who have the faith can lose it, and they must continue in *holiness* to be saved. It's not surprising at all that one Protestant who attempted to respond to this verse in a debate about justification had no response whatsoever. He simply said that it's "quite mysterious."

BY GOD'S GRACE, YOU WILL SAVE YOURSELF BY DOING THINGS

1 Timothy 4:16

“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”

Here we see that one must continue in the faith to be saved. One could lose the faith, therefore. We also read that it is in doing things that one is saved!

This verse is quite important because some Protestants – who preach the false doctrine of justification by faith alone – like to contrast the Catholic and Protestant views in these terms: *The Protestant view [they say] is all about Jesus saving man and doing all the work; but the Catholic view is about man doing the work and saving himself.* Obviously the Catholic view is not about man saving himself, but that Jesus saves man by making salvation possible. Without Jesus, man cannot do anything. However, *a man must cooperate with God's grace.* If he cooperates and takes advantage of the salvation which Jesus has made available, and does the things which God requires, then he will save himself.

In the verse above, we see that the Bible teaches the Catholic view; it's not all Jesus without man's cooperation. Rather, man's works and deeds (i.e., what man

does) clearly determine whether he – and others – will have salvation. Faith-alone Protestants would have to condemn the above verse as heretical.

ST. PAUL REJOICES THAT HE HAS KEPT THE FAITH, OBVIOUSLY BECAUSE BELIEVERS CAN LOSE IT

2 Timothy 4:6-7

“For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.”

ALEXANDER THE COPPERSMITH WILL BE REWARDED ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS

2 Timothy 4:14

“Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works.”

ONE MUST ENDURE AND RESIST TEMPTATION TO HAVE THE CROWN OF LIFE

James 1:12

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” The Bible says that one must resist temptation and endure to the end to have eternal life.

SINS OF LUST BRING FORTH ETERNAL DEATH – THUS IT’S NOT BY FAITH ALONE

James 1:13-15

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Notice here that if one consents to a sin of lust, it brings forth death. He’s clearly speaking of eternal death (damnation). That means that man is not justified by faith alone.

The second chapter of James truly obliterates the Protestant idea of justification by faith alone and once saved always saved. Martin Luther called the book of James “an epistle of straw” and wanted to remove it from his version of the Bible until his friends persuaded him that that would be too radical a move (see the end of this book for more on Luther’s views). The following verses, which reject justification by faith alone, are why Luther criticized this book of the Bible:

James 2:14

“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?”

James 2:17

“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”

James 2:18

“Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.”

James 2:19

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

James 2:20

“But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

James 2:21

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?”

James 2:22-23

“Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.”

James 2:24

“Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

This is the only place in the entire Bible that the words faith and alone (or only) are joined together. The Bible says that **MAN IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY FAITH ALONE, BUT BY WORKS!**

OBJECTIONS: WHAT ABOUT THE PASSAGES WHICH SAY THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN JESUS WILL BE SAVED?

ANSWER: TO JESUS, TO BELIEVE IN HIM UNTO SALVATION NECESSARILY MEANS TO FOLLOW AND KEEP HIS WORDS AND COMMANDMENTS UNTO THE END. THIS IS PROVEN BY THE IMMEDIATE OR EXTENDED CONTEXT OF EVERY CASE WHERE JESUS SAYS THAT THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIM WILL BE SAVED, IN ADDITION TO ALL THE OTHER PASSAGES WHICH HAVE BEEN COVERED.

FIRST EXAMPLE: JOHN 3:16

John 3:16

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

One might see this verse on posters at sports stadiums, at overpasses on highways, and in many other places. Protestants believe it's the best, or one of the best, examples of the Bible's teaching that whoever believes is saved by faith alone. What they don't tell you or fail to perceive is what is stated in the verses which immediately follow John 3:16.

John 3:17-20

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already... And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”

It's fascinating that in the very context which immediately follows John 3:16, we see prominent references to condemnation for evil deeds, as well as to people who do evil and to deeds being judged. This makes it clear that a faith in the only begotten Son of God which will grant salvation is a faith which must be accompanied by persevering in good deeds and good works. To Jesus, to believe in Him *unto salvation* is to follow and keep His words and His commandments, as all the other passages we have covered demonstrate. The context demonstrates that John 3:16 does not teach justification by faith alone or eternal security.

SECOND EXAMPLE: ROMANS 10: IF THOU CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH... THOU SHALT BE SAVED

Romans 10:9 is another verse which Protestants bring forward in an attempt to prove salvation by faith alone in Jesus.

Romans 10:8-10

“...The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Once again, however, the context shows us that the Protestant understanding of this passage is false. What many don't realize is that the passage above (Romans 10:8-10) is quoting from Deuteronomy 30:14 and following. The footnotes in your Bible will show the reference to Deuteronomy 30:14. Well, Deuteronomy 30:14 and following speak of **THE NECESSITY OF DOING THE WORKS OF GOD AND OF KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS**.

Deuteronomy 30:14-16

“But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it [Quoted in Romans 10:8]. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.”

This reference to Deuteronomy 30:14 in Romans 10:8-10 shows that to Paul and his listeners, it was understood that to believe unto salvation is to follow and keep and do the works that are necessary for salvation. Only in that way will a believer “live” and have salvation. The Protestant view of justification is simply a total misunderstanding of Scripture, as the full context of this passage shows again.

THIRD EXAMPLE: JOHN 5:24

Reading this in isolation, some Protestants think that all believers are assured of salvation.

John 5:24

“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”

But just a few verses later, starting in John 5:28, Jesus says this:

John 5:28-29

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”

Again, we see that people will be condemned on the basis of what they have done, not just on the basis of whether they have believed. Invariably, to Jesus, to believe unto salvation is to follow and keep His words and do the works which are necessary for salvation.

FOURTH EXAMPLE: JOHN 6:47

John 6:47

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.”

Some Protestants like to quote this passage to argue for justification by faith alone. But this is easily refuted by the entire context of John 6. Almost the entire chapter deals with how one must not only believe for salvation, but also eat the flesh of the Son of Man to be saved. Therefore, it’s not by faith alone. This is covered in the section on the Eucharist, but this is another example where the extended context refutes a Protestant misconception.

John 6:53-54

“Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whosoever eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

WHAT ABOUT EPHESIANS 2:8-9, BY GRACE YOU ARE SAVED THROUGH FAITH, NOT OF WORKS?

Non-Catholics frequently quote the following verse to attempt to prove that man is saved by faith alone.

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

This argument also fails. As I will now show, this argument fails because this verse is specifically talking about the initial grace of receiving water baptism. Water baptism is not a work “of yourselves,” but a sacrament instituted by God. No work you can do can substitute for the power of water baptism. This is said to “save” because it removes man’s original sin and puts him into the initial state of justification. The proof that Ephesians 2:8-9 is actually referring to water baptism is found when one compares the passage to Titus 3:5, and then to 1 Peter 3:20-21.

Look at this:

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Titus 3:5

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Notice that the two passages are extremely similar. They are talking about the same thing. They both mention being saved, *and not of works which we have done*. Ephesians 2:8-9 describes this as being saved through “faith”; Titus 3:5 describes it as being saved through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. They are referring to the same thing.

Titus 3:5 is without any doubt referring to water baptism, as even John Calvin and Martin Luther admitted. Ephesians 2:8-9 is also talking about water baptism; it’s just that Ephesians 2:8-9 calls it “faith” because accepting baptism is submitting to faith; it’s how one joins the faith, as Jesus makes clear in Mark 16:15 and Matthew 28:19: *“Preach the Gospel to every creature.... Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.”* Baptism is also described as “faith” in Galatians 3:

Galatians 3:26-27

“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

We see that receiving baptism is synonymous with receiving “faith” in Christ Jesus. To further confirm that Ephesians 2:8-9 is about being saved by baptism, let’s expand the comparison:

Ephesians 2:8-9

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

Titus 3:5

“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

1 Peter 3:20-21

“... when they waited for the patience of God in the days of Noe, when the ark was a building: wherein a few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. Whereunto baptism being of the like form, now saves you also...”

This demonstrates that Ephesians 2:8-9 is referring to the initial grace of baptism. Ephesians 2:8-9 is not talking about the ongoing justification of those who have already been baptized, but simply about how people were initially brought out of original sin and given the grace of justification. No work which anyone can do could replace or substitute for water baptism and the grace it grants: the first justification and removal of original sin. But once a person enters the Church through baptism (which is God’s work), his deeds and works indeed become part of the justification process, and a factor which will determine whether he maintains justification. This is made clear from the abundance of passages (e.g., James 2:24) that we already covered. Hence, the Protestant argument from Ephesians 2:8-9 is another one which doesn’t hold up to the context of Scripture. Baptism is not a work of righteousness we have done; it’s the sacrament which Jesus instituted, which pours out His saving Blood and the cleansing of the Holy Ghost.

**WHAT ABOUT THE STATEMENT THAT MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH
“APART FROM WORKS OF THE LAW” (ROMANS 3:28)?**

Protestants like to quote Romans 3:28 and similar passages.

Romans 3:28

“For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law.”
(New American Standard Version)

Romans 3:28

“For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from observing the law.”
(Romans 3:28 – NIV Version)

Martin Luther thought this passage taught justification by faith alone, apart from any consideration of human actions or works. This is completely wrong. In fact, failing to understand what is meant by the phrase “works of the law” is one of the biggest misconceptions in Protestantism.

As we saw already, James says in James 2:24 that man is justified by works and not by faith alone. What is meant in Romans 3:28 and throughout the New Testament by the phrase “works of the law” is the Old Testament laws and prescriptions. “Works of the law” means works of the Old Law. It does not mean all works and human actions. Paul was writing to people who were stuck on the notion that *the system of the Old Law, with circumcision, the laws about clean and unclean foods, ritual sacrifices, etc.* is indispensable.

That this is what the “works of the law” means in Romans 3:28 and similar passages is proven from the context of Romans, but especially from Galatians 2:14. Notice that the phrase “works of the law” is used, and that it specifically refers to the Old Law (the Law of the Old Testament), not all works or deeds.

Galatians 2:12-16

“... fearing them which were of the circumcision... If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.”

Notice that the phrase “works of the law” is clearly used by Paul to refer to living “as do the Jews” – observing the Old Law, circumcision, etc. It is not referring to all works and human deeds. This is obvious throughout the book of Galatians. Here’s another example:

Galatians 5:3-6

“For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith. For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.”

As we see again here, it’s clear that when St. Paul speaks of “the law,” and how no man can be justified by it, he is talking about the works of the Old Law: circumcision, etc. He is not talking about all works! No honest person can deny this fact. He is simply pointing out to them that the faith/religion/Church of Jesus Christ has saving power in itself. He is telling them that one doesn’t have to

observe the Old Law and its system to obtain the salvation which comes from Jesus Christ. Here's another example:

Galatians 6:13

“For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh.”

Again we see that “the law” refers to the Old Law: observing circumcision, etc. No man is justified by the Old Law. We also see that Paul was talking about the Old Law in Romans 3:28 (when he uses “works of the law”), if we look carefully at the context in Romans 3 and 4.

Romans 3:1

“What advantage then hath the Jew? Or what profit is there of circumcision?”

We see that the very first verse of Romans 3 deals with the Old Testament work of circumcision. St. Paul is emphasizing to the Jews and others that they don't need to observe these prescriptions for salvation, or to enter the true faith of God that has been delivered by the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Philippians 3 is another example which proves the point about what the Bible means by “the law” and “works of the law” and working under the law. In Philippians 3, St. Paul is explaining that he was a Jew who observed the Jewish law. It's in that precise context that he speaks of having a justification/righteousness which is not his own of the law, but by the faith of Jesus. In other words, his statement that justification is not his own of the law means that it's not of the Old Law or by having observed the Old Law:

Philippians 3:5-9

“[I] Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.”

It's obvious that when he speaks of the righteousness or justification which is by faith – which is not his own of the law – he is not teaching justification by faith alone. Rather, he is simply emphasizing that the Jewish law does not justify and is not necessary for salvation.

We have already seen an abundance of passages which prove that human deeds and works are part of whether one has justification and salvation. It's certain that by “works of the law” Paul means that one is not saved by the works of the Old Law, but by the religion of Jesus Christ.

With these facts in mind, we can see what a tragic and devastating mistake of misinterpretation millions of Protestants have made. This has led them into the disastrous errors of justification by faith alone and eternal security – ideas which run counter to the whole tenor of Scripture, the necessity to avoid sin, the parables of Jesus, etc.

2 Peter 3:16

“As also in all his [Paul’s] epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.”

THE CASE OF ABRAHAM REFUTES PROTESTANT THEOLOGY - IT PROVES THAT JUSTIFICATION IS NOT A ONCE AND FOR ALL TIME ACT, BUT SOMETHING INCREASED AND MAINTAINED THROUGH OBEDIENCE

The Bible tells us that Abraham (whose name was changed from Abram) was justified in Genesis 15:6 for believing what God said about the number of his descendants.

Genesis 15:5-6

“And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he [Abram] believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness.”

It should be pointed out that, in Catholic theology, the justification given in the Old Testament was inferior to the adoption as sons of God which is given in the New. Regardless, the following points about Abraham's Old Testament justification – something which is brought up repeatedly in the New Testament – is sufficient *to again thoroughly disprove the Protestant position* on justification.

Abraham was justified in Genesis 15:6. If, as Protestants contend, justification is not a process, but a one-time event in which God imputes (applies) justification to a person as a result of faith alone, then Abraham could not have been justified before or after Genesis 15:6. That's pretty simple. But the Bible teaches that Abraham was justified both before and after Genesis 15:6

- 1.) Hebrews 11:8 teaches that Abraham believed God – and was justified – when God originally called him to go to an unknown country. This occurred in Genesis 12. Hebrews 11:8- “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance [Genesis 12], obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.” Genesis 12:1-4- “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country... unto a land that I will show thee... So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him.” Therefore, Abraham was justified by faith in Genesis 12, three chapters (and probably years) before he believed God (about how many descendants he would have) in Genesis 15:6, at which time he was justified again. Just in case anyone thinks that this belief of Abraham in Genesis 12 didn't justify him, it should be pointed out that Hebrews 11 is all about justifying faith. Thus, there is no doubt that Hebrews 11:8 teaches that Abraham was justified by faith in Genesis 12.
- 2.) The Bible teaches that Abraham was justified again (a third time) in Genesis 22, when he offered his son Isaac on the altar.

James 2:21-24

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar [Genesis 22:10]? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

So, to put this as simply as possible: the Bible teaches that Abraham was justified three different times:

In Genesis 12:1-4 (see Hebrews 11:8 – “By faith Abraham... obeyed”)

In Genesis 15:6 (see Genesis 15:6 – “he believed... and it counted to him for righteousness”)

In Genesis 22:10 (see James 2:21 – “Abraham our father justified by works”)

This proves that justification is not a once and for all time event, as the Protestants say, but rather a process. It shows that justification is a process that is **CONFIRMED AND INCREASED BY CONTINUING TO BELIEVE AND BY REPEATED OBEDIENT ACTIONS**. In fact, it is only in Genesis 22, after Abraham heroically offers to sacrifice his son in obedience to God’s command, that God “swears” to bless Abraham’s descendants (Genesis 22:16-17). Abraham’s obedient action *sealed his faith and increased/confirmed/maintained his justification*.

Understanding this about Abraham’s process of justification is very important. Understanding this point provides the key to understanding another point, which has been a source of confusion for many. That point has to do with why the Bible seems to emphasize, in one place, that Abraham was not justified by works (Romans 4), whereas in another it says and emphasizes that he was justified by works (James 2:21-24). The Bible’s teaching on the justifications of Abraham, as well as the points we’ve already made about what the Bible means by “works of the law,” reveals the simple answer to this apparent dilemma.

In Romans 3 and 4, St. Paul is writing to people about the works of the Old Law. As stated already, he is speaking to people who believed or were concerned that salvation is tied up with the Old Testament system of circumcision, etc. To prove to these people that justification is not inextricably bound up with the Old Law, circumcision, etc. – to which many were so attached – Paul gives the example of how Abraham was justified by his faith in Genesis 15:6, which was *before he was circumcised* in Genesis 17:

Romans 4:9-10

“Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for

righteousness [Gen. 15:6]. How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.”

His point, therefore, is that if God can justify Abraham by faith before circumcision (as this example shows), then he can justify you, if you submit to the faith of Jesus *and cast aside circumcision*, etc. That’s the precise point he is making. That must be understood when one reads this chapter. His point is not that if you submit to Jesus and His faith, none of your human actions, deeds or sins will have anything to do with your justification!

Thus, when Paul says the following in Romans 4:1-4...

Romans 4:1-4

“What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.”

He is clearly speaking in the context of contrasting the Old Testament system of works with the power that God has to justify those who accept His faith outside of that system of Old Testament works. That is the precise subject and the context. He is not teaching that justification by faith in Christ is apart from all human actions and deeds.

But in James 2, the subject and the context are different. James 2 concerns teaching Christians that their faith in Christ is not enough. It’s about the Christian life and life in general, not about teaching people that the Old Testament system is not obligatory. One could say truly that in James 2 the subject is the same as the issue we’re talking about, the Protestant idea that man is justified by his faith in Jesus alone. And that idea is denounced as completely false.

James 2:21-24

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar [Genesis 22:10]? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

So we can see how the Protestants have totally misunderstood these passages of Scripture. In doing so they have constructed a false religion and a false Gospel which completely contradict the whole message of Scripture.

The Catholic Church has remained faithful to the Bible's teaching on justification because it is the one true Church. It is necessary for salvation to belong to this Church.