**The Works of The Law, Justification, Sacrifices**

**The Difference Between the Law and Grace—Sacrifice, Not Righteousness**

It is important that we note that both the Law and faith/grace deal with sin in the same way—they teach righteousness and prescribes/provides sacrifices/rituals for the forgiveness of sin. Noting this, we then see that the key difference between the Law and grace is not the teaching of righteousness but rather its sacrifices for sins.

Just as the Law demands righteousness, so too, just as with the other apostles, the Gospel of Christ according to Paul demands it.

Nowhere in the Gospel is it taught or suggest in any way that we may lead unrighteous lives and still be justified. Rather, sins are plainly described, righteousness is strictly taught and greatly emphasized. The Gospel, in fact, starts with a call to repentance, a call to turn away from sin.

The Gospel does not teach anywhere that those in Christ are not accountable for their sins, or that the knowledge of sin has no effect on whether or not they are excusableness for their sins [Act 24:16; Luk 12:47-48; Joh 15:24; Jas 3:1; 4:17]. On the contrary, the fact that we will be judged means that it counts [Rom 2:16; 14:10-12; 2Co 5:10; 2Ti 4:1].

That the teaching of righteousness is not different between the Law and faith is evident in Paul saying that “the doers of the Law shall be justified” [Rom 2:12]. Since Paul teaches justification by faith, it means that the Law and grace are the same with regard to righteousness.

That the Gospel teaches the commands of the Law, “Love your neighbour as yourself” [Lev 19:18; Mat 22:39; Mar 12:32-34; Luk 10:27; Rom 13:9; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8] and other commands of the Law [Mat 19:17-19; Rom 13:9; Eph 6:1-2] show that this part of the Law is not frowned on by the Gospel.

Therefore, with regard to sin, the real difference between the Law and faith is their sacrifices. The Law prescribes its sacrifices and rituals for the cleansing and forgiveness of sins. It prescribes it, but the people provide them. Grace on the other hand provides the sacrifice for sin in the person of Jesus Christ and all we have to do is believe in God and in Christ as His Son.

**Significance of the Fact**

Therefore, although Paul does not mention the sacrifices of the Law, the fact that it is the sacrifice of Jesus that we are justified through,

1. Since the Law had sacrifices for the same purpose—the forgiveness of sins—and since they are the direct equivalent of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, though Paul does not explicitly mention ‘sacrifice‘, **the sacrifices of the Law are in his view**
2. Since, with regard to sin and righteousness, the difference between the Law and Grace is their sacrifices, **Paul has the sacrifices and rituals of the Law in mind when he speaks of the inability of the Law to justify anyone**—he wasn’t thinking of doing righteous things but of the sacrifices for sin prescribed by the Law,
3. Since the Law had sacrifices for the same purpose—the forgiveness of sins—it means that *(along with doing righteousness)* **the sacrifices of the Law is what ought to have brought justification to those under the Law, i.e., the Jews/circumcised**,
4. Therefore, the works of the Law will be a reference to the rituals of the law for cleansing from sin
   1. **The law of works vs. the law of faith is really about the sacrifices**
   2. To have access to the sacrifice of the law of faith, we only need to believe. The sacrifices of the law of works are however provided by us
5. With regard to scriptures showing that Jews are sinners, Paul’s argument is that: **since the Scriptures declare the Jews to be sinners, in spite of their sacrifices of the Law, it means that those sacrifices are ineffective to save them from their sins**. The declaration of the Jews as unrighteous and sinners by the Scriptures mean that the deeds of the law do not justify anybody.

**Summary**

In summary, it may be observed that in speaking of the Law, Paul does not mention the word sacrifice. Nevertheless, knowing that the Law has its prescribed sacrifices *and rituals*for the cleansing/forgiveness of sins and knowing how important they are to the functioning of the Law, we can be absolutely sure that Paul had them in mind. Thus, for example, when Paul says that “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified”, he has the sacrifices of the law in mind.

Please, let me emphasize. Though doing good works is demanded of us *(just as it is demanded by the Law from those under it)*yet it is a sacrifice that gives us justification through the forgiveness of sins. Therefore, since we are justified through a sacrifice, when Paul says that “by the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified”, what he is really saying is that “by the sacrifices of the Law shall no flesh be justified”.

**Why Not Just “Sacrifices of the Law”?**

While the “deeds of the Law” may be shown to include doing good, practically, “deeds” or “works” in such words as when Paul says “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified” are a reference to the sacrifices of the Law. Nevertheless, Paul doesn’t say “by the sacrifices of the law shall no flesh be justified”. Why?

There is an advantage in not isolating the sacrifices, for that may suggest that we are still expected to be under the Law—God just had to address a weakness of the Law. Some, for example may sincerely argue that we are still to keep the special days and months and seasons and years which Paul says we are not to [Gal 4:10-11,8-9].

The description, “deeds/works of the law” indicates it is the law as a whole that has failed—the failure of a part of the system is the failure of the whole. The Law is a covenant different and separate from the New Covenant in Christ Jesus, and according to the Gospel it has been abolished in Christ [Rom 6:14; 7:4; Gal 2:19; Eph 2:15; Heb 8:13]. Therefore, there should be no suggestion that it continues.