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The Response to Justification 3: 27-31

The response to justification DIG: How are people justified before YHVH? What is required? How does God's plan demonstrate His fairness toward all humanity? Why does Paul argue that when it comes to one's standing before God, no one has the right to boast or be filled with religious pride? How is God both merciful and just at the same time? What spiritual fruit should we see in a genuine believer? How does the cross confirm the Torah?

REFLECT: When did you first realize that salvation is a free gift provided by the Messiah? Who or what helped you reach that realization? In what different ways do people try to earn salvation? How does the cross confirm the Torah? How would your life be different today without Yeshua? What has His gift meant to you? What has been your response?

There's no room for bragging in our response to our justification, only gratitude,
which produces growth and good spiritual fruit.



What is priceless can't be bought or earned. Eternal life is just such a treasure. We receive it free or not at all. We could never afford it. We could never deserve it. It's **God's** gift to us, or we don't have it. But it would be a huge mistake to conclude in this case that what is free is cheap. It cost **YHVH** a great deal, including **His Son's** life, to provide this gift for us. There's no room for bragging in our response, but only gratitude.[84]

The cross leaves no room for boasting: As we will see so many times in **Romans**, **Paul** starts **his** teaching with a question? **So what room is left for boasting?** Again, answering **his** own question, **he** declares: **None at all! What kind of Torah excludes it? One that has to do with legalistic observance of rules?** Once again, **legalism** is not the answer. **No, rather, a Torah that has to do with trusting** (Greek: *pisteos*, meaning *faith, trust, belief*)**.** Not even **Abraham**, the father of **God's chosen people**, was **justified** by works **(Romans 4:2)**. **For you have been delivered by grace through trusting, and even this is not your accomplishment but God's gift. You were not delivered by your own actions; therefore, no one should boast (Ephesians 2:8-9).** 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, mankind is able to make themselves acceptable to **God**. **Paul** completely undercuts their works righteousness by declaring: **We hold the view that a person comes to be considered righteous by God on the ground of trusting, which has nothing to do with the** corrupted **legalistic observance of Torah commands (3:27-28).** But what should we see after

trusting?

What are some reliable proofs of saving **faith**? How do we know if someone is saved? We are not to judge other people, but we are to look for **spiritual fruit** in the life of a professing **believer**. **ADONAI** does not leave **His** children uncertain about their relationship with **Him**.

The **first** reliable evidence of saving **faith** is **love for God**. **The mind controlled by the old nature is hostile to God, because it does not submit itself to God's Torah – indeed, it cannot (8:7).** The unsaved **person** cannot love god and has no desire to do so. The true child of **God**, however, despite often failing **YHVH**, will have a life characterized by a delight in **ADONAI** and **His Word (Psalm 1:1-3,** also see **Psalms 42:1-2** and **73:25; Matthew 10:37**).

*Dear Wonderful Heavenly **Father**, The more I know about **You**, the more I **love** and worship you! You do all things in complete **love**. Even when **You** must discipline, it is done in **love**. **"My son, do not take lightly the discipline of ADONAI or lose heart when you are corrected by Him, because ADONAI disciplines the one He loves and punishes every son He accepts" (Hebrews 12:5b-6). You, God,** our loving **Father**, are acting as a wise potter to mold **Your** child into a beautiful vessel of **righteousness. "Now all discipline seems painful at the moment – not joyful. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:13).*

Your love** is wonderful for **You** are completely faithful and can always be trusted. **I will say of ADONAI, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust . . . He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings you will find refuge. His faithfulness is body armor and shield (Psalms 91:2** and **4).** What a joy that **God Himself has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you," (Hebrews 13:5c).

Your** love graciously looks to how long eternity is, and allows trials in our lives to mold us to shine for **Your** glory and honor. **These trials are so that the true metal of your faith (far more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire) may come to light in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Messiah Yeshua (First Peter 1:7).

*How wonderful that as we **love Yeshua** as our **Lord and Savior, He** comes to live right in us! **Yeshua answered Thaddaeus,** one of the twelve apostles, **and said to him: If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our dwelling with him (John 14:23), so that Messiah may dwell in your hearts through faith (Ephesians 3:17a).** What wonderful **love** that is always with us. **Your love, ADONAI, is in the heavens, Your faithfulness up to the skies (Psalms 36:5).** As we turn our focus off what is around us and look at how great **Your love** is for **Your children**, we are filled with eternal peace. **And I pray that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to grasp with all the kedoshim what is the width and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Messiah which surpasses knowledge, so you may be filled up with all the fullness of God. (Ephesians 3:17b-19).** I **love You!** In the holy name of **Yeshua** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

A **second** reliable evidence of saving **faith** is **repentance from sin and the hatred of it** that always accompanies true repentance. This second mark of saving **faith** is the reverse side of the first. The **person** who **loves God** has a built-in hatred of **sin**. It is impossible to **love** two things that are contradictory to one another. **No one can be a slave to two masters; for he will either hate the first and love the second, or scorn the second and be loyal to the first (Matthew 6:24).** To **love** a holy and righteous **God** is, almost by definition, to hate **sin**.

When confronted by **Nathan** concerning **his sins** of adultery with **Bathsheba**, and the murder of her husband **Uriah**, **David's** repentance was genuine, as reflected in **Psalm 51:1-4a**. **God, in your grace, have mercy on me; in your great compassion, blot out my crimes, he** prayed. **Wash me completely from my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my crimes, my sin confronts me all the time. Against You, only You, have I sinned and done what is evil from Your perspective.** The **believer** will have no peace of conscience until he repents of it.

True repentance is more than simply being sorry for getting caught. **Judas** became bitterly sorry for **his sin** in betraying **Yeshua**, to the extreme of committing suicide (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ, to see link click Lm – Judas Hangs Himself**). But **he** did not repent and ask **Yeshua** for forgiveness. **Paul** commended the **Corinthian believers, "I rejoice not**

because you were pained, but because the pain led you to turn back to God. For you handled the pain in God's way" – repentance **(Second Corinthians 7:9).**

No **believer** becomes completely **sinless** until he goes to meet **the Lord**. **If we claim not to have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we acknowledge our sins, then, since He is trustworthy and just, he will forgive them and purify us from all wrongdoing (First John 1:8-9).** If a **person's sin** does not bother **him** and increasingly put **him** under conviction about it, that **person's** salvation is questionable. The test of true repentance is not merely sorrow for bearing the consequences of one's **sin**, but sorrow for the **sin's** offense against a holy **God**, which above all else leads a **believer** to implore **ADONAI's** forgiveness.

A **third** reliable mark of saving **faith** is **genuine humility**. A **person** cannot be saved as long as **he** trusts in and exalts **himself**. Salvation begins by confessing one's poverty of spirit **(Matthew 5:3)**, and the willingness to deny oneself and take up the cross **(Matthew 16:24)**. Like the prodigal son (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Hu – The Parable of the Lost Son and His Jealous Brother**), the true **believer** who **sins** will eventually **come to his senses**, **his** spiritual senses that convict of **sin**. **He** will then, again like the prodigal, go to **his** heavenly **Father** and humbly confess **his sin** and **his** unworthiness for forgiveness, while pleading for it on the basis of **his Father's grace**.

A **fourth** reliable evidence of true **faith** is **prayer**. **Now because you are God's children, He has sent forth into our hearts the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit who cries out, "Abba!" (that is, "Dear Father!"). The heart** of a genuine **believer** cannot help calling out to **God**, who is **his** heavenly **Father** and whose **Spirit** is within **him** to generate that desire. Every genuine **believer** will freely admit that **he** does not pray as often or as earnestly as **he** should. But in **his** innermost being, communion with **his** heavenly **Father** is the desire of **his** heart.

A **fifth** mark of saving **faith** is **selfless love**, not only for **God**, but for others, especially fellow **believers**. **Anyone who claims to be in the light while hating his brother is still in the dark. The person who keeps loving his brother remains in the light, and there is nothing in him that could make him trip (1 John 2:9-10).** Later in **his** letter, **John** said: **We, for our**

part, know that we have passed from death to life because we keep on loving the brothers. The person who fails to keep on loving is still under the power of death (1 Jn 3:14). The person who does not sincerely care for the welfare of true **believers** is **himself** not a true **believer**, but **is still under the power of death**. Again, in **his** letter, **John** declares: **Beloved friends, let us love one another; because love is from God; and everyone who loves has God as his Father and knows God. Those who do not love, do not know God; because God is love (1 John 4:7-8).**

A **sixth** mark of saving **faith** is **separation from the world**. **Believers** are called to be in **the world** but not of **it**. **They** are in the world to testify to **Messiah**, a central testimony of which is not to reflect **the world's** standards and ways **(John 17:15-17)**. So, on the one hand, **John** says: **Do not love the world or the things of the world. If someone loves the world, then the love of the Father is not in him; because all the things of the world – the desires of the old nature, the desires of the eyes, and the boastings of what he has and does – are not from the Father, but from the world (First John 2:15-16).** But on the other hand, **he** declares: **Everyone that has God as their Father overcomes the world. And this is what victoriously overcomes the world: our trust/faith/belief. Who does overcome the world if not the person who believes that Yeshua is the Son of God (First John 5:4-5)? The person** who has saving **faith** has **not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit of God (First Corinthians 2:12).**

A **seventh** reliable evidence of true **faith** is **spiritual growth**. The central truth of the parable of the soils (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Et – The Parable of the Soils**), is that true **believers** will always grow spiritually to varying degrees, because by **trusting, they** have genuinely received **the seed** of the Good News. **This is what the Kingdom of God is like. A farmer scatters seed on the ground, Yeshua** said on another occasion; **Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head (Mark 4:26-28 NIV).** Like **the farmer** and **his** crops, **the believer** does not understand *how* **he** grows spiritually, but **he** knows that because **he** has spiritual life within **him**, **he** will grow **(Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 1:6)**.

The **eighth** and final mark of saving **faith** is **obedient living**. **The way we**

> **can be sure we know him is if we are obeying His commands. Anyone who says, "I know Him," but isn't obeying His commands is a liar and the truth is not in him. Here is how one can distinguish clearly between God's children and those of the Adversary; everyone who does not continue doing what is right is not from God (1 Jn 2:3-5** and **3:10).** Although no one is saved by good **works**, those who are truly saved produce **good works (Ja 2:18)**. Those who are truly saved will produce **good works** because **we are God's making, created in union with the Messiah Yeshua for a life of good actions already prepared by God for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).**

The cross reveals God's universal grace: More questions. **Or is God the God of the Jews only? Isn't He also the God of the Gentiles? Paul** takes one of the most basic of Jewish beliefs, monotheism, and turns it against the works righteousness of Pharisaic Judaism. If **justification** is by **the Torah**, then **God** *does* belong to **the Jews**. But if **justification** is by **trusting**, then **He** is the **God** of both **the Jews** and **the Gentiles**. Follow this logic. If **the Jew** persisted in this position, then there must be two **Gods** – one for **the Jews** and one for **the Gentiles**. But the **Jew** would not allow for that. **Yes, he is indeed the God of the Gentiles (3:29), because, as you will admit, God is one** (see the commentary on **Deuteronomy Bw – Sh'ma Isra'el**)**. Paul** makes clear that **the Torah** is no longer **the middle wall of separation** between **Jews** and **Gentiles (Ephesians 2:14)**.

Trusting is the condition of receiving salvation on the part of **Jew** and **Gentile** alike. Neither has any advantage over the other. **Therefore, He will consider righteous the circumcised on the ground of trusting and the uncircumcised through that same trusting (3:30).** The content of what one can **trust** in will vary from Dispensation to Dispensation (see the commentary on **Hebrews Bp – The Dispensation of Grace**), but means of becoming **righteous** has always been the same . . . by **trusting** (see the commentary on **Galatians Bc – We are Not Justified by Deeds of the Torah**). **God is one**, so **He justifies** everyone the same way. Only **one God**, only **one** way of salvation.[85] **Trusting** is not in any way inconsistent with **the Torah**, but rather, is thoroughly in agreement with **it**, and is therefore confirmed by **it**.

The cross fulfills God's Torah: Paul follows the rabbinic method, found throughout the Talmud, of anticipating a hypothetical question – and not so hypothetical, if one reads the literature of Jewish attitudes towards Christianity: **Does it follow that we abolish Torah by this trusting** in **Yeshua Messiah?**

And **Paul** answers **his** own question by saying: **Heaven forbid** (Hebrew: *chalilah*, meaning *that's a contradiction, it makes no sense*)**! On the contrary, we** appreciate **the Torah** even more because the cross **confirms it (3:31).** How so? Because trusting **YHVH** is the very basis, foundation and essence of **Torah**. In saying so, **Paul** does not exhaust the subject. It is **his** literary style, however, to introduce a topic briefly, allowing the reader to be filled with questions, and then return to it later. That is what **he** does here; **he** returns to the matter of how **faith** and **Torah** fit together in **Chapters 7** and **9-11**.[86]

Secondly, **the Torah** refers to the entire TaNaKh, and **the feasts** point to **Messiah's** First and Second Coming. Of the seven major feasts on the **Jewish** calendar, the first four **feasts** were fulfilled by the program of **the First Coming** of **Messiah** and occur within fifty days of each other. **Passover** was fulfilled by the death of **Messiah** on the cross; **Unleavened Bread** was fulfilled by the sinlessness of **His** sacrifice; **First Fruits** was fulfilled by **Yeshua's** resurrection to life, and **Shavu'ot** was fulfilled by the birth of the Church.

Between the first four feasts and the last three feasts, there is a four-month interval mentioned in passing. **When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am ADONAI Your God (Leviticus 23:22).** During the pause between the two sets of festivals, life is to continue as normal. This interval is pictured as a summertime of labor in the fields in preparation for the final harvest of the summer and before the fall harvest. This verse is not related to any feast. Unless one understands what is really happening, it almost seems like an unnecessary interruption. However, it is the pause between **the festivals** that fulfilled the program of the First Coming as opposed to the festivals to be fulfilled by the program of the Second Coming. This internal of four months does have a messianic implication.

The messianic implication is the insertion of the Dispensation of Grace, interrupting the program of **the feasts** of **Isra'el**. Indeed, **the gleanings for the poor and the foreigner residing among you** is a very good picture of the mission of the Church itself in gospel evangelism. For example, **Jesus** states: **Look to the fields! They are ripe for harvest (John 4:35)!** Thus, it becomes a fitting symbol of the obligation of the Church to do the work of gospel evangelism. **Leviticus 23:22**, being a parenthetical verse interrupting the discussion of the feasts of **Isra'el**, is significant in that it symbolizes the present age in which we now live and in which the program of the feasts of **Israel** has been temporarily interrupted.

The last three festivals in the second cycle of **festivals** also come close together, even closer than those of the first cycle of **feasts**. In fact, they all come within two weeks of each other. The last three **feasts** of the second cycle are to be fulfilled by the program of the Second Coming. **Rosh ha-Shanah** will be fulfilled by the Rapture of the Church; **Yom Kippur** will be fulfilled by the future affliction of the Jews in the Great Tribulation, and **Sukkot** will be fulfilled by the thousand-year Messianic Kingdom.[87]

Today, my friend, when you and I will take the position that we are **sinners** and come to **God** and **trust Messiah** as our **Savior** – regardless of *who* we are, **where** we are, and *how* we are or **when** we are – **God** will save us. For **YHVH** today has put salvation on one basis and one basis alone. **His** question is this, “What will you do with **My Son** who died for you on the cross?[88]