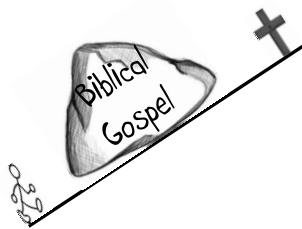


Sharing with Latter-day Saints— Rock 5



Contrast becomes an obstacle when we don't understand the role of faith and works for biblical salvation.

Clearing Rocks from the Road to Redemption

The above diagram depicts one of the common obstacles or “Rocks” that Latter-day Saints (LDS) frequently encounter when discussing matters of faith with biblical Christians.

The below diagram represents the ideal sharing scenario—the Rock has been cleared from the road to redemption. In other words, the only thing standing between LDS and being forgiven of ALL their sins is faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ ALONE to freely secure their salvation.

Note that the road to redemption is NOT on level ground, but is an uphill climb. This is because many LDS risk incredible loss (e.g. family, friends, social status, financial security, etc.) when contemplating leaving the LDS Church for a saving relationship with the Jesus Christ of the Bible.



I. Rock 5 at a Glance

A. The Purposes of Rock 5

1. One aim of this lesson is to clarify how God can reasonably and justly forgive all sins by faith in Christ alone to the exclusion of “works” according to the biblical gospel.
2. Another aim of this lesson is clarify the indispensable role that “works” play in salvation according to the biblical gospel.

II. What Are the Primary Purposes of God’s Laws?

A. To Reflect God’s Essential Nature and Moral Perfection

1. Leviticus 11:44-45 (NIV2011)

⁴⁴ I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground.

⁴⁵ I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

Comment [MG1]: To be holy means to be “set apart.” The God of Israel is set apart from the sinful world. His “thoughts” and “ways” are wholly other than that of fallen humanity (Isa. 55:8-9).

2. 1 Peter 1:14-16 (NIV2011)

¹⁴ As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance.

¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do;

¹⁶ for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

Comment [MG2]: God’s morally perfect character was initially revealed under the old covenant in the Ten Commandments (see Ex. 20:1-17).

God gave His commandments to set ancient Israel apart from the ways of the world and used the terms “clean” and “unclean” to distinguish between holiness and sinfulness.

3. Isaiah 45:21 (NIV2011)

²¹ Declare what is to be, present it— let them take counsel together.

Comment [MG3]: Under the new covenant Jesus is the ultimate reflection of God’s holy character and Christians (through obedience to Christ) are to be set apart from unbelieving, pagan society.

Who foretold this long ago, who declared it from the distant past? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me.

Comment [MG4]: The God of Israel is "righteous" in the sense that He is and does right in contrast to the false gods. God is true to Himself and satisfies His own moral holiness.

4. Romans 7:12 (NIV2011)

¹² So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

Comment [MG5]: Calling the law and commandment holy and righteous points to its true Originator (see Isa. 5:16).

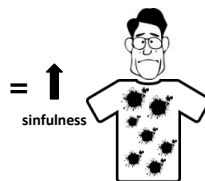
B. To Reflect God's Requirement for Righteous Perfection

1. James 2:10 (NIV2011)

¹⁰ For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.

Comment [MG6]: Godly perfection requires absolute, unfailing, flawless obedience. And while we all as lawbreakers are not necessarily as BAD as we can be, we are undeniably as BAD OFF as we can be.

C. To Increase Our Sins and Reveal Our Need for a Savior



Comment [MG7]: The purpose of the law may be threefold: (1) to increase our awareness of sin; (2) to increase the sinfulness of sin; and (3) to quantitatively increase sins.

1. Romans 5:20-21 (NIV2011)

²⁰ The law was brought in so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,

²¹ so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Comment [MG8]: Note how the apostle Paul contrasts sin via the law with grace via the righteousness of Christ. The antithesis (i.e. mutual incompatibility) between law unto death and grace unto righteousness is a recurring theme for Paul. Therefore, any aspect of law-keeping as a basis for salvation should be considerable cause for alarm.

Note also that LDS "eternal life" (i.e. the highest of the three levels within the celestial kingdom) requires more law-keeping than for any other "grade of salvation." (See sections III, IV.C and V in R4.)

2. Romans 3:19-20 (NIV2011)

¹⁹ Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God.

²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

Comment [MG9]: Note again the fundamental purpose of the law is to raise our awareness of personal sin and NOT to function as a basis for salvation. In fact, "works of the law" are antithetical to God declaring us righteous in His sight.

D. To Impart the Curse of Physical and Spiritual Death



= &

God's Wrath

1. Galatians 3:10-13 (NIV2011)

¹⁰ For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

¹¹ Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith."

¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them."

¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole."

Comment [MG10]: The apostle Paul's implied syllogism is as follows:
1. Those who don't do everything required by the law are cursed.
2. No one does everything required by the law.
3. Therefore, those who rely on law-keeping for justification (i.e. acquittal of all sin-guilt) and righteousness are cursed.

Comment [MG11]: Note Paul's repeated contrast between law-keeping and faith in the context of the basis of our salvation.

Comment [MG12]: That is, hypothetically, but NOT possibly.

Comment [MG13]: Law-keeping (in whole or in part) entails a degree of self-reliance. Faith entails absolute, utter dependence on Christ. In the sense of securing our salvation, law-works and faith in Christ's work are antithetical for Paul. Indeed, it is an all-or-nothing spiritual principle.

2. Galatians 3:21-22 (NIV2011)

²¹ Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.

²² But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Comment [MG14]: While the law revealed how God's people SHOULD LIVE, it did not produce the necessary power TO LIVE (i.e. "impart life"). Clearly the law and the promises of God serve two different functions.

3. Romans 6:23 (NIV2011)

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Comment [MG15]: Note again the apostle Paul's repeated contrast between law-keeping and faith in Christ in the context of our salvation.

Moreover, God's promise of salvation through righteousness can be guaranteed on the basis of faith because it is Jesus Christ who saves us from beginning to end and He CANNOT fail!

4. Romans 7:9-11 (NIV2011)

⁹ Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died.

¹⁰ I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death.

¹¹ For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.

Comment [MG16]: Note that the "wages of sin" is contrasted with "the gift of God." That is, physical and spiritual death is merited, while eternal life is unmerited, and this, because it is Christ Jesus alone who secures our salvation.

Comment [MG17]: That is, prior to Paul's conversion and in his naive, self-deceived state of "righteousness based on the law" (Phil. 3:6).

Comment [MG18]: Paul's sinfulness was dormant because he had no conviction of sin. Yet when conviction came, so, too, did Paul's awareness of his condemned status.

Comment [MG19]: That is, sin uses the law to deceive and seduce us.

5. Ephesians 2:1-3 (NIV2011)

¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,

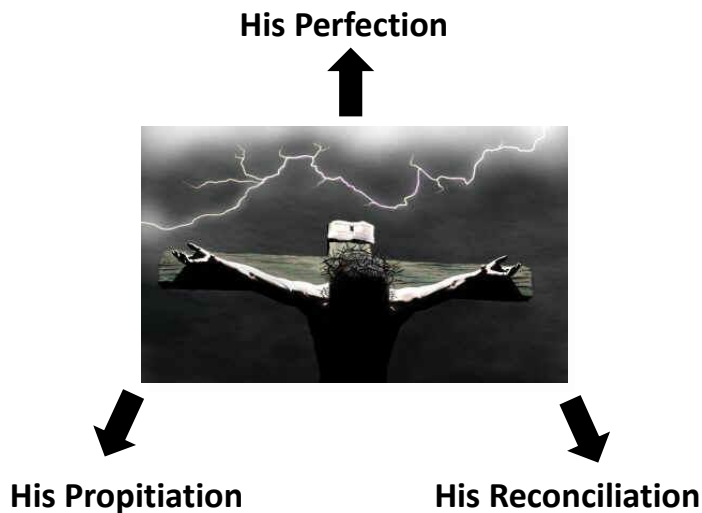
² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.

³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

Comment [MG20]: Clearly Paul is referring here to spiritual death.

Comment [MG21]: Clearly God's holy anger and His judgment against our sin is in view here. It is only when the greatness of God's wrath is grasped that the greatness of His mercy is grasped.

III. The Savior's "Work" Is Our Only Remedy for the Curse of God's Laws.



A. Christ Meets Our Need for Righteous Perfection.

1. Romans 3:20-24 (NIV2011)

²⁰ Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile,

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

Comment [MG22]: "Declared righteous" (*dikaioō*) or "justified" (i.e. acquitted of all guilt) by God are synonymous. "Works of the law" here are viewed specifically from the perspective of the Jews and OT law. (See Diagram 5A below for further clarification of Paul's set-subset principle of "works.")

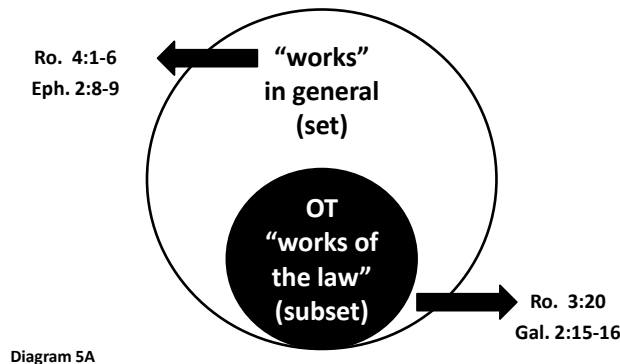
Comment [MG23]: Jesus Christ is God's sole provision of righteousness of which sinful man is in desperate need.

The basis of our righteousness is "faith in Jesus Christ," which necessarily excludes "works" of any kind, under any covenant (in whole or in part). It makes no sense to argue (as the LDS Church does) that Paul rejects law-keeping under the old covenant, only to require it under the new covenant because it is co-instrumental with faith in Christ.

Comment [MG24]: That is, being "justified freely by God's grace" is compatible with faith in Christ's work alone and antithetical (i.e. mutually incompatible) to our work. Clearly the latter would NOT entail God's absolutely free (*dōrean* – "without payment," "gratis") gift of grace.

It is precisely because ALL who are in Christ by faith are declared righteous and freely justified by God that there is ONLY ONE heaven where we will dwell eternally with the Father and the Son. (Compare Paul's declaration here with sections III and IV in R4.)

For Paul Justification/Salvation by Faith Excludes All “Works”



Paul's Set-Subset Principle of “Works”

1. When Paul emphasized the failure of law-keeping of ANY KIND (set) as a basis of salvation, he used the term “works.” This is evident for Abraham, who predated the law of Moses 430 years (see Ro. 4:1-6; Gal. 3:16-17) and for Gentiles, who were NOT under the law of Moses (see Eph. 2:8:9-11).
2. When Paul emphasized the failure of THE LAW OF MOSES (subset) as a basis of salvation, he used the term “works of the law.” This is evident when he addressed the Jews (see Ro. 3:1, 20) and the influence of the Judaizers on Gentile Christians (see Gal. 2:15-16; 5:1-4).

2. Romans 8:1-4 (NIV2011)

- ¹ Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,
- ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.
- ³ For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh,
- ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Comment [MG25]: The benefits of Jesus' sinless sacrifice are fully applied to those who trust in Him alone to save them, thereby removing the wrath of God and eternal separation from God. (Compare Paul's declaration here with **sections III and IV in R4.**)

Comment [MG26]: As our substitute, the Son satisfied “the righteous requirement of the law” by living a life of perfect obedience to God UP TO the cross and by providing the perfect sacrifice for God ON the cross.

Comment [MG27]: Clearly the appropriate response of the saved sinner is to live according to the Spirit and not the flesh. This is NOT to say, however, that the life lived is a BASIS of salvation; rather, it is the necessary EVIDENCE of salvation (see Ro. 6:1-4 and 7:4-6).

Comment [MG28]: That is, as the punishment for our sins was imputed to Christ, so “the righteousness of God” is imputed to us who are “in [Christ]” by faith.

3. 2 Corinthians 5:21 (NIV2011)

- ²¹ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

4. Philippians 3:8-9 (NIV2011)

⁸What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

Comment [MG29]: The apostle Paul here strenuously establishes the antithesis between law-keeping and faith unto "the righteousness that comes from God." Therefore, any aspect of law-keeping as a basis for righteousness should be considerable cause for alarm.

B. Christ Received the Full Measure of God's Punishment for Our Sins.

1. Isaiah 53:4-5 (NIV2011)

⁴Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted.

⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Comment [MG30]: Isaiah – writing some 700 years before Jesus Christ – describes the mission and fate of the LORD's Suffering Servant against the backdrop of a peace that was lost due to wickedness (48:18, 22) and the need to be reconciled to God (49:5-6). This prophetic work would be accomplished by Israel's Messiah through His substitutionary, penal death for both Jews and Gentiles (49:6).

Question: Why didn't the substitutionary piercing, crushing, and punishment suffered by Jesus Christ bring "peace" with God to those who are consigned to the LDS terrestrial and telestial kingdoms? (See sections III and IV in R4.)

2. Romans 3:25-26 (KJV)

²⁵ [Christ] Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

²⁶To declare, *I say*, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.

Comment [MG31]: Christ is the "propitiation" (*hilastērion*) or sacrifice of atonement for our sins. Propitiation is closely connected to the "mercy seat" (the cover over the ark) where the blood was poured on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:14). In this light, the blood of Christ both appeases God's wrath and forgives sin.

Note that the basis of propitiation is "faith in his blood."

Remember this: Unless Mormons "access," "accept," or "receive" the Atonement through law-keeping, Christ's propitiation will be of NO BENEFIT to them! (See section II of R4.)

3. See also Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 2:13-14; Hebrews 2:17; 7:27; 9:22; 1 John 2:1-2; and Revelation 1:5.

C. Christ Meets Our Need for Reconciliation to God

1. Romans 5:10-11 (NIV2011)

¹⁰ For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!

¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

2. Colossians 1:21-23 (NIV2011)

²¹ Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

²³ if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

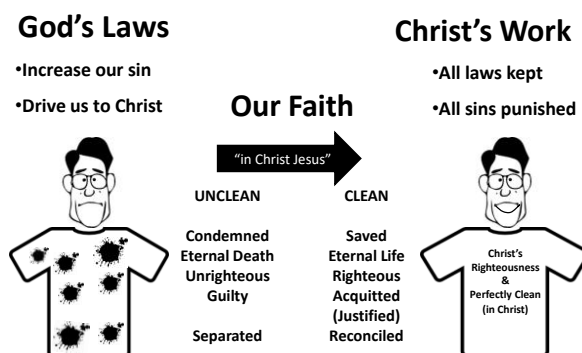
Comment [MG32]: Our being "reconciled to [God] through the death of his Son" is the natural result of our justification (i.e. being acquitted of all guilt). Paul explains in Romans 5:1, "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

It is significant that our being "reconciled to him" (v. 10) is a past tense verb in the indicative mood, that is, the mood of certainty. The reason for this "done deal" is simply because the work of Christ is a done deal. Once again, the basis of our justification is faith in the all-sufficient, finished work of Christ.

Comment [MG33]: Remember this: Faith unto reconciliation to God is antithetical to our "works" (in whole or in part) because it requires our utter, desperate dependence on God's provision of Christ's work alone to secure it. This IS the apostle Paul's "gospel."

Note that the LDS gospel holds no such hope of being reconciled to Heavenly Father given its cooperative, synergistic, 3-kingdom model of salvation. Moreover, being reconciled to God in the celestial kingdom requires complete obedience, which ultimately requires self-dependence. (See sections III and V in R4.)

"The Great Exchange"



IV. The Faith-Grace-Gift Principle Excludes “Works”

The Law of the Excluded Middle

(either A or non-A)

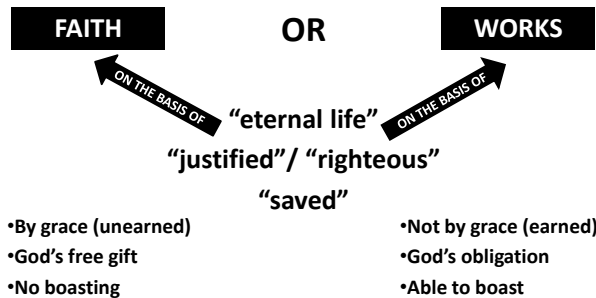


Diagram 5B

A. Eternal Life on the Basis of Faith Excludes “Works”

1. John 6:25-40 (NIV2011)

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill.

²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰ So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do?”

Comment [MG34]: Verse 27—Following Jesus’ feeding of the 5,000 with 5 loaves and 2 fish, the crowds rowed several miles across the Sea of Galilee to its western shore to find Him. This is the sense in which Jesus uses the term “work” (i.e. pursuit through self-effort).

Note that “eternal life” according to both the biblical and LDS gospels is equated with being eternally reconciled to God the Father. (See **section IV in R4.**)

Comment [MG35]: Verse 28—That is, “Tell us what works God requires of us for eternal life, and we will do them.”

Comment [MG36]: Verse 29—That is, “What God requires is faith in the Son whom He sent—it cannot be worked for.” In view of the Jewish emphasis on faith through “works of the law,” Jesus’ answer is shocking (see Ro. 3:20, 27-28; Gal. 2:15-16; 3:2, 5, 10; Phil. 3:6, 9).

It is significant that LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie’s paraphrase of Jesus here reads: “Believe that the Father sent me to do his will, and show that you believe by obeying the laws and ordinances of my gospel” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1974, 1:353).

Further, the LDS Institute *New Testament Student Manual Religion* 211-212 (2014) commentary on this passage is conspicuously absent (see p. 221).

³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³² Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.

³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe.

³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.

⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

Comment [MG37]: Verse 35—That is, “com[ing] to me” (Jesus) is believing that the Father sent the Son from heaven to offer eternal life as a gift for the asking (cf. Jn. 4:7-14).

Comment [MG38]: Verse 36—Note that Jesus emphasizes their seeing Him, but not believing Him—namely, His claims as to Messianic identity, purpose, and authority. Clearly no aspect of man’s works are here in view.

Comment [MG39]: Verse 40—That is, “look[ing] to the Son” is trusting in Him alone to freely give eternal life and not trusting in one’s self-efforts (in whole or in part) to help secure it.

Note that “I will raise him up at the last day” (i.e. resurrection) is equated with “eternal life” and NOT mere “immortality” in the LDS sense with our eternal destination being determined ultimately by our works. **(See sections II and III in R4.)**

It is significant that LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie’s paraphrase of Jesus here reads: “... and who believeth that I am the Christ, and who obeyeth the laws and ordinances of my gospel ... shall have everlasting life” (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1974, 1:354).

Further, the LDS Institute *New Testament Student Manual Religion 211-212* (2014) commentary on this passage is conspicuously absent (see p. 221).

B. Being Justified and Declared Righteous on the Basis of Faith Excludes “Works”

1. Romans 4:1-25 (NIV2011)

¹ What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter?

² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God.

³ What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

⁴ Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation.

⁵ However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

⁶ David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

⁷ “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

⁸ Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

⁹ Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham’s faith was credited to him as righteousness.

¹⁰ Under what circumstances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before!

¹¹ And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them.

¹² And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

Comment [MG40]: Verse 1—The apostle Paul asks how his previous declarations in 3:27-31 bear on the life of Abraham.

It is important to note that (1) the Jews stressed Abraham’s works-righteousness as THE model of piety before God; (2) God’s covenant with Abraham predated the Law of Moses some 430 years (see Gal. 3:16-17); and as such (3) Paul in reference to Abraham uses the term “works” (generally) instead of “works of the law” specifically. (Refer above to Paul’s Set-Subset Principle in **Diagram 5A.**)

Comment [MG41]: Verse 2—Much to the shock of the Jews, Abraham’s “works” in no way contributed to his being “justified” (i.e. being acquitted of all guilt) before God. Therefore, by logical implication ALL boasting was necessarily “excluded” (3:27).

Comment [MG42]: Verse 3—Paul’s quote here of Genesis 15:6 is significant because what Abraham trusted God for—namely, the son of promise, Isaac, he was HELPLESS to in any way bring to fruition (see Gen. 17:15-17; Ro. 4:17-21).

Comment [MG43]: Verse 4—That is, an employer pays an employee the earned wage out of obligation—it is a category mistake to refer to a wage worked for as a gift or “reckoned of grace” (KJV). Note that with the synergistic LDS gospel, Mormons actually put God in their “debt” (KJV). (**See section III in R4.**)

Comment [MG44]: Verse 5—That is, faith unto justification and righteousness is antithetical to law-keeping, as works unto earning a wage is antithetical to a gift of grace.

Comment [MG45]: Verse 10—Paul here corrects two Jewish errors: (1) that Psalm 32:1-2 (quoted in verses 7 and 8) applied exclusively to the Jews and (2) that the initiating mechanism of Abraham’s righteousness was his work of circumcision in Genesis 17 (some 29 years AFTER Genesis 15:6!).

¹³ It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith.

¹⁴ For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless,

¹⁵ because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all.

¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

¹⁸ Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

¹⁹ Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead.

²⁰ Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God,

²¹ being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

²² This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness."

²³ The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone,

²⁴ but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

²⁵ He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Comment [MG46]: Verse 16—It is significant that the Joseph Smith translation of the Bible (JST) in Romans 4:16 reads: "Therefore ye are justified of faith and works, through grace" and is officially quoted on page 342 in the LDS Institute *New Testament Student Manual Religion 211-212* (2014).

Comment [MG47]: Verses 17-21—Note how Paul frames Abraham's hopelessly "dead" condition and utter inability to in any way contribute to "the promise of God"—namely, to become *the father of many nations* through Isaac (see Gen. 15:1-6; 17:15-17). Indeed, his only recourse is absolute dependence upon and trust in God.

Comment [MG48]: Verses 23-24—Paul here delivers his deathblow to the faulty Jewish notion that Abraham's works were A BASIS of righteousness and, therefore, by implication Jewish "works of the law" were as well.

The LDS Church reconciles Paul's faith-works antithesis in Romans 4 with its synergistic gospel of salvation in 2 ways:

1. The "works" or "the law of works" (Ro. 2:2, 4-5 JST) against which Paul makes his antithetical argument is the law of Moses (specifically) and NOT the works done in faith and obedience to God prior to Mosaic law (in the case of Abraham) or after the coming of Christ in the NT.

2. The "works" Paul refers to are also those done solely through self-effort and to the exclusion of faith in Christ. Without the Atonement no one would have the OPPORTUNITY to be forgiven; therefore, even our works done in faith do not "fully merit" salvation. Salvation then is rightly understood as a free gift of grace by God.

(See pages 341-343 in the 2014 edition of the LDS Institute *New Testament Student Manual Religion 211-212* for more information.)

C. Being Saved on the Basis of Faith Excludes “Works”

1. Ephesians 2:1-10 (NIV2011)

- ¹ As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,
² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.
³ All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.
⁴ But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,
⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.
⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,
⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.
⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—
⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.
¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.



If Paul meant to declare that “faith alone” is necessary for salvation (to the exclusion of works), what would he have written?



If Paul meant to declare that “works” CANNOT be necessary for salvation (even if combined with faith), what would he have written?

Comment [MG49]: Verse 1—Note the apostle Paul’s declaration of being “dead” (past tense), clearly stressing spiritual death.

Comment [MG50]: Verse 2—Note how Paul implies a radically changed lifestyle that is IN ACCORDANCE WITH salvation, but not THE BASIS OF salvation (see Comments 53-54).

Comment [MG51]: Verse 5—Note how Paul equates being “made alive with Christ” with having been “saved.” Note that “by grace” is causative—Paul will qualify grace in verses 8-9.

Comment [MG52]: Verse 6—Note how Paul also equates being “raised up” and “seated with” Christ with salvation, and this, because of being “in Christ Jesus.” Remember this: “seated with” (*synkathizō*) means to be proximally together. Therefore, “in the heavenly realms” is tantamount to being PRESENT WITH the Son AND the Father (see 1:20).

It is significant to note that LDS apostle Bruce R. McConkie locates salvation here “in the celestial kingdom”—the only dwelling place of the Father (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1970, 2:500).

Comment [MG53]: Verses 8-9—Paul now qualifies “grace” (and “faith” and “the gift of God”) unto salvation as being antithetical to our “works.” (Refer above to **Diagram 5B**.)

The LDS Church responds: “Paul taught [in vv. 8-10] that we are not saved by either faith or works alone, as both are critical to salvation” (*New Testament Student Manual Religion* 211-212, 2014, p. 425).

Note how boasting IS possible in the LDS 3-kingdom gospel of salvation. (**See section III in R4.**)

Comment [MG54]: Verse 10—The LDS gospel requires that our works be the CO-BASIS OF salvation; however, the biblical gospel requires them to be IN ACCORDANCE WITH our salvation. That is, we are not saved BY our good works, but TO DO good works!