

**1196 Justification, New Testament as reality, logical deduction from God - Gal(3)10-29
(by Whirlwind)**

First, we discussed how justification by faith in the New Testament era results in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Second, we explained that the Old Testament is a shadow, while the New Testament is the reality of the coming of Christ, the fulfillment of the promise, and we discussed related topics. We saw how Paul arrived at his conclusion through a step-by-step logical deduction; therefore, let us examine this logic. We observed that the Bible makes it very clear from the very beginning in the Book of Genesis that this logical deduction comes from God, and it explains where in the Scriptures this is stated. Finally, it is discussed that the Law is merely our tutor to lead us to Christ; justification by faith brings us through the gate, and we must walk the path of sanctification led by the Holy Spirit to obtain eternal life. Therefore, when studying the Bible, we must "let the Holy Spirit to lead our Bible study."

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (6/28/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

1. Justification by faith in the New Testament era brings the indwelling Holy Spirit

"For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "The righteous man shall live by faith." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "He who practices them shall live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it."(Galatians 3:10-15)

What the verses said at the beginning is consistent with this Scripture: "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."(James 2:10) If a person could truly keep the entire law, at most he would merely "...He who practices them shall live by them."(Galatians 3:12) Since there is no temple now, it is simply impossible to keep the entire Law. In the New Testament era, justification by faith is accompanied by the indwelling Holy Spirit, as the latter passage makes very clear: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?"(1 Corinthians 6:19) Christ was crucified and hung on a tree, where He was cursed, thereby taking upon Himself the curse that we should have borne: "in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."(Galatians 3:14) We need only believe in Jesus to be justified—justification by faith—and this principle applies not only to Gentiles but also to Jews, even though there are not many Israelis who believe in the Lord at present.

Indeed, from a human perspective, once a covenant is made, it cannot be changed; otherwise, one must bear legal responsibility. First, let us consider that lying is fundamentally foreign to God, for "...the devil (Satan) ...Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies."(John 8:44) Lying originates from Satan and was definitely not created by God. Let us look further: "For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.""(Hebrews 6:13-14) "In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath."(Hebrews 6:17) God's promise and His oath—which cannot lie—are two unchangeable realities; therefore, "...we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil."(Hebrews 6:18-19)

2. The Old Testament is a shadow, while the New Testament is the reality of Christ's coming, as promised

"Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed (G4690, singular). He does not say, "And to seeds(G4690, plural)," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed (G4690, singular)," that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made. Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one. Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."(Galatians 3:16-22)

The promise mentioned at the beginning refers to this passage: "Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, "By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed (H2233, singular) shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed (H2233, singular) all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.""(Genesis 22:15-18) This was said after the offering of Isaac (cf. Genesis 22:1-14).

Let us first examine the usage of the Old Testament term "seed (H2233). It is often used in the singular; a typical example is: "And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed (H2233, singular) and her seed (H2233, singular); He shall bruise you on the head, And you shall bruise him on the heel."(Genesis 3:15) It can also be used in the plural, as shown in this passage: "See, I have placed the land before you; go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to them and their descendants (H2233, plural) after them."(Deuteronomy 1:8)

In the New Testament, the word "seed" (G4690) is used, and it can be either singular or plural, as shown in the opening verses. Therefore, we cannot determine whether it is singular or plural based on grammar alone. However, Paul clearly states that the promise uses the singular form, because his understanding came from revelation, as he himself said, "For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ."(Galatians 1:12) He also says, "Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me—to keep me from exalting myself!"(2 Corinthians 12:7)

He then used clear logic to demonstrate that the promise could never be superseded by the later Law, followed by a naturally derived self-questioning and self-answer: "Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed (G4690, singular) would come to whom the promise had been made."(Galatians 3:19) He knew that "...a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one."(Galatians 3:20) So he naturally asked, "Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? ..." (Galatians 3:21) Then he answered himself, "...May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."(Galatians 3:21-22) This is justification by faith.

Here, we see Paul using logical reasoning step by step to reach his conclusion. Of course, this is not the only instance; it is a common pattern in his epistles, evident throughout. Therefore, let us examine this logic. When broken down, logic consists of two parts: axioms and logical deduction. Paul's axiom is, "All Scripture (the Old Testament) is inspired by God ..." (2 Timothy 3:16). Here, it is important to note that the Christian axiom is, "All Scripture (both the New and Old Testament) is inspired by God." Therefore, Christians must begin by having faith—believing that the New Testament is also inspired by God—so that it becomes possible to "...from faith to faith..." (Romans 1:17) Aside from certain matters that cannot be determined by logical deduction alone but must come from revelation—such as the aforementioned term "seed," for which the Bible does not provide a definitive conclusion—the rest can be deduced logically when the Scriptures (both the New and Old Testaments) are read correctly.

Why is this so? Because the Bible makes it very clear right from the beginning in the Book of Genesis that logical reasoning comes from God. Let's look at what the passage in the Book of Genesis says: "Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; ..." (Genesis 3:22). When we speak of two things being similar, there must be both similarities and differences; otherwise, they would be either completely the same or completely different. He is saying that now man is like us; therefore, in the past, they were the same, because "God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them." (Genesis 1:27). At the time of creation, their eyes were not yet open, and they were in the image of God; God's standards were their standards, and thus they were the same.

Now let's look at where the change occurred. When they disobeyed God and sinned, "Then the eyes of both of them were opened, ..." (Genesis 3:7). Thus, they became like God. The similarity lies in this: "...knowing good and evil; ..." (Genesis 3:22). Apart from this point, the rest remained the same. As we mentioned earlier, logic consists of two parts: logical deduction and the axioms serving as input. Logical deduction is objective; it does not change simply because their eyes were opened. Therefore, logical deduction comes from God. The only change resulting from their eyes being opened was that they themselves could know good and evil—that is, they developed their own standard for judging good and evil and no longer shared a standard in harmony with God's. Logically speaking, that harmonious standard is God's axiom as reflected in the image of God.

Once their eyes are opened, each person has their own standard (perception); we call this a personally variable axiom (or simply a personal axiom), which serves as the input for their logical decisions on how to act. Because personally variable axioms differ, even though the logical deduction is the same, different decisions regarding the same matter will arise due to the input of different personally variable axioms—this is logic. Let's start with a simple example free of other intervening factors: the straightforward question of whether murder is evil. Most people, based on their personal axioms, believe that murder is evil and therefore refrain from killing. However, for a cannibalistic tribe, killing members of other tribes is considered good; their logical deductions lead them to do what is good, and thus, based on their personal variable axioms, they kill members of other tribes. Therefore, personal axioms are variable. For a mentally ill person, their personal axioms can change in the blink of an eye. Although the logical reasoning remains the same, due to different inputs, different decisions will be made at different times.

When God opens our eyes, we are able to see more, and our personal axioms change as a result. For example, when "...Elisha prayed and said, 'O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.'" And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha." (2 Kings 6:17) The young man's original set of principles did not include a mountain full of chariots of fire and horses of fire surrounding Elisha; now that he knows they were indeed there, his personal axiom have been updated and changed, and his new personal axiom now include a mountain full of chariots of fire and horses of fire surrounding Elisha.

Don't we often encounter differing viewpoints during Bible study precisely because our personal axiom (our "perspective") differs from what the Bible teaches? It's often a case of "everyone has their own opinion"—we don't often hear people say, "This is what the Bible says," but rather, "I have a different perspective on the Bible." May God open our eyes so that we are truly willing to "let the Holy Spirit lead our Bible study"—not merely guide it, but lead it, just as Paul did. To give an example, during Paul's second missionary journey, "They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'" (Acts 16:6-9) It was the Holy Spirit who was leading them along their route.

In fact, this is what Paul meant when he said, "Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose."(Philippians 2:1-2) I used to think this was impossible, but when we are united with Christ, we share in all that He has—so how could it be otherwise?

Let's return to Paul's situation: since logical reasoning comes from God, wasn't this exactly the case for Paul? When his personal axiom—that the Bible is divinely inspired—was correct, he would arrive at the same divinely inspired conclusions as God, which were then recorded in the New Testament. In short, because the process of logical reasoning is the same as God's, we can see how Paul arrived at his conclusions through a step-by-step logical process.

Finally, let's consider a statement Christians often hear: that the Old Testament is a shadow and the New Testament is the reality. But if you search the entire Bible, you won't find this exact phrase; yet the Bible certainly contains this concept—just as with the term "Trinity," which you won't find in the Bible, but the concept itself is there. We've previously mentioned examples of Christ's types in the Old Testament; here, the reality of the New Testament—Jesus Christ—has come. Therefore, we must believe in the Lord Jesus. As it says here: "But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."(Galatians 3:22).

3. The Law is our tutor

"But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."(Galatians 3:23-29)

The Old Testament existed long before the Gospel came: "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith."(Galatians 3:24) Now that the Gospel of justification by faith has come—and since we can be justified simply by faith, a threshold that is not very high—it leads us into the faith. This is because "...God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."(John 3:16) Moreover, "...God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."(1 Timothy 2:3-4)

This is what the Great Commission refers to: "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, ..." (Matthew 28:19). However, the Great Commission does not call us to stop there; rather, it calls us "teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; ..." (Matthew 28:20)—

it requires corresponding action in obedience. It means walking the path of sanctification by the power of the Holy Spirit, and only the Holy Spirit of the Trinity can sanctify us. For the Scripture makes it very clear: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but God who causes the growth."(1 Corinthians 3:6-7) Therefore, only God can grant us life.

The Holy Spirit is one Person of the Triune God, and "...the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."(Titus 3:5-7) Therefore, we must now rely entirely on the indwelling Holy Spirit. Although "...He who prepared us for this very purpose is God, who gave to us the Spirit as a pledge (G728)," (2 Corinthians 5:5) we must realize that this is merely a pledge. When we first come to faith in the Lord, all we have is this pledge; we must walk the path of sanctification before it is possible to "...from faith to faith; ..." (Romans 1:17). The closest analogy for the word "pledge" is the down payment made when buying a house, with the remainder to be paid in installments. In other words, although this is a slow process, "...if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live." (Romans 8:13) When studying the Bible, be sure to "let the Holy Spirit lead your Bible study."