

The Conditions Placed Upon Attaining Salvation— Some Notes

John A. Crabtree

September 24, 2019

Handout #7

Paul’s understanding of the conditions which must be met in order for an individual to be saved—that is, in order for a person to be deemed *dikaios*.

- A. In order for a particular individual to be deemed *dikaios* in the eyes of God, ALL of the following things must be true:
1. The Messiah intercedes for that individual and appeals to God for mercy on his behalf.
 2. The Messiah dies on the cross—in obedience to God—and thereby makes his intercession on behalf of that individual effective.
 3. The individual is “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and is thereby made to be inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes.
 - a. Or, alternatively—in the typical circumstance—the individual displays an authentic inward BELIEF with respect to God and his promises and purposes.
- B. From Paul’s perspective, all of the above are NECESSARY CONDITIONS for being deemed *dikaios*, and hence for being granted eternal Life. None of them, alone, are SUFFICIENT CONDITIONS for being deemed *dikaios*. And only one of the above is the BASIS for being deemed *dikaios*—namely, “1” above (=The Messiah intercedes for that individual and appeals to God for mercy on his behalf).
1. A **necessary condition** for X is something that MUST be true in order for X to be true.
 2. A **sufficient condition** for X is something that, *if it—and it alone—is true*, then X will be true. Nothing besides it needs to be true in order for X to be true.
 3. A **basis** for X is that which supplies **the reason WHY** X is the case.
 - a. In the case of *dikaiosune*, the **basis** for an individual’s being deemed *dikaios* is that which explains WHY God chooses to deem that individual *dikaios*. It is none other than the fact that Messiah Jesus intercedes for him and appeals to God for mercy on his behalf.
 4. NOTE: the *conditions* for X and the *basis* for X are independent of one another except in one important respect: If Y is the sole *basis* for X, then it follows necessarily that Y will be a *necessary condition* for X.
 - a. From this it follows that if Y is not a *necessary condition* for X, then Y cannot be the sole *basis* for X.

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- (1) In particular, if Law-obedience is not a **necessary condition** for *dikaiosune* (and salvation), then Law-obedience by itself cannot be the sole **basis** for *dikaiosune* (and salvation).
 - b. Note that Y can be a *necessary condition* for X without its being the sole *basis* for X.
 - (1) In particular, belief in Jesus can be a **necessary condition** for *dikaiosune* (and salvation) without being the sole **basis** for *dikaiosune* (and salvation).
 - C. It happens to be the case that condition “2” (in “A” above) is an already fulfilled condition. In other words, the Messiah did in fact die on the cross—in obedience to God—and thereby made his intercession effective on behalf of whomever he chooses to intercede for. This is simply a matter of historical fact. Hence, the three conditions above (in “A”) reduce to two conditions in the light of the FACT of Jesus’ death on the cross:
 - 1. The Messiah intercedes for that individual and appeals to God for mercy on his behalf.
 - 2. The individual is “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and is thereby made to be inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes.
 - a. Or, alternatively—in the typical circumstance—the individual displays an authentic inward BELIEF with respect to God and his promises and purposes.
 - D. According to Paul’s understanding of the gospel, the Messiah has promised that he will intercede for anyone who has been “sanctified” by the Spirit of God such that he is inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes (that is, such that—in typical circumstances—he displays an authentic inward BELIEF with respect to God, his promises, and his purposes).
 - 1. In other words, it just is the case that if an individual displays authentic inward BELIEF with respect to God, his promises, and his purposes, then it follows that the Messiah will intercede for that individual and will appeal to God for mercy on his behalf.
 - 2. HENCE, the two conditions above (in “C”) will both be met if *the one following condition* is met:
 - a. The individual is “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and is thereby made to be inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes.
 - (1) Or, alternatively—in the typical circumstance—the individual displays an authentic inward BELIEF with respect to God and his promises and purposes.
 - E. The content of the authentic, inward BELIEF that—in the typical case—meets the requisite condition for an individual to be deemed *dikaios* by God changes over time and circumstances:
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1. In the time of Moses, the requisite belief is this: *the God who has made a covenant with the people of Israel is worthy of honor and respect such that I ought to honor his covenant by keeping it and obeying it.*
 - a. Hence, in the time of Moses, the individual who has been “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and has thereby been made to be inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes will manifest the reality of his sanctification through his LAW-OBEDIENCE.
 2. In the time following the coming of Jesus the Messiah, the requisite belief is this: *Jesus is God’s Messiah such that I ought to honor and obey him and embrace the truth that he has been sent into history to teach us.*
 - a. Hence, in the time of Jesus the Messiah, the individual who has been “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and has thereby been made to be inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes will manifest the reality of his sanctification through his BELIEF IN JESUS THE MESSIAH.
- F. It follows from all of the above that all of the conditions for salvation into eternal Life (that is, for *dikaiosune*) will be met *if this ONE condition is met:*
1. From the time of Moses until the coming of the Messiah: *The individual keeps and obeys the Law of Moses in such a way that he demonstrates that he has been “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and thereby made into a person who is inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes.*
 - a. This condition, in the typical English translations, is indicated by the phrase “**WORKS of the Law.**”
 2. After the coming of the Messiah: *The individual believes that Jesus is God’s Messiah and seeks to learn from him and embrace the truth that he taught and thereby demonstrate that he has been “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and made into a person who is inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes.*
 - a. This condition, in the typical English translations, is indicated by the word “**FAITH.**”
- G. Only one condition for salvation is a necessary condition in ANY AND ALL circumstances:
1. ***Namely, the condition that the individual has been “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and made into a person who is inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes.***
 - a. Only this condition is a necessary condition in ANY AND ALL circumstances.
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- b. Doing “works of the Law” is a necessary condition only in the circumstance that one is a member of the people of Israel after God has made his covenant with Israel and before Messiah Jesus has come.
 - c. Having “faith” in Jesus is a necessary condition only in the circumstance that one has been confronted by the claims of Jesus the Messiah.
 - d. **Abstaining** from doing the “works of the Law” is **not** a condition placed on one’s salvation.
 - (1) **Unless** doing the “works of the Law” is in a context where to do the “works of the Law” amounts to a rejection of the truth of and about Jesus.
 - (a) NOTE: Ignorance of the truth of and about Jesus is different from a rejection of the truth of and about Jesus. The latter is damnable, the former is not necessarily damnable.
- H. “Belief in Jesus” supplants doing “works of the Law” as the indicator *that the individual has been “sanctified” by the Spirit of God and made into a person who is inwardly open and receptive to God, his promises, and his purposes.*
- 1. Because belief in Jesus is a “sanctified” response to the ultimate basis for God’s mercy to mankind, while doing “works of the Law” is a “sanctified” response to a mere place-holder for the real basis for divine mercy.
 - a. Hence, embracing God’s ultimate basis for salvation (and showing receptivity to God in that way) is *a surer and more complete indicator* of sanctification than is embracing a temporary, surrogate “basis” for salvation.
 - (1) In principle, one could appear to embrace the place-holder and yet reject the real. It is only the one who embraces the real who is a truly sanctified individual.
 - 2. While belief in Jesus supplants doing works of the Law as the condition for an individual’s being granted mercy and Life, there is no reason to think that belief in Jesus supplants doing works of the Law as the condition for meeting the terms of the Mosaic Covenant.
 - a. Even after Messiah Jesus has come, in order for the people of Israel to honor the covenant that God made with them at Mt. Sinai, they must keep and do all that is required of them by *Torah*. Belief in Jesus does not supplant what Torah requires.

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**Paul’s complex inference about the conditions placed on salvation from *Habakkuk* 2:4—
“The one who is *dikaios* by reason of his belief shall attain Life.”**

- A. *Habakkuk* 2:4 clearly suggests that belief in God’s promise is a sufficient condition for being deemed *dikaios* by God.
1. For long after the Mosaic Covenant is in effect, *Habakkuk* appears to speak of a man who is *dikaios* by reason of his belief, and that alone. He makes no mention whatsoever of Law-obedience.
 2. Indeed, in the preceding assertion in the very same verse [= “if one hesitates, my soul has no pleasure in him”], *Habakkuk* asserts that failure to believe God’s promise renders an individual *adikaios* (one who will not receive mercy and Life).
 3. It follows that, in *Habakkuk*, belief in God’s promise is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for being deemed *dikaios* by God.
 - a. That is, if you believe you will be granted Life; if you don’t believe you will not be granted Life.
- B. It follows from “A” that doing and keeping the Mosaic Covenant is not a necessary condition for being deemed *dikaios* by God.
1. If belief is a sufficient condition, then Law-obedience cannot be a necessary condition.
- C. It follows from “B” that doing and keeping the Mosaic Covenant is not the basis upon which an individual is deemed *dikaios* by God.
1. If Law-obedience is not a necessary condition, then it cannot be the basis.
- D. BOTTOM LINE: In *Habakkuk* 2:4, Paul sees evidence that, contrary to the belief of many of his contemporaries within Judaism, ***obedience to the Law*** is NOT the *basis* upon which an individual attains personal salvation from being condemned to death.
1. Nor is it a *necessary condition* for such salvation.

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**Paul’s complex inference about the conditions placed on salvation from *Leviticus* 18:5—
“The man who does these things shall attain Life by them.”**

- A. Doing and keeping the requirements of the Mosaic Covenant is a fulfilled condition that would result in an individual being granted Life.

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1. According to *Leviticus* 18:5—at least *in the context of the Mosaic Covenant*—being deemed *dikaioi* by God can be attained through Law-obedience.
 2. *Leviticus* 18:5 seems to describe Law-obedience in such a way that Law-obedience is characterized as a sufficient condition for being deemed *dikaioi*.
- B. However, it follows from *Habakkuk* 2:4 that—even in the context of the Mosaic Covenant—being deemed *dikaioi* by God can be attained through responding to God’s promise with authentic, inward belief. And indeed, it follows from *Habakkuk* 2:4 that believing God’s promises is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for being deemed *dikaioi* by God.
1. It follows from this that Law-obedience is neither the basis upon which one is deemed *dikaioi* by God, nor is it a necessary condition for being deemed *dikaioi* by God, nor is it a sufficient condition for being deemed *dikaioi* by God.
- C. Since responding to God’s promise with authentic, inward belief is a necessary condition for being deemed *dikaioi*, it follows from all of the above that Law-obedience can and will be a sufficient condition for being deemed *dikaioi* by God (as *Leviticus* 18:5 suggests) ***if and only if*** such Law-obedience is a manifestation of ***belief*** in God and his promises.
1. In other words, the Law-obedience mentioned in *Leviticus* 18:5 is not in contradistinction to belief in God’s promise. Rather, the Law-obedience mentioned in *Leviticus* 18:5 is one manifestation of belief in God’s promise.