

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## LIVING BY FAITH

*But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.*

*Galatians 3:11*

Someone has said, "If you tell a lie long enough even you will begin to believe that it is the truth." There are outright lies which are so preposterous that any sane person would never believe them. For this type of "lie" or storytelling, there are actual competitions for those who aspire to be champion "liars". These types of "lies" are essentially harmless and are often a grand source of humorous entertainment. An example of such is: a man told me that it had gotten so dry, that the fish he caught had fleas.

Then there are "lies" which are expected, such as we see demonstrated by practically all of those in the political arena. These lies are accepted by a candidate's supporters, as "truth" (since they have itching ears), and by their detractors as insidious evil. These sort of lies (sadly) just go with the territory and any man is a fool to really expect that a candidate will actually stand by their word. Politician's must bend the truth (i.e.; lie) in order to be elected, though most would never admit to it (it's called politics). Thinking adults should not be taken in by such. The candidates hope that you will forget what they said when they get in office.

But there is a category of lies which are so subtle, that they go undetected by the multitudes, yet are so insidious that they subvert the hearers and cloud the truth, in such fashion that even men with some spiritual understanding are caught in their snare. By this characteristic we see this subterfuge to be the product of him whom scripture says is the "father of lies". (see John 8:44)

He is able to transform himself into an angel (messenger) of light (see II Cor. 11:14) Because of this it is often difficult to discern between those who are themselves "willful deceivers" and those who are themselves "deceived". In either case to perpetuate a lie is to subvert the truth and mislead people. Paul warned the Ephesian elders of this reality (see Acts 20:29-30) and admonished the Galatians, who at one time appeared to be the followers of CHRIST from being turned aside from following after the truth. (see Gal.1:6-8; 3:1-4; 4:20)

It is not uncommon for there to be a "falling away" from sound doctrine in the lifespan of most churches even as Paul prophesied. (see II Tim 4:2-4) There are many "religious organizations" who have figured out a formula to perpetuate themselves after the flesh but there are essentially none who do not devolve into places with Ichabod written over the door and ultimately disappear in the course of time. This is most often the result (humanly speaking) of disregarding sound doctrine and entertaining (while being entertained) doctrines of devils. (see I Tim.4:1)

Some might object to calling these aberrations of sound doctrine, "lies", so we will simply label them as "*fables*" since Paul uses that term. One of these "fables" is discovered in the common use of the term "faith", as we see it set forth by the rank and file of those who call themselves Christians and what they believe that the scripture means when it says "*the just shall live by faith.*"

Simply put, the scriptures put far more emphasis on the "object" of faith than they do upon the "activity" of faith. Faith and justification go hand in hand, but rather, than faith producing

justification, justification is that which is the basis and grounds of faith. It is quite common to hear men speak of being “justified by faith” as if the activity of a man, believing the gospel, causes him to then (at that point) be justified. Yet the “justification” of GOD’s children is the sovereign work of GOD, just like HIS predestination, calling, and glorification of them. *“Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom 8:30)* This “justification” is said to be *“by HIS blood” (Rom.5:9), “by HIS grace” (Tit.3:7) and “in HIS NAME (i.e.; by HIS authority)” (1 Cor.6:11)*

So when we initially read that *“the just shall live by faith”*, we first understand that the prophet, (Habakkuk) has reference to a particular people whom he calls “the just”. They are the only ones who can live by FAITH, for they are the only ones who possess the indwelling CHRIST, who is the AUTHOR and FINISHER of their “faith” which is clearly “the gift of GOD”, which they have received freely from HIS hand, with no room to glory in anything else but HIM.

Next when we read, *“the just shall live by faith”*, we understand that this is not an optional course which the “just” might select or an activity which they may or may not choose. The scripture says they *“shall”* live by faith. This does not describe some moral activity or standard of citizenship among them compared to others, but rather denotes the certainty of that basis upon which their lives depend.

This is embodied in Paul’s declaration, *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Php 1:21)* It is further explained when he said, *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” (Php 3:7-10)*

Then when we read *“the just shall live by faith”* we understand that this is not speaking of some singular activity or some religious experience, but rather, the whole course of the awakened child of GOD’s existence in the Earth. Paul describes this “life” quite succinctly and vividly for us in Galatians 2:20, *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”*

And finally when we read, *“the just shall live by faith”* we understand that he is referring to the very basis of his hope and expectation. We are not encouraged by trying to discover acts of “faith” (so called) which we might endeavor in. Nor do we expect that, even if such should be discovered, that they would be any thing of note, since we would but be doing that which is expected of us. *“So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.” (Luke 17:10)*

No this “FAITH” in which the sons of GOD find rest and comfort is CHRIST HIMSELF. That which HE has performed for us is the SUM and SUBSTANCE of all of our hopes, the BASIS of all of our expectations. Far be it from us to consider any righteousness which is not completely HIS own, or any source of standing or recognition which does not spring from HIM as our SUBSTITUTE and REDEEMER.

This is the “FAITH of CHRIST”. It is exemplified by HIM. It is provided by HIM. It is performed by HIM. It is by HIS stripes that we are healed; by HIS blood that we are justified, by HIS grace that we have access into the glory in which we stand; and by HIS resurrection that we have hope beyond the yawning abyss of the grave, which swallows up the sons of Adam. HE is our LIFE and LIGHT. Our PEACE and our JOY. HE is that ONE in whom our soul delights. *“For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.” (Heb 10:36-39)* mam