

Golden Rule Bible™:
An Introduction

Chapter One

Do We Need a New Translation?

The “Paradox Poem” has been amusing children for over a century:

One bright day in the middle of the night,
Two dead men got up to fight.
Back to back they faced each other.
They drew their swords and shot each other.
A deaf policeman heard the noise.
He came and shot those two dead boys.
If you don’t believe this lie is true,
Ask the blind man, he saw it too.

Martin Luther thought the New Testament contains statements equally paradoxical:

James calls the law a **law of freedom**, although Saint Paul calls it a **law of slavery**¹—Martin Luther

The Law of Freedom is a Law of Slavery. It’s paradoxical. Luther believed the paradox to be insolvable, and therefore he accused James of doing “violence” to scripture:

James does violence to scripture and so contradicts Paul and all scripture.²—Martin Luther

New Testament paradoxes have fascinated the brightest religious minds throughout the history of the Faith. Photius, arguably the greatest intellect of the Byzantine Era, wrote about a paradox found in Paul’s letter to the Romans. In modern Bibles, Romans 2.26 says:

So if the **uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law**, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?³

Circumcision is a requirement of Jewish law. Therefore, as Photius noted:

And how is it possible for an uncircumcised person to observe the law when he’s transgressing the law on that very issue, the fact of being uncircumcised?⁴—Photius

Photius hit the proverbial nail on the head: **How can an uncircumcised man be keeping the requirements of a law that requires circumcision?** He cannot, of course. It’s a paradox.⁵

¹ Martin Luther’s *Preface to the Epistles of Saint James and Saint Jude*. Note: Martin Luther was the Father of the Protestant Reformation.

² Martin Luther’s *Preface to the Epistles of Saint James and Saint Jude*.

³ Romans 2.26 NASB

⁴ Photius’ commentary on Romans 2.26.

⁵ After stating the paradox, Photius continued on to resolve it by explicating the Greek phraseology of Romans 2.26. He wrote that Paul wasn’t referring to an uncircumcised man who keeps the whole law. Rather, he was referring to an uncircumcised man who keeps the law’s *code of justice*. Modern Bibles continue to portray Romans 2.26 in a paradoxical manner, even though Photius published his solution many centuries ago. (Modern Bibles still translate Romans 2.26 as if Paul is referring to an uncircumcised man who is keeping the whole law.) Perhaps the other numerous unresolved Pauline Paradoxes caused modern translators to be reticent to embrace Photius’ solution to Romans 2.26 until they were certain his explanation was congruent with a coherent framework which systematically resolves all the Pauline Paradoxes in toto.

This isn't the only paradox found in conventional Bibles. In fact, modern translations portray Paul's letters as being riddled with paradoxes. Galatians 5.4-6.2 is a perfect example. In this short passage, conventional Bibles claim that Paul vilified law, then praised law, then vilified law again, then praised law again!

In this short section, Paul supposedly taught:

- Converts who keep the law will fall from grace.
- Converts must enslave themselves to the law.
- Converts are not under the law.
- Converts must fulfill the law.

Conventional Bibles say:

you who are seeking to be justified by **law**; you have fallen from grace....

through love serve one another. For **the whole Law** is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"...

you are not under **the Law**....

fulfill **the law** of Christ.⁶

When it comes to Paul's teachings on law, the paradoxes seem to have no end. Consider another example:

Do we then nullify the Law through faith? May it never be! On the contrary, **we establish the Law**.... For **Christ is the end of the law** for righteousness **to everyone who believes**.⁷

Does faith establish the law or does it end the law? According to modern Bibles, law does both. It's another *Pauline Paradox*.

One final example:

the Law brings about **wrath**... For **the law** of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has **set you free** from the law of sin and of death.⁸

Does the law bring wrath or does it set people free from sin and death? According to modern Bibles, law does both. It's another *Pauline Paradox*.

Photius' solution: "Paul doesn't say 'observes the Torah,' lest the Jew say, 'And how is it possible for an uncircumcised person to observe the Torah when he's transgressing the Torah on that very issue, the fact of being uncircumcised?' Therefore, so as not to give those people a handle on that issue, he doesn't put it that way. Instead, he says '*the Torah's code of ethics*.' For the Jews, he talks about 'the Torah;' for the uncircumcised, he talks about '*the Torah's code of ethics*.' He is saying, '*I didn't speak of the whole law, but only of the justice-related parts ...*'"—Photius's commentary on Romans 2.26 (as translated by Dr. William Berg).

⁶ Excerpted from Galatians 5.4-6.2 NASB

⁷ Romans 3.31, 10.4 NASB

⁸ Romans 4.15, 8.2 NASB

As you may have noticed, all the paradoxes discussed so far involve *Paul's view of law*. In light of the previous examples, it's easy to see why even the brightest scholars have considered Paul's view of law to be "seemingly insolvable":

Paul's attitude toward the law has been one of the most puzzling and **seemingly insolvable** in biblical study.⁹—James A. Sanders

In addition to being a seminary professor, James A. Sanders is also one of the editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls and founder of the Ancient Biblical Manuscript Center. Yet, this scholarly heavyweight acknowledged that (at the time he wrote the statement in the 1970's) Paul's view of law seemed *insolvable* to the scholarly community.

A recent international multid denominational symposium was held on "Paul and the Law" at St. John's College, Durham (United Kingdom). The symposium participants met from September 19 to 23 in 1994. The objective was to bring together the leading scholars who have been tackling the issue of the Pauline Paradoxes head on:

The object was rather to achieve a representative spread of the leading New Testament scholars actively engaged in this area of contemporary debate, and in this we succeeded. **Indeed, it would be hard to conceive of a more high-powered and representative gathering on this subject anywhere in the world.**¹⁰—James Dunn

The symposium brought together high-powered scholars who specialized in studying Paul's view of law. Yet, by the conclusion of the symposium, no "single coherent view" had been found to synthesize Paul's positive and negative statements about law:

Major questions therefore remain.... How to correlate the seemingly positive assertions Paul also makes (about believers fulfilling the law) with his more negative comments? **Can all his statements about the law be synthesized into a single coherent view?**¹¹—James Dunn, commenting on the outcome of the international multid denominational symposium on "Paul and the Law."

Thus, by 1994, no scholar had yet been able to synthesize Paul's positive and negative legal statements into a single coherent view. In 1994, Paul's positive/negative statements about law remained as unresolved paradoxes.

These seemingly insolvable Pauline Paradoxes are largely responsible for the now countless number of denominations. After all, the paradoxes force people to pick and choose because one cannot believe two polar opposites at the same time. Even those who claim they follow the "whole Bible" are forced to pick and choose, whether they realize it or not. Conventional translations simply leave no other alternative.

But this begs a very important question: Is the New Testament message really that confusing? The answer is a resounding No! In fact, the message of the Greek New Testament is so simple that even a child can understand it.

In 2013, Michael Wood published the first systematic reconciliation of Paul's positive/negative statements on law.¹² His solution finally allows for the New Testament to be translated seamlessly (i.e. without paradoxes). The Golden Rule Bible™ translation is based on Wood's pioneering

⁹ "Torah and Paul" by James A. Sanders as printed in *God's Christ and His People: Studies in Honor of Nils Alstrup Dahl*, p. 132, edited by Jacob Jerrell and Wayne A. Meeks, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1977.

¹⁰ *Paul and the Mosaic Law* by James D. G. Dunn, pp. 2-3, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001

¹¹ *Paul and the Mosaic Law* by James D. G. Dunn, pp. 2-3, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001

¹² He published his solution in *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

research findings. It is, therefore, the first English translation of the New Testament to communicate each author's teachings on salvation, law, and judgment in a seamless, coherent manner (without the paradoxes found in prior English translations). Fortunately, this is easily demonstrated.

The Jewish law is called *Torah*. The Apostle Paul simply considered all the written commandments of Torah to be superseded by Jesus' Law—the utterance “Love your neighbor as yourself.”¹³

When translating Paul's writings, the translator should let the reader know which law is being referenced: Torah or Jesus' Law. Many of Paul's supposed paradoxes effortlessly resolve themselves the moment we adopt the following notation:

- Use the word ‘Torah’ whenever Paul is writing about the Jewish legal code.
- Use the word ‘Law’ (with a capital ‘L’) whenever Paul is writing about Jesus' Law.

With this in mind, consider the previous example as it reads in the Golden Rule Bible™:

the Torah brings wrath... **the Law** of the Spirit of life in King Jesus set me free from the principle of sin and death

In Paul's theology: Torah brings wrath while Jesus' Law frees people from sin and death. It's just that simple.

Now consider another of the previous examples. In the Golden Rule Bible™ it reads:

Do we then nullify **the Law** through the Faith? In no way! On the contrary, **we establish the Law**.... For King Messiah is the **end of the Torah** unto the exoneration of everyone of faith.¹⁵

In Paul's theology: The Faith establishes Jesus' Law by ending the Torah as a source of exoneration.¹⁶ Once again, it's just that simple.

Even the seemingly paradoxical Galatians' passage is effortlessly reconciled. The passage simply taught:

- Converts who keep the Torah will fall from grace.
- Converts must enslave themselves to Jesus' Law.
- Converts are not under Torah.
- Converts must fulfill Jesus' Law.

When properly translated, the passage is as simple as that.

In the Golden Rule Bible™ the passage reads:

you who are seeking to be exonerated by **Torah**; you have fallen from the favor....

you are enslaved to one another through love (because the whole **Law** is fulfilled in the utterance, “Love your neighbor as yourself”)....

¹³ Romans 13.8-9; Galatians 5.14, 6.2

¹⁴ Romans 4.15, 8.2 GRB

¹⁵ Romans 3.31, 10.4 GRB

¹⁶ For a more detailed explanation of Paul's view of the relationship between Torah and Jesus' Law see *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 25-60, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

you are not under **Torah**...
fulfill King Messiah's **Law**.¹⁷

Paul taught salvation by enslavement to brotherly love (because such enslavement to brotherly love fulfills Jesus' Law). Once again, it's just as simple as that.

In the original New Testament, Paul didn't teach salvation based on what a person believes, rather he taught about a salvation based on keeping the teachings of Jesus' Faith. But, once again, conventional Bibles have misconstrued Paul:

Conventional Bibles:

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God through **faith in Jesus Christ**... so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has **faith in Jesus**.¹⁸

Golden Rule Bible™:

But now God's exoneration apart from Torah has been manifested, that which is attested by the law and prophets—God's exoneration through **King Jesus' Faith**... so that he would be the benevolent benefactor of him who belongs to **Jesus' Faith**.¹⁹

God exonerates everyone who adheres to the teachings of Jesus' Faith—not those who “believe in Jesus” per se.²⁰ Likewise, Jesus' death on the cross brings about the forgiveness of sins for everyone who keeps the teachings of Jesus' Faith—not those who “believe in Jesus” per se:

Conventional Bibles:

Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood **through faith**.²¹

Golden Rule Bible™:

King Jesus whom God set forth as an appeasement in his blood **through the Faith**.²²

Paul taught *repentance* for the forgiveness of sins. Everyone who repents of their meanness towards others is covered by Jesus' blood. Everyone else is not.

The Golden Rule Bible™ shows that Paul treated Jesus' Faith and Jesus' Law interchangeably.²³ Everyone who keeps Jesus' Law is a member of Jesus' Faith. And keeping Jesus' Law solely requires one thing—*brotherly love*:

he who loves others fulfills the Law (because “don't commit adultery,” “don't murder,” “don't steal,” “don't covet,” and if there's any other commandment, it is summed up in this utterance, “Love your neighbor as yourself”).²⁴—Paul

¹⁷ Excerpted from Galatians 5.4-6.2 GRB

¹⁸ Romans 3.21, 26 NASB

¹⁹ Romans 3.21, 26 GRB

²⁰ For documentation on the translation “King Jesus' Faith” (instead of “faith in Jesus Christ”) see *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 80-89, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

²¹ Romans 3.25 NASB

²² Romans 3.25 GRB

²³ In Galatians 3, Paul wrote that Torah has been replaced by Messiah's *Faith*. In Galatians 5-6, Paul wrote that Torah has been replaced by Messiah's *Law*. Paul treated Jesus' Faith and Jesus' Law interchangeably.

²⁴ Romans 13.8-9 GRB

Not only do those who love others fulfill Jesus' Law, but they also automatically fulfill the *Torah's code of justice* (Torah commandments such as "don't commit adultery," "don't murder," "don't steal," etc.).

In this passage, Paul was appealing to a well-known, well-established division of Jewish law.²⁵ First-century Jews divided the Torah into two parts:

- Justices (code of justice)
- Jobs done for God

The code of justice was comprised of all the commandments based on "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the other commandments were considered to be jobs done for God. Everyone who loves others *entirely fulfills the Torah's code of justice*. Thus, there exists a one-for-one relationship between Jesus' Law and the Torah's Justices. This one-for-one relationship fully explains another of the paradoxes previously discussed:

Conventional Bibles:

So if the uncircumcised man keeps the requirements of the Law, will not his uncircumcision be regarded as circumcision?²⁶

Golden Rule Bible™:

So if the uncircumcised man keeps the Torah's Justices, won't his uncircumcision be regarded as circumciṣiōḥ?

In Paul's theology: Any uncircumcised man who fulfills the Torah's Justices will be regarded as being circumcised. In other words, any uncircumcised man who fulfills the Torah's code of justice will be regarded as a true Jew (a true member of Jesus' Faith).²⁸ This was Paul's way of reiterating that brotherly love *alone* fulfills the Law.

When the New Testament is translated properly, we find it is amazingly redundant. We've certainly seen this in the above examples of Paul. And the same holds true for the rest of the New Testament authors as well. Consider Martin Luther's dilemma over James:

James calls the law a law of freedom, although Saint Paul calls it a law of slavery—Martin Luther

This seeming paradox caused Luther to accuse James of doing "violence" to scripture. However, the answer was always surprisingly simple: James calls *Jesus' Law* a law of freedom; whereas Paul calls *Torah* a law of slavery. It had always been as simple as that.²⁹

²⁵ For documentation on the traditional division of Jewish law, see *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 27-48, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

²⁶ Romans 2.26 NASB

²⁷ Romans 2.26 GRB. Note: Romans 2.26 refers to the Torah's Justices (*dikaïomata tou nomou*) in contrast to the Torah's Jobs (*erga nomou*) in Romans 3.20, 28.

²⁸ Paul wrote: "if the uncircumcised man keeps the Torah's Justices, won't his foreskin be regarded as circumcision? And the physically uncircumcised man who keeps the Torah will condemn you (who through having the letter and circumcision are a violator of the Torah). For he who is a Jew on the exterior isn't a Jew; nor is circumcision on the exterior (in the flesh) 'circumcision.' But he who is a Jew inside is a Jew, and circumcision of the heart (in the spirit and not the letter) is 'circumcision'; and his praise doesn't come from man, but from God."—Romans 2.26, 28-29 GRB

²⁹ For a discussion on James' reference to *Jesus' Law*, see chapters five and six, "James on Judgment," and "Torah's Justices."

Now some will rightly protest, “If brotherly love is the entire law then *only a lack of kindness would incur God’s wrath on Judgment Day.*”

Yes, this is the *necessary* conclusion. And this is why Paul characterized Judgment Day accordingly:

to the selfish who have not followed the truth but instead have followed **unkindness**—there will be rage and wrath.³⁰

Paul portrayed *unkindness* as the sole target of God’s wrath on Judgment Day. Yet this critical teaching is missing from conventional translations. Modern Bibles portray *unrighteousness* as God’s sole target instead.

Unfortunately, conventional Bibles use the word “unrighteousness” where many of the New Testament authors actually expressed “unkindness.”³¹ Those are two very different concepts. Unrighteousness is commonly viewed as *impiety towards God*; whereas unkindness refers to *mistreatment of our fellowman*.

In his Judgment-Day teaching, Paul used the Greek word *adikia*—a word which specified *mistreatment of our fellowman*. Here’s an interesting historical fact: Protestant Reformer John Calvin was informed of this meaning of the word, but he dismissed the information out of hand:

Some make a difference between impiety and **unrighteousness**, and think, that by the former word is meant the profanation of God’s worship, and by the latter, **injustice towards men**³²—John Calvin

Calvin rejected the information, and insisted that “impiety” and “unrighteousness” were the same, completely dismantling the notion of judgment based on brotherly love alone.

This illustrates what has always been the root of the problem. Had Calvin accepted the information, Paul’s teaching on judgment (based on *kindness*) would perfectly align with Paul’s teaching on law (as being entirely fulfilled by *brotherly love*). Yet, *by rejecting the historical use of the word*, a Pauline Paradox was brought into existence. (Paul’s teaching on judgment no longer aligns with his teaching on law.) As will be demonstrated throughout this work, each Pauline Paradox traces back to an overt rejection of the historical meanings of the Greek words.

Such a rejection of information isn’t confined to days gone by. In fact, some of today’s theologians seem to revel in rejecting the historical word meanings. For example, Biblical scholars openly acknowledge that the Greek word *theostuges* had *only one meaning*, yet they insist that Christians accept a *rewrite of the word* anyway:

Haters of God (Greek *theostuges*) is thought by some to be understood in the passive sense—hated by God. The majority accept the active—haters of God. This view best suits the context: “In classical Greek [*theostuges*] seems **always** to have a passive sense, ‘hated by God,’ and the Vulgate understands it here as ‘hateful to God’; but an active sense fits the present context much better and should be accepted” (Cranfield 131)³³

Your eyes do not deceive you. Scholars acknowledge that the word had *only one meaning*,³⁴ yet they rewrite it and their rewrite “should be accepted.”

³⁰ Romans 2.8 GRB

³¹ For documentation regarding the translation “unkindness,” see chapters two and three.

³² “Commentary on Romans” by John Calvin, commentary on verse 1.18.

³³ *Romans* by F. Leroy Forlines, p. 40, Randall House Publications, Dec 1, 1987

³⁴ Cranfield acknowledges that the meaning of *theostuges* remained invariant from the Classical Era up into the Byzantine Era (the time period in which the Vulgate was translated). Paul’s letters were written during the Hellenistic

No, it shouldn't be accepted. All the rewrites (and there are many) should be summarily discarded, and it's time to translate Paul according to the common vernacular of his day.

But why did they rewrite the words in the first place? Calvin didn't believe in a judgment based on *unkindness alone*. Therefore, he rejected the predominant first-century meaning of the Greek word *adikia*.³⁵

What motivated Cranfield to rewrite *theostuges* opposite of the *entire* historical record? In Romans 1.26-32, Paul made a list of exclusively *unjust* deeds, and then declared that *only such deeds* are worthy of death. Paul, once again, made it clear that judgment will be based solely on the proper treatment of our fellowman. Inside the list were "slanderers abhorred by God." By changing "abhorred by God" into "haters of God," Cranfield changed an exclusively human-justice-based list into one that included the requirement of *piety* as well. (The list now contains "slanders" and "haters of God.") Cranfield couldn't accept a judgment based *solely* on the just treatment of others, therefore he rewrote a word (against the historical record) to suit his ideology.

Many scholars (such as Cranfield and Calvin) argue that words *must* be rewritten (contrary to their historical meanings) in order to fit the passage's "context."³⁶ But they actually mean that the words must be rewritten to fit their own theology. After all, the translators only obfuscate or rewrite words that oppose their doctrinal beliefs. And this is how the paradoxes were born in the first place.

The "seemingly insolvable" Pauline Paradoxes testify that the scholars' appeal to "context" is foolishness at best (subterfuge at worst). After all, it is their rewrites in the name of "context" that shattered an originally seamless text into irreconcilable paradox in the first place.

But something incredible happens when all the Greek words are translated according to their actual meanings: The entire New Testament reads seamlessly and fluidly without even the slightest hint of contradiction. Thus, the context *never* demands the wholesale rewrite of words. On the contrary! The seamless fluidity of proper translation betrays the scholarly appeal to "context" as a pretext to write *their own definitions* of the Koine Greek terms.

It is beyond the scope of this introduction to provide a full exposé on the gamesmanship behind conventional translation. However, a full exposé on the disingenuous treatment of the New Testament text by conventional translators is presented in *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood. (This work also includes documentation of the historical meanings of every significant New Testament word.)

Era (the time period between the Classical and Byzantine Eras); thus, *theostuges* had but one meaning throughout the Hellenistic Era, the time Paul used this word.

³⁵ For documentation on the first-century use of *adikia*, see chapters two and three.

³⁶ Calvin defended rewriting the meaning of *adikia* as follows: "Some make a difference between impiety and unrighteousness, and think, that by the former word is meant the profanation of God's worship, and by the latter, injustice towards men; but as the Apostle immediately refers this unrighteousness to the neglect of true religion, we shall explain both as referring to the same thing."—John Calvin (*Commentary on Romans*, verse 1.18). The irony is that Romans 1.18 presents mankind's obligation to God as *solely requiring brotherly love*. The sentence structure literally does the opposite of Calvin's assertion. (For a discussion on the sentence structure of Romans 1.18, see "Appendix A—Impious Godliness.")

Additionally, Michael Wood repudiates Calvin's claim by examining how Paul used *adikia* throughout the entire passage (Romans 1-2). Wood demonstrates that Paul consistently used the word *to distinguish the just treatment of others from religious duty*, the opposite of Calvin's assertion. (See *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 381-389, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.)

The primary purpose of this introduction is to unveil the original New Testament Nexus—the fundamental teaching shared by *every* New Testament author. All the New Testament authors taught, each in their own way, that Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross instituted salvation by brotherly love in lieu of salvation by Torah observance.³⁷ In other words, all the New Testament authors preached Jesus’ teaching of the Golden Rule as the narrow road to life:

In everything, therefore, **treat others the same way you want to be treated** for this is the Law and the Prophets. **Enter through the narrow gate**; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and **the way is narrow that leads to life**, and there are few who find it.³⁸—Jesus

Jesus taught that the Golden Rule is “the narrow way that leads to life.” Matthew, Peter, James, John, and Paul all taught the same thing.

Those intimately familiar with conventional translations are the most likely to scoff at the idea of salvation by brotherly love alone. In fact, they most probably consider the notion detestable to *Paul*. Yet, notice that the reconciliations of the Pauline Paradoxes all have one thing in common: Paul originally taught salvation by brotherly love but his message has either been obfuscated (such as obfuscating the Torah/Law distinction) or his message has been rewritten altogether (such as rewriting the “Torah’s Justices” as referring to all “the law’s requirements” and rewriting “unkindness” as “unrighteousness”). In all cases, Paul’s underlying message of salvation by brotherly love *has been rewritten*.

The reality is that conventional Bibles have been leading people *away from* the New Testament’s fundamental message. The more mistranslated verses a person has memorized, the harder it is for him to accept what Jesus and his apostles originally taught.

The only antidote to this situation is to provide an accurately translated version of the New Testament. For only then can the Christian community truly understand that *every* New Testament author (including Paul) taught Jesus’ Golden Rule as the narrow road to life. And, since this was the fundamental teaching which united them all, this translation of their writings is entitled the *Golden Rule Bible*TM.

Some will accuse this translation of promoting a brand new religion, or some newfangled idea. Therefore, it’s important to put the translation into proper perspective. There have been three general Christian camps throughout the history of the Faith:

- Salvation is by believing in Jesus, and living according to the Old Testament moral code.
- Salvation is by faith alone.
- Salvation is by keeping Jesus’ Golden Rule.

The last camp is neither a new religion nor a newfangled idea. This camp has existed (to one degree or another) throughout every stage of Christianity. Today, however, there is a resurgence of this camp in many mainline denominations.

³⁷ For a more detailed explanation of Paul’s view of the relationship between Torah and Jesus’ Law see *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 25-60, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

³⁸ Matthew 7.12-14 NASB

But there is a tremendous irony. The first two camps have long claimed to be the Biblicists. (They have claimed the Bible as their ultimate authority, and they have accused the third camp of ignoring the teachings of the New Testament.) Yet, as the Golden Rule Bible™ documents, it's always been the third camp that has carried the original torch of the Faith. For, when the Greek words are translated according to their actual meanings, we find that *all the New Testament authors were members of the third camp.*

For two thousand years, the third camp has claimed to be beating the drum of *Jesus'* original message. It has been long overdue for everyone to recognize that the third camp has been beating the drum of the *apostles'* original message too—including the apostle Paul. It is only the third camp that can properly lay claim to the title “Biblicist.” For it has always been they alone who have been teaching the unified message of the Greek New Testament. This is easily demonstrated...

Chapter Two

Conduct Done to Men

Almost all languages create groups of related words using roots. For example, in English a *singer* is one who sings, a *player* is one who plays, and a *rider* is one who rides. These words come from the roots sing, play, and ride respectively. We can create numerous words by adding prefixes and suffixes to roots. For example, the English root *oper-* gives rise to: operate, operator, operated, operation, inoperable, etc.

This same phenomenon occurs in the Greek language. By adding prefixes and suffixes to the Greek root *dik-* we get the following words:

- *Dikaios*
- *Dikaiosune*
- *Adikoi*
- *Adikia*

In the first-century, these words primarily referred to the just treatment of others (with a twist which will be discussed in the next chapter). For now, we'll approximate their meanings with the following:

- *Dikaios*—**Just**
- *Dikaiosune*—**Justice**
- *Adikos*—**Unjust**
- *Adikia*—**Injustice**

When first-century writers wanted to refer to *the just treatment of others*, they often used the *dik-* words to do so. However, when they wanted to refer to *religious duty*, they often used *seb-* words instead:

- *Eusebeia*—**Piety**
- *Asebeia*—**Impiety**

Here is something critical: **First-century authors commonly used the *dik-* and *seb-* words to distinguish between the just treatment of others and religious conduct. This is the single most important fact for every Christian to know, because gross mistranslation of the New Testament can only continue as long as the laity remains unaware of this.**

We're going to first document the historical difference between the *dik-* and *seb-* words. Then, we're going to reveal a surprising statistic about how these words are used in the New Testament. Once you understand the historical difference between the *dik-* and *seb-* words, not only will the statistic surprise you, but you will see through the charade of conventional translations as well.

Let's begin by documenting the historical difference between the *dik-* and *seb-* words.

Dio Chrysostom was a secular Greek author from the first century. He simply couldn't have made the difference between the two word groups any clearer:

unseemly actions in what concerns the gods are called *asebemata*, whereas such conduct when done by men to one another is called *adikia*.³⁹

The *seb-* words refer to “actions in what concerns the gods”; whereas the *dik-* words referred to “conduct when done by men to one another.” Moreover, the two word groups were used to *distinguish the just treatment of others from religious duty*.

Consider Philo Judaeus, a first-century Jewish author:

For the *adikos* and *asebes* man is peculiarly unclean, being one who has no respect for either **human** or **divine** things⁴⁰

The *seb-* words refer to “respect for divine things”; whereas the *dik-* words refer to “respect for other humans.” Moreover, the two word groups were used to *distinguish the just treatment of others from religious duty*.

Consider Flavius Josephus, another first-century Jewish author:

behaving toward each other with *dikaosune*, and toward God with *eusebeia*⁴¹

The *seb-* words referred to “behavior toward God”; whereas the *dik-* words referred to “behaving toward each other.” Moreover, the two word groups were used to *distinguish the just treatment of others from religious duty*.

At the time the New Testament was written, the *dik-* and *seb-* words were commonly used to distinguish between *the just treatment of others* and *religiousness*.⁴² And now we come to a fascinating statistic; in the Gospel of Matthew:

- The religious *seb-* words were used **0 times**.
- The justice-based *dik-* words were used **25 times**.

The early Fathers placed the Gospel of Matthew as the first book of the New Testament. They recognized that this book framed Jesus' quintessential message: The just treatment of others

³⁹ Dio Chrysostomus Soph., *Orationes* (first cent. CE) Oration 31, section 13, line 4 (Cohon translation)

⁴⁰ Philo Judaeus Phil., *De specialibus legibus* (lib. i-iv) Book 3, section 209, line 1

⁴¹ Flavius Josephus Hist., *Antiquitates Judaicae* Book 18, chapter 117, line 1

⁴² The use of *dik-* and *seb-* words to distinguish between treating others justly and religion can be seen as early as the 3rd century BCE. For example, Chrysippus wrote: “Considerateness is *dikaosune* undertaken voluntarily.” “*Eusebeia* is the art of paying service to the gods.” (*Fragmenta moralia*, Fragments 273.6 and 273.7 respectively.) This distinction between the *dik-* and *seb-* words became increasingly more popular. Consider Posidonius (1st cent. BCE): “Beyond that, they had an amazing *eusebeia* towards anything divine, and much *dikaosune* in taking care to avoid offending all people in their agricultural practices.” (*Fragmenta*, Fragment 81 [Athenaeus VI 274a – e. 275a].)

The distinction between the *dik-* and *seb-* words reached its height during the first century CE—the time the New Testament was written. For example, the distinction was so strong that Philo Judaeus used *eusebeia* and *dikaosune* to distinguish between the Torah's Jobs and Justices respectively. (Philo Judaeus., *de specialibus legibus*, Book 2, section 63, line 3.) Law was the heart and soul of first-century Judaism, and to divide the commandments based on the distinction between the *dik-* and *seb-* words is highly significant.

For detailed historical documentation on the *dik-* word group see *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, Section VII, “Law and Righteousness,” pp. 161-210, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

supersedes all religious duty. All the rest of the New Testament books were to be read from this perspective.

“But what about Paul!” many will protest. First, here’s the high-level statistic on the undisputed letters written by Paul:

- The religious *seb-* words were used **7 times**.
- The justice-based *dik-* words were used **70 times**.

Not only do Paul’s letters abound with the justice-based *dik-* requirement, but his use of the religious *seb-* words is going to surprise you: Many of Paul’s *seb-* references were written to teach that *religious piety is unnecessary*.⁴³ Consider Romans 4.5 for example:

But to the person who remains unemployed (but is **trusting him who exonerates the person not adhering to religious duty [ton asebe]**), the person’s trust is credited as exoneration.⁴⁴

Paul wrote that mankind doesn’t have an employment relationship with God. Mankind is free from all religious duty. In fact, salvation depends on believing in a God who exonerates people *apart from adhering to religious duty*. It is faith in this kind of God that Paul requires.

Paul’s “faith” teachings originally portrayed faith *as the replacement of the religious seb-requirements!* This leaves only the justice-based *dik-* requirements in force.⁴⁵

But how has something so simple remained unknown for so many centuries? We can thank conventional translations for this. **The original New Testament message can only be seen when the *dik-* words are translated as referring to the just treatment of others. But conventional Bibles rewrite the *dik-* words as religious terms instead. Salvation by the just treatment of others has been rewritten as salvation by righteousness instead.**

Conventional translations have changed the justice-based *dik-* words into synonyms of the religious *seb-* words. Consider the following supposed definition of *dikaioisune* for example:

The Biblical sense of *dikaioisune*, therefore, is that **conformity to Right which God enjoins and of which He is the standard**.⁴⁶

Even though first-century authors used *dikaioisune* to distinguish the just treatment of others from religious conduct, *dikaioisune* is now being taught as a religious term instead. As a reminder, the rewriting of this word group traces back to the 16th century:

Some make a difference between **impiety** and **unrighteousness**, and think, that by the former word is meant the **profanation of God’s worship**, and by the latter, **injustice towards men**.⁴⁷—John Calvin

Notice that scholars were trying to inform Calvin of the first-century distinction between the *seb-* and *dik-* word groups. However, **Calvin insisted that both the *seb-* and *dik-* word groups**

⁴³ For a broader discussion on Paul’s use of the *seb-* word group see “Appendix A—Impious Godliness.”

⁴⁴ Romans 4.5 GRB

⁴⁵ Romans 2-4 flow seamlessly in the original Greek, and the original message explained why only the Torah’s Justices remain in force: *Romans 2*—only the doers of the Torah’s Justices will be exonerated before God; *Romans 3*—no one will be exonerated by the Torah’s Jobs; *Romans 4*—faith in God supersedes all religious duty (as evidenced by Abraham who was exonerated by faith in God before performing any religious rites).

⁴⁶ *Romans* by F. Leroy Forlines, p. 93, Randall House Publications, Dec 1, 1987

⁴⁷ “Commentary on Romans” by John Calvin (verse 1.18).

referred to religious piety, rather than distinguishing between religious piety and justice-based conduct.⁴⁸

Conventional translators have followed Calvin’s lead on this (against the historical record). In fact, *leading scholars warn against viewing the terms according to their real-world historical use:*

Some caution against considering ungodliness and unrighteousness as two kinds of sin (Cranfield 111, 112; Hendrikson 68; Lenski 92).⁴⁹

Once again, leading scholars seem to revel in the rejection of the actual historical meanings of words.

Earlier we noted that Cranfield acknowledged that *theostuges* had *only one historical meaning*, yet he insisted that a rewrite be accepted anyway. And his insistence was based on turning an *justice-based* list into one that required *piety* as well. Now, in the above, Cranfield insists that the *dik-* and *seb-* words be considered equivalents, even *cautioning against viewing them according to the actual historical usage*. And the motivation is the same: Cranfield transforms the *justice-based dik-* words into terms connoting *piety* instead. This *justice to piety* transformation is behind many of the conventional rewrites of the New Testament text.⁵⁰

Conventional Bibles weren’t translated by men who were seeking to use the historical meanings of words. Quite the opposite. Word meanings were chosen to promote the translators’ theological ideology, and the historical meaning was only a secondary consideration (if a consideration at all).⁵¹

But the moment we apply the real-world historical use of the *dik-* words, the original seamless message reemerges out of the chaos. The original Greek New Testament used the *dik-* words to teach that *treating others justly* supersedes all *religious righteousness*. Nevertheless, English translations use the *dik-* words to teach salvation by religious righteousness instead. And this “righteousness” rewrite is the root of Christian division:

- The “faith alone” camp says that “righteousness” is received by faith.
- The “moral code” camp says “righteousness” requires adhering to Old Testament morality.

These two camps have been arguing over something that doesn’t exist in the original text. They’ve been arguing over their own self-invention.

⁴⁸ Calvin defended rewriting the meaning of *adikia* as follows: “Some make a difference between impiety and unrighteousness, and think, that by the former word is meant the profanation of God’s worship, and by the latter, injustice towards men; *but as the Apostle immediately refers this unrighteousness to the neglect of true religion*, we shall explain both as referring to the same thing.”—John Calvin (*Commentary on Romans*, verse 1.18). The irony is that Romans 1.18 *presents mankind’s obligation to God as solely requiring brotherly love*. The sentence structure literally does the opposite of Calvin’s assertion. (For a discussion on the sentence structure of Romans 1.18, see “Appendix A—Impious Godliness.”)

Additionally, Michael Wood repudiates Calvin’s claim by examining how Paul used *adikia* throughout the entire passage (Romans 1-2). Wood demonstrates that Paul consistently used the word *to distinguish treating others justly from religious duty*, the opposite of Calvin’s assertion. (See *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 381-389, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.)

⁴⁹ *Romans* by F. Leroy Forlines, p. 25, Randall House Publications, Dec 1, 1987

⁵⁰ For additional examples, see chapter fourteen.

⁵¹ Chapters twelve through fifteen document many theologically motivated rewrites commonly found in conventional translations.

The New Testament was never about “righteousness” in the first place. Rather, it taught a salvation which was solely dependent on the just treatment of others, that which the Golden-Rule-based denominations have been proclaiming all along.

Chapter Three

Loving-Kindness

The *dik-* words expressed the just treatment of our fellowman. In other words, they expressed treating our fellowman with *justice*. But it is here that the *dik-* words have a special twist; a twist that reveals something quite surprising about the New Testament.

The Roman Empire was greatly concerned with the concept of ‘justice.’ (Greek: *dikaioσune*. Latin: *iustitia*). Yet, first-century justice doesn’t even closely resemble the modern English word “justice.” Rather, first-century ‘justice’ was equivalent to modern English words such as “benevolence,” “altruism” and “loving-kindness.” This was true for Stoics, Jews, and Christians alike.⁵²

Stoicism was the dominant philosophical school at the time the New Testament was written. The Stoics greatly altered the meaning of “justice.” For they made justice synonymous with *loving-kindness*:

It was **the Stoics**, not Socrates, who **connected justice with universal love**⁵³

Stoics didn’t consider loving-kindness to merely be a facet of justice; rather they considered it to be the very foundation of justice:

we are inclined by nature to **love other humans, and that is the foundation of justice**.⁵⁴—Cicero

The English word “justice” is often a lousy translation for first-century references. After all, the English word “justice” usually refers to giving a person what is due them. For example, punishing enemy combatants is “justice.” However, the Stoic concept had nothing to do with the modern notion of justice. On the contrary, Stoic justice involved turning the other cheek—including helping war-time enemies:

The most illustrious example of **justice toward an enemy** was presented by our ancestors, when the Senate and Caius Fabricius sent back to Pyrrhus a deserter who promised the Senate to kill the king by poison. Thus **they refused to sanction the murder of an enemy, and a powerful one, and one who was making war on them without provocation**.⁵⁵—Cicero

King Pyrrhus initiated an unprovoked war with Rome. During the war, when his personal physician plotted to kill him, a Roman soldier named Caius Fabricius informed him of the plot—saving his life. Fabricius *went out of his way to help his war-time enemy avoid death*, and this was an illustrious example of “justice toward an enemy.” Certainly the English word “justice” doesn’t

⁵² Followers of Jesus were first called “Christians” in 44 CE. However, “Christianity” as a self-standing religion wasn’t even a consideration of at this point. Followers of Jesus were “Jews who followed Jesus because they believed he was the Christ—the Messiah.” Gentile Christians were therefore converts to Judaism.

⁵³ *Gandhi and the Stoics: Modern Experiments on Ancient Values* by Richard Sorabji, p. 75, University of Chicago Press, Nov 14, 2012

⁵⁴ *Cicero: On the Commonwealth and On the Laws*, 1.43.

⁵⁵ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Cicero De Officiis*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Andrew P. Peabody (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1887), 1.13.40.

really fit. This was far more than the modern notion of justice. This was universal benevolence, kindness, and altruism *extended even to those waging war on our country*. It represented the ultimate form of turning the other cheek. Stoic justice truly was based on *unconditional brotherly love*—a love even extended to enemies.

The Stoic conception of justice made both the Greek word *dikaiosune* and the Latin word *iustitia* synonymous with loving-kindness—at least in secular Gentile society. But what about the Jews? What did *dikaiosune* mean to them?

As early as the 2nd century BCE, practicing *dikaiosune* became synonymous with practicing *loving-kindness* in certain prominent Jewish schools of thought:

And for all those who practice *dikaiosune* from out of your possessions give your alms... Give of your bread to the hungry one, and from your clothing to the naked ones; make an almsgiving from everything that you have more than enough for you.⁵⁶

The degree to which *dikaiosune* connoted loving-kindness is also seen in an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew scripture (a translation referred to as the *Septuagint*). This Hebrew to Greek translation was undertaken by Egyptian Jews in the 2nd century BCE. And there are two crucial facts to know about this translation:

- In the Septuagint, the Hebrew equivalent of *dikaiosune* was translated with the Greek word for compassion in many instances.⁵⁷
- In the Septuagint, the Hebrew word for loving-kindness was translated with the Greek word *dikaiosune* in many instances.⁵⁸

Thus, *dikaiosune* had been commonly and popularly used to express loving-kindness for hundreds of years by the time Paul wrote his letters. Paul was born into a society in which this meaning was part of everyday Jewish vocabulary. As Ziesler notes:

[the Septuagint shows] that the Rabbinic tendency to give the meaning ‘benevolence,’ ‘charity,’ or even ‘almsgiving,’ was extant as early as this [the 2nd century BCE], and was not a purely Palestinian phenomenon [i.e. was in widespread use in Jewish society].⁵⁹

The Septuagint translation of Proverbs 20.28 is particularly fascinating. The original text uses *hesed* (the Hebrew word for loving-kindness) two times in the same sentence. The NIV correctly translates the verse into English as follows:

Love (*hesed*) and faithfulness keep a king safe; through love (*hesed*) his throne is made secure.

The Septuagint translators did something remarkable when translating this verse:

- They translated the first “love” with the Greek word for compassion.
- They translated the second “love” with the Greek word *dikaiosune*.

⁵⁶ Tobit 4:6-7, 16

⁵⁷ *Zedaka* (the Hebrew equivalent of *dikaiosune*) was often translated with the Greek word *eleēmosunē* which meant: mercy, compassion, alms.

⁵⁸ *Hesed* (the Hebrew word for “loving-kindness”) was sometimes translated with the Greek word *dikaiosune*.

⁵⁹ *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry* by J. A. Ziesler, p. 59, Cambridge University Press, Dec 2, 2004

The Hebrew word “love” was translated with two different Greek words, even though that same Hebrew word was used twice in the same sentence! In Proverbs 20.28, the Hebrew word for love was translated once with compassion and once with *dikaiosune*.

The Greek word *eleēmosunē* meant: mercy, compassion, alms. This was the other Greek word used in Proverbs 20.28. And, since this is critical for understanding first-century Jewish thought, let it be clearly stated that in the Septuagint translation of Proverbs 20.28:

- The first “love” is translated with *eleēmosunē* (mercy, compassion, alms).
- The second “love” is translated with the Greek word *dikaiosune*.

As Ziesler notes, “at all events” *dikaiosune* “can be used interchangeably” with both *eleēmosunē* (compassion) and the Hebrew word for loving-kindness.⁶⁰

The Septuagint treated *dikaiosune* as a variant of both *eleēmosunē* (compassion) and loving-kindness. Many Hellenistic Jews used the Septuagint as their primary source of scripture. Therefore, the Septuagint shaped the Jewish conception of *dikaiosune* itself. That’s why first-century Jews such as Philo Judaeus viewed *dikaiosune* as a variant of both *eleēmosunē* (compassion) and brotherly love:

“It has been pointed out that Philo takes *dikaiosunē* and *eleēmosunē* [mercy, compassion, alms] and treats them as variant descriptions of *philanthropia* [brotherly love]”⁶¹—*Jews in the Hellenistic World*

First-century Jews treated *dikaiosune*, compassion, and brotherly love as interchangeable concepts. And the New Testament was written by first-century Jews.

First-century Jew Philo Judaeus used *dikaiosune* and *eleēmosunē* (mercy, compassion, alms) interchangeably. Another first-century Jew did the same. His name was... Jesus:

Beware of **practicing *dikaiosune*** before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. So when you **practice *eleēmosunē***...⁶²

In line with standard Jewish tradition, Jesus used *dikaiosune* interchangeably with *eleēmosunē* (mercy, compassion, alms). In other words, Jesus used *dikaiosune* to express practicing *loving-kindness*. But conventional Bibles translate Jesus as discussing practicing “righteousness” instead.

Even the phrase “**practicing *dikaiosune***” betrays the conventional translation. “Practicing *dikaiosune*” was a Jewish phrase that was often used to specify engaging in compassionate deeds such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked:

And for all those who **practice *dikaiosune*** from out of your possessions give your alms... **Give of your bread to the hungry one, and from your clothing to the naked ones; make an almsgiving from everything that you have more than enough for you.**⁶³

⁶⁰ *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry* by J. A. Ziesler, p. 61 footnote 3, Cambridge University Press, Dec 2, 2004.

⁶¹ *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Volume 1, Part 2: Philo* by Ronald Williamson, p. 211, CUP Archive, May 18, 1989.

⁶² Matthew 6.1-2

⁶³ Tobit 4:6-7, 16

Thus, when Jesus spoke of “practicing *dikaioisune*,” he was referring to engaging in compassionate deeds such as feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. And when Jesus spoke of the *dikaiois* (those who practice *dikaioisune*), he was speaking about the very same thing:

Then the king will say to those on his right, “Come here! you who are blessed of my father, take possession of the kingdom held for you from the foundation of the world because **I was hungry and thirsty, and you gave me food and drink; I was a stranger and you invited me in; I was naked and you clothed me; I was sick and you visited me; I was in prison and you came to me.**”

Then **the compassionate** [*dikaiois*] will reply to him, “Your highness, **when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? And when did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to visit you?**”

The king will answer saying to them, “I assure you that as much as you did it to one of these brothers of mine, the lowest in society, you did it to me.”⁶⁴

In Jesus’ parable, the *dikaiois* feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless.

In line with Jewish tradition, Jesus used the *dik-* words to express *loving-kindness shown to others*—not religious righteousness. And this is only natural, since the *dik-* word group connoted loving-kindness to both Jewish and Gentile societies during Jesus’ day. (The Septuagint caused the *dik-/love* association to be deeply ingrained in Jewish thought, and Stoicism caused the *dik-/love* association to be deeply ingrained in Gentile thought.)

Here’s another critical statistic: *dik-* words are used almost **200 times** in the New Testament. They are the heartbeat of the text. And the heartbeat originally taught salvation by loving-kindness—not salvation by righteousness. When the New Testament is properly translated, this is abundantly clear.⁶⁵ Consider the ending to Jesus’ parable cited above:

the compassionate will go into life in the Age to Come.⁶⁶

Jesus used the word *dikaiois* to teach that *the compassionate* will inherit life in the Age to Come. New Testament salvation is as simple as that, provided the *dik-* word group is translated according to the predominant first-century meaning.

When the *dik-* words are properly translated, the New Testament’s salvation teachings are both seamless and redundant:

When you host a feast, **invite the poor, the handicapped, the crippled, the blind** and you will be blessed; since they are unable to repay you, **you will be repaid at the resurrection of the compassionate** [*dikaiois*].⁶⁷

The connection between *dikaiois* and loving-kindness is so strong in this passage that even ultra-conservative Kittel conceded this:

There will be a resurrection of the just (Luke 14.14), **but the context shows that love constitutes the *dikaiois***⁶⁸

⁶⁴ Matthew 25.34-40

⁶⁵ For a broader discussion on the first-century *dik-* word group, and its implication regarding the original New Testament message, see “Appendix B—Exoneration through Loving-Kindness.”

⁶⁶ Matthew 25.41-46

⁶⁷ Luke 14.14

⁶⁸ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Volume 1* edited by Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, Geoffrey William Bromiley, p. 170, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1985

The New Testament repeatedly taught that the *dikaios*—*the compassionate*—will inherit life and everyone else will not. In other words, the *dik-* words show that the New Testament taught salvation by loving-kindness, just as the Golden-Rule-based denominations have always said.

The historical meaning of the *dik-* word group is problematic for both the “faith alone” and “moral code” camps. The historical meaning forces them to make the following choice: reassess their ideology, or rewrite the meaning of the words. Most have opted for the latter. They’ve rewritten the *dik-* references, changing salvation by *compassion* into salvation by *righteousness* instead. Then, as previously mentioned, the two camps debate the meaning of their own rewrite:

- The “faith alone” camp says that God imparts the attribute of righteousness to everyone who believes in Jesus.
- The “moral code” camp says that righteousness depends on adhering to Old Testament morality.

But the New Testament never taught salvation by righteousness in the first place. These camps are arguing over the meaning of their own self-invention.

The “faith alone” and “moral code” camps have long been the driving force behind modern English translations. As long as their rewrites capture the imagination of millions, the debate can continue ad infinitum. But once the *dik-* word group is restored to its historical first-century meaning, salvation by *loving-kindness* is seen throughout the New Testament from beginning to end. And the debate is finally over, because there are no longer multiple competing thoughts expressed in the English translation. Rather, one unified, seamless message flows from beginning to end. And that seamless message is *salvation by brotherly love alone*.

Chapter Four

Proving Ground

When it comes to understanding the New Testament view of salvation, nothing is more important than the teachings regarding Judgment Day. After all, whatever way each author depicts Judgment Day, that (and that alone) documents how they viewed salvation itself:

- **If the New Testament authors depict judgment as being based on *what we believe***—then salvation is indeed by “faith alone.”
- **If the New Testament authors depict judgment as being based on *fulfilling a moral code***—then salvation indeed requires adhering to a “moral code.”
- **If the New Testament authors depict judgment as being based on *brotherly love alone***—then salvation is indeed by brotherly love alone—the “Golden Rule.”

So the first question is: Do all the New Testament authors depict Judgment Day in the same way? The answer is... yes, they do.

So the second question is: In what way do all the New Testament authors depict Judgment Day? *In the Greek*, the New Testament authors unanimously depict a judgment based on brotherly love alone. Therefore, salvation is indeed by brotherly love alone—the “Golden Rule.”

When introducing the New Testament to anyone, there’s nothing more important than documenting the New Testament’s unified stance on Judgment Day. After all, this is the *endgame*. And everything else ends here.

With this in mind, let’s take a look at the five core New Testament authors’ depiction of Judgment Day. Let’s take a look at:

- James
- Matthew
- Paul
- John
- Luke

Chapter Five

James on Judgment

James explained that *everyone who is compassionate triumphs on Judgment Day*:

Now if you are accomplishing the king's law according to scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are behaving properly. But if you discriminate based on personal appearances, you are missing the mark, and are indicted under the Law as lawbreakers.

For anyone who keeps the whole Law, but is at fault on one count, has become guilty on all counts. He who said "don't commit adultery" also said "don't kill." If you don't commit adultery but do kill, you have become a lawbreaker.

Speak and act like those who are about to be **judged by the Law of Freedom** because judgment will be without compassion for him who hasn't shown compassion. **Compassion triumphs over judgment.**⁶⁹

James' logic is solid:

- Brotherly love fulfills the entire Law.
- Law is the basis of judgment.
- Therefore, compassion will triumph on Judgment Day.

Law (not faith) is the stated basis of judgment. And the scope of the specified law is "*Love your neighbor as yourself*" (not a broader moral code). James wrote about a judgment based on *brotherly love alone*, that which the Golden-Rule-based denominations have been proclaiming all along.

Many are often quick to assert that brotherly love is *part* of the Judgment Day standard, but certainly not the *entirety* of it. Yet, the passage's tightknit relationship between law and judgment repudiates this assertion. The passage was written to communicate a very specific premise: Because brotherly love fulfills the entire Law, compassion will triumph on Judgment Day. This law/judgment relationship is the very heart and soul of the passage. Therefore, imposing any requirement beyond brotherly love not only violates the letter of what James wrote, it truly opposes the spirit of what he wrote as well.

Only the Golden-Rule-based denominations preserve both the letter and spirit of this particular passage. For those who claim that there is more to Judgment Day than "Love your neighbor as yourself" rip apart James' tightknit law/judgment relationship.

⁶⁹ James 2.8-13 GRB

Chapter Six

Torah's Justices

From a modern perspective, James appears to have contradicted himself—as the following three concepts seem to stand in tension with one another:

- The king's entire Law is “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- Torah precepts such as “don't commit adultery” and “don't kill” are still in force.
- The king's Law, which preserves some Torah requirements, is a “Law of Freedom.”

At first blush, these concepts can appear to be irreconcilable. Yet, James' teaching was perfectly seamless *to his first-century Jewish audience*.

Let's take a closer look at what James wrote:

The king's Law is “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Now if you are accomplishing the king's law according to scripture, “Love your neighbor as yourself,” you are behaving properly....

Justices such as “don't commit adultery” and “don't kill” are still in force.

He who said “don't commit adultery” also said “don't kill.” If you don't commit adultery but do kill, you have become a lawbreaker.

The king's Law, which preserves the Justices, is a “Law of Freedom.”

Speak and act like those who are about to be judged by the Law of Freedom.

In declaring brotherly love to be the king's entire law, James simultaneously communicated that the Torah's *Justices* remains in force. First-century Jews divided the Torah's precepts into two discreet groups:

- **Justices**—all the commandments related to brotherly love. Precepts such as “don't murder,” “don't steal,” “don't commit adultery,” etc.⁷⁰
- **Jobs done for God**—all the commandments unrelated to brotherly love. Precepts such as “get circumcised,” “don't wear multi-fabric garments,” “observe the Sabbath,” etc.⁷¹

⁷⁰ First-century Jewish author Philo Judaeus referred to the Torah's precepts based on brotherly love as *the Justices* (*dikaionata*). (*On the Decalogue* by Philo Judaeus, section 108a, 109.) In a later period, Jewish rabbis referred to this group of precepts as *mitzvot bein adam lachaveiro* (commandments between man and neighbor). For the sake of simplicity, this work refers to this group of precepts as the Torah's code of justice, or more succinctly the Torah's Justices.

⁷¹ Dead Sea Scroll 4QMMT referred to the ritual and sexual purity requirements as “Jobs of the Torah” (*ma'ase ha-torah*). In a later period, Jewish rabbis referred to this group of precepts as *mitzvot bein adam lamakom* (commandments between man and God). For the sake of simplicity, this work refers to this group of precepts as “Jobs done for God,” or more succinctly the Torah's Jobs.

By declaring brotherly love to be the king's entire law, James simultaneously declared: the king's Law *only preserves the Justices* and it *frees humanity from the requirements of the Jobs*. Hence, James cited some of the Justices that remain in force, and he also referred to the king's Law as the Law of Freedom as well.⁷²

To his first-century Jewish audience, James' passage unequivocally communicated that the king's Law is truly is *fulfilled* by "Love your neighbor as yourself". And, *for this reason*, compassion alone will triumph on Judgment Day.

⁷² James wrote that judgment will be based on compassion *because of the Law of Freedom*. [James 2.12-14] The Law of Freedom was the stated reason for why judgment will be based on compassion. Therefore, the Law of Freedom *must* be referring to the aforementioned king's Law—"Love your neighbor as yourself." Moreover, given that the Law of Freedom *is the reason* that compassion triumphs on judgment day, there simply wasn't a more unequivocal way for James to equate the concept of "freedom" to *emancipation from the Torah's Jobs*. For only emancipation from the Torah's Jobs would explain compassion as the sole determinant on Judgment Day.

Chapter Seven

Matthew on Judgment

James' passage is predicated on the one-for-one relationship between the Torah's Justices and the utterance, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Quite interestingly, one of Matthew's teachings on judgment is predicated upon the very same thing:

A man came up to him and said, "Rabbi, **what good thing can I do to attain life in the Age to Come?**"

Jesus said to him, "Why ask me about that which is good. There is only one who is good! But if you want to attain the life of the age to come, **keep the commandments.**"

The man said, "Which ones?"

Jesus said, "**‘Don't murder,’ ‘don't commit adultery,’ ‘don't steal,’ ‘don't bear false witness,’ ‘honor your father and thy mother’—‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’**"⁷³

Notice that Matthew's and James' teachings are *identical*:

- They both had the same scope of Law: "Love your neighbor as yourself."
- Therefore, they both considered the Torah's Justices to remain in force.
- Therefore, they both considered *brotherly love alone to be the judgment day standard*.

And, just like James' teaching, Matthew's teaching also repudiates both the "faith alone" and "moral code" notions:

- The man asked, "What must I do to inherit immortality?" and Jesus didn't say, "Just have faith." On the contrary! Jesus required, "Keep the commandments." This is the *opposite* of "faith alone."
- Then the man asked, "Which ones?" and Jesus didn't say, "The moral code." On the contrary! Jesus specified the Torah's *Justices*—all the commandments summarized by "Love your neighbor as yourself."

In response, many are often quick to characterize the above teaching as either ambiguous or hyperbolic. But the first-century historical setting invalidates the claim. Jesus delivered this teaching to a nation which catalogued its legal precepts based on brotherly love.⁷⁴ Thus, the story went as follows:

⁷³ Matthew 19.16-19

⁷⁴ Pinchas was one of history's most eminent scholars of ancient Jewish law. According to Pinchas, the Torah's code of justice was defined by the precept, "Love your neighbor as yourself": "all of the commandments between man and man are included in this precept of loving one's neighbor."—Pinchas (as quoted in *Judaism and Global Survival* by Richard H. Schwartz, p. 14, Lantern Books, 2002).

- A *first-century Jew* asked Jesus which commandments will matter on Judgment Day.
- Jesus named some of the Torah's Justices and concluded with "Love your neighbor as yourself."

From a first-century Jewish perspective, Jesus answered the man's question *specifically* and *unequivocally*. He referred to the well-known, well-established group of commandments that the man already knew.

The teaching was unequivocally specific, and it was this very specificity that made the teaching *revolutionary*. In essence Jesus told his fellow countryman: You know the Torah's Justices; I'm telling you that they *alone* will matter on Judgment Day. That was the whole point. And that's what made the religious leaders so upset!

Chapter Eight

Paul on Judgment

Both James and Matthew presumed a tightknit relationship between law and judgment. Such a tightknit relationship between law and judgment was very Jewish. The *most fundamental* Jewish teaching was: the doers of the law inherit life in the Age to Come.⁷⁵

The New Testament was written entirely by Jewish authors. Therefore, we find the Jewish law/judgment relationship presumed throughout the text—including the letters written by Paul.

Like Matthew and James, Paul also taught: because brotherly love fulfills Jesus' Law, judgment will be based on benevolent deeds alone:

King Jesus' Law is "Love your neighbor as yourself."

the entire Law is fulfilled in one utterance, "Love your neighbor as yourself."... Bear one another's burdens and in this manner fulfill King Messiah's Law....

Therefore, everyone who persists in benevolent deeds will reap the Spirit's immortality.

Don't be led astray: God cannot be outwitted because whatever a person sows, that shall he reap; he who sows in his own flesh shall reap his flesh's perishability while he who sows in the Spirit shall reap the Spirit's immortality. When we are doing something benevolent, let's not do it half-way because we will reap [immortality] at the proper time if we're unrelenting.⁷⁶

Because brotherly love fulfills Jesus' Law, judgment will be based on brotherly love alone. Like Matthew and James, Paul presumed the tightknit relationship between law and judgment.

Paul described Judgment Day *in relationship to Jesus' Law*—"Love your neighbor as yourself." And Paul was intimately familiar with the one-for-one relationship between the Torah's Justices and Jesus' Law:

"don't commit adultery," "don't murder," "don't steal," "don't covet," and if there's any other commandment, it is summed up in this utterance, "Love your neighbor as yourself."⁷⁷—Paul

The requirement of the Torah's Justices and the requirement of Jesus' Law was the same. Therefore, Paul had two ways of depicting the law/judgment relationship:

- Judgment will solely be based on benevolence because of *Jesus' Law*.
- Judgment will solely be based on benevolence because of *the Torah's Justices*.

⁷⁵ "It was a commonplace in rabbinic teachings that the study of the law would lead to 'life in the age to come.'"—George Eldon Ladd. (*A Theology of the New Testament* by George Eldon Ladd, p. 292, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1993.)

Some ancient examples include: "To those who practice it, the law gives life in this age and in the age to come." (P. Aboth 6.7), and "The law brings man into the life of the age to come." (Sifre Bemidbar 37b-40a as cited in *The Consequences of the Covenant*, p. 138, Brill Archive).

⁷⁶ Galatians 5.14; 6.2, 7-10. For documentation on the translation "doing something *benevolent*" see chapter sixteen, "For Goodness Sake."

⁷⁷ Romans 13.8-9

Quite remarkably, Paul used both approaches. He used the first approach in Galatians (above). And he used the second approach in Romans (below):

Judgment will be based on benevolent deeds alone.

you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and the disclosure of God's equitable judgment.

God will repay each person according to his deeds: To those who seek glory, honor, and immortality by persisting in benevolent deeds—he will give life in the Age to Come...

For the Torah's Justices alone determine who is a true Jew and who isn't.

if the uncircumcised man keeps the Torah's Justices, won't his foreskin be regarded as circumcision?...

For he who is a Jew on the exterior isn't a Jew; nor is circumcision on the exterior (in the flesh) 'circumcision.' But he who is a Jew inside is a Jew⁷⁸

Paul taught that *all humanity* will be judged solely on *the benevolence of their deeds* because *the Torah's Justices alone* determine who is a true Jew (a true member of the Faith).

Thus:

- **Galatians**—Judgment will be based on benevolence because of *Jesus' Law*.
- **Romans**—Judgment will be based on benevolence because of *the Torah's Justices*.

Paul effortlessly switched between the Torah's Ethics and Jesus' Law since they were two ways of saying the very same thing. Most importantly, at least in terms of this present inquiry, Paul *repeatedly* taught that judgment shall be based on *benevolence alone* based on *the specified legal code*.

⁷⁸ Romans 2.5-8, 17, 20-22, 25-29

Chapter Nine

John on Judgment

John wrote that *Jesus' utterance* is “the commandment his converts heard from the beginning”:

But whoever keeps **Jesus' utterance**, in that person God's love is truly fulfilled; in keeping **Jesus' utterance**, **we know that we are in Jesus**. The one who claims to live in Jesus needs to walk himself just as Jesus walked. Beloved brothers and sisters, **I'm not writing down a new commandment for you, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. That old commandment is the utterance that you've heard.**⁷⁹

Jesus' utterance is *the commandment John's converts heard from the beginning*. So what did John consider Jesus' utterance (the commandment from the beginning) to be?

John considered Jesus' utterance to be “Love one another”:

I'm not writing it to you as a new commandment, but **the one we've had from the beginning: “Love one another.”**⁸⁰

Jesus' utterance (the commandment from the beginning) is “love one another.” And, John wrote:

- *Whoever keeps Jesus' utterance*—in that person God's love is truly fulfilled.
- *In keeping Jesus' utterance*—we know that we are in Jesus.

In John's theology, Jesus' utterance (“love one another”) is *the sole determinant* of whether a person is in Jesus or not. John truly believed that, because of Jesus' utterance, *everyone* who loves others has been born of God and knows God:

Beloved, let us love each other, because love is from God, and **everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.**⁸¹

Some will accuse this assessment of cherry picking. “But John also told his converts to *trust in Jesus' authority*,” they will protest.

Yes, John did tell them that. So the natural question is: *Why* did John want his converts to trust in Jesus' authority? John wanted his converts to trust in Jesus' authority *so that they will obey his command to love one another*:

trust in the authority of God's son King Jesus and therefore **love one another just as he commanded us.**⁸²

John presented trusting in Jesus' authority *as a means to an end* not the endgame. Those who trust in Jesus' authority will love one another as he commanded, and *thereby* be saved. John consistently portrayed brotherly love as the endgame—the entirety of the Judgment Day standard:

⁷⁹ 1 John 2.5-7

⁸⁰ 2 John 5

⁸¹ 1 John 4.7 GRB

⁸² 1 John 4.8

God is love, and the one who lives in love, lives in God, and God in that person. **Love perfected in us gives us confidence on Judgment Day**⁸³

John, like all the others, taught love as the sole determinant on Judgment Day. For John, *anyone who loves others can rest assured that he has crossed over from death unto life*:

We know that we have crossed over from death to life, because we love our brothers and sisters. The one who doesn't love remains in death.⁸⁴

From John's perspective, brotherly love affords *assurance of salvation*. He truly believed that everyone who loves others is born of God and is in Jesus as well.⁸⁵

Certainly every true follower of Jesus will obey Jesus' command to "love one another" and *thereby* be saved. But what about members of other religions? What does the New Testament say about them?...

⁸³ 1 John 4.16-17

⁸⁴ 1 John 3.14

⁸⁵ Many modern denominations often quote John's Gospel out of context. In John's Gospel, Jesus declares, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the father except through me." [John 14.6] Jesus *continues on* to explain that *everyone who loves others abides in him*; everyone else is cast away. [John 14.23-24, 15.10, 12] In other words, the passage taught: *everyone who loves others is "in Jesus" and therefore will see the father*. Notice that this is precisely what John taught in his Epistles as well: everyone who lives according to Jesus' utterance ("love one another") is "in Jesus." Many denominations misconstrue Jesus' pronouncement about being the only way to the father. They use that statement (out of context) to teach that one must therefore *believe in Jesus* to go to the father. Their criterion for being "in Jesus" is different from the criterion stated in the Gospel passage and it's different from the criterion stated in John's Epistles as well. John's teachings always end with brotherly love as the standard.

Chapter Ten

Luke on Judgment

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells a story involving three characters: a Samaritan, a Levite, and a priest. Why did Jesus choose this particular cast of characters? Who were these people, and what did they represent?

The Samaritan:

At the time the New Testament was written, Jews and Samaritans were fierce enemies. The enmity between them is the backdrop of the following account in Luke:

As the days until he was to be taken away were being completed, Jesus himself turned in the direction of the journey to Jerusalem. He sent messengers in advance of himself. They went ahead and got to a village of Samaritans to make things ready for him. However, the Samaritans didn't welcome him (because he turned in the direction of the journey to Jerusalem).

Upon seeing this, the disciples James and John said, "Master, if you're willing, we'll command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them!"⁸⁶

Jews considered Samaritans to be religious heretics. Therefore, the disciples were all too eager to see the Samaritans destroyed by fire. Jesus scolded them for their attitude.

Jews strongly considered Samaritans to be *foreigners* (non-Jews):

He was a Samaritan.... *foreigner*—Luke 17.16-18

Josephus, a first-century Jewish author, characterized the Samaritans as foreign "apostates" despite the Samaritans' desire to be seen as "Jews":

The Samaritans whose chief city at that time was Shechem, which lay beside Mount Garizim and was inhabited by **apostates** from the Jewish nation, seeing that Alexander had so signally honored the Jews, decided to call themselves Jews⁸⁷—Josephus

Now we know the significance of the Samaritan: He represented *foreign apostates*.

The Levite:

The Jewish nation consisted of twelve Hebrew tribes. Levites were the descendants of the tribe of Levi. The Levites were known for being the *fiercest defenders of Moses' law*. In fact, they *killed* in the name of defending Judaism *against apostates*—including their family members and "neighbors":

⁸⁶ Luke 9.51-54

⁸⁷ AJ 11.340

“...go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and **kill every man** his brother, and every man his friend, and every man **his neighbor**.” So **the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed**, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day.⁸⁸

In direct response to their willingness to kill their family and neighbors in the name of Moses’ law, the Levites were appointed to “teach God’s law to Israel.”⁸⁹

In Jesus’ parable, the Levite represented the fierce defenders of Moses’ law—*the fierce defenders of Torah*.

The Priest:

The Priests were the religious officials of Israelite religion and of classical Judaism from the birth of the Jewish nation until 70 CE. The Holy Temple was their domain:

The priesthood in general, and the high priest in particular, dominated the Jewish state during the Second Temple period. As might be expected, **the priests were in charge of the temple and the operation of the cult... they maintained control of the temple and were still the most important figures of the religious establishment.**

What is not often realized is the extent to which the priests—the altar priests and the Levites—were also **the transmitters of the written scriptures, the cultivators of wisdom, the interpreters of the religious tradition, and even the authors and editors of the written Word.**⁹⁰—*An Introduction to Second Temple Judaism: History and Religion of the Jews in the Time of Nehemiah, the Maccabees, Hillel, and Jesus*

The priests were the defenders of *religious duty*. They defended Israel’s religion against heretics and apostates. For example, High Priest Hyrcanus and his sons famously wasted the city of Samaria and the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim:

John Hyrcanus’ military exploits included the capture of Medaba and Samaga together with the nearby towns, the capture of Shechem and Mount Gerizim, the conquest of the Cuthean (Samaritan) race (the race which lived around the temple modelled on the temple in Jerusalem), and the capture of a number of cities in Idumea. He also besieged the city of Samaria, whose capture and destruction were accomplished by his sons Aristobulus and Antigonus, despite the attempt of Antiochus Aspendius (Grypus) of Syria to relieve the siege.⁹¹— Alan David Crown

The destruction of Samaria by the priestly tribe was still a core issue during Jesus’ day. Jesus’ choice of “priest” as the third character was well understood by his first-century Jewish audience: *The priest represented those who fiercely defended the Jewish religion against the Samaritan heretics.*

⁸⁸ Exodus 32:26-28

⁸⁹ Deuteronomy 33:8-10

⁹⁰ *An Introduction to First Century Judaism: Jewish Religion and History in the Second Temple Period* by Lester L. Grabbe, p. 31, Continuum, 1996

⁹¹ *The Samaritans* edited by Alan David Crown, p. 32, Mohr Siebeck, 1989

The Parable

In Jesus' story, we have the following cast of characters:

- A Samaritan apostate.
- A member of the Levite tribe which violently defended Torah against apostate family members and neighbors.
- A member of the priestly tribe which violently defended the Jewish religion against Samaritan heretics.

Now we are ready to understand how *provocative* Jesus' story was to his first-century Jewish audience. For in this story, the heretical Samaritan apostate is the *one who inherits life in the Age to Come* and the religious defenders *are the ones disinherited from life in the Age to Come*. Moreover, the heretical apostate inherits life in the Age to Come *because of his brotherly love*; whereas the defenders of Torah and tradition are disinherited from life in the Age to Come *because of their lack of compassion*. From a first-century Jewish perspective, there simply couldn't be a more unequivocal way to teach that brotherly love *alone* will matter on Judgment Day:

Suddenly an expert in Torah got up and tested Jesus by saying, "Rabbi, **what must I do to inherit Life in the Age to Come?**"

Jesus replied, "Well, what's written in the Torah? How do you read it?"

His answer: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength. And **love your neighbor as yourself.**"

"You've given the right answer," said Jesus to him. "**Do this latter thing, and you will live.**"

Still wanting to justify himself, the expert asked Jesus, "And just who is my neighbor?"

Jesus answered, "A fellow was journeying home from Jerusalem to Jericho when he ran into bandits. They stripped him, beat him, and left him for dead. **A priest** happened by on that side of the road. When he saw the fellow, he crossed to the other side and passed on.

"**A Levite** did the same thing when he came to the spot: He took a look, crossed to the other side, and passed on. But **a Samaritan** traveler came upon the fellow, looked, and **felt compassion**.

"The Samaritan went right to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them. Then he mounted him on his own steed, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. He departed the next day, paying the innkeeper two denarii with the words, 'Take good care of him, and if you have to spend anything more, I'll repay you when I come back this way.'

"Which of those three do you think was a neighbor to the fellow who had run into the bandits?"

"The one who had compassion on him," said the expert.

"Go then and do the same yourself," Jesus told him.⁹²

The context of the passage is: "What must I do to inherit life in the Age to Come." Everything spoken was directed at answering this question. And Jesus' answer was *shocking*: Those who love others in the same manner as the religious apostate will inherit life in the Age to Come. What a shocking message indeed!

⁹² Luke 10.25-37 GRB

And notice, once again, the tightknit relationship between law and judgment. The passage singled out “Love your neighbor as yourself” as the legal standard, and then used *an apostate member of another religion* to communicate that brotherly love *alone* will matter on Judgment Day.

Chapter Eleven

Legal Eagles

The Faith was still *a denomination within Judaism* at the time the New Testament was written. As Hellenistic Jews, the New Testament authors intimately presumed that *law determined membership in the Faith, and law determined the Judgment Day standard as well*. Law was at the center of it *all*.

And that's what made the New Testament authors so reviled in the first place. By declaring brotherly love to be the entire *law*, they completely redefined who is a true Jew (a true member of the Faith), and they completely redefined who will triumph on Judgment Day. It was the declaration of brotherly love as the entire law that initially defined the original Jesus Movement. This is unanimously attested to in the law/judgment teachings of James, Matthew, Paul, John, and Luke.

James:

Law—The king's Law, "Love your neighbor as yourself." **Judgment Standard**—Compassion.

Matthew:

Law—"Love your neighbor as yourself."
Judgment Standard—The Torah's Justices (all the commandments based on "Love your neighbor as yourself").

Paul:

Law—"Love your neighbor as yourself" (Galatians)/the Torah's Justices (Romans).
Judgment Standard—Benevolent deeds (Galatians and Romans both).

John:

Law—The commandment they heard from the beginning—"Love one another."
Judgment Standard—Brotherly love.

Luke:

Law—"Love your neighbor as yourself,' do *this* and you will live."
Judgment Standard—Compassion

The major New Testament authors' promoted the identical law/judgment relationship: **Because brotherly love completely fulfills Jesus' Law, judgment will be based on brotherly love alone**. This was the fundamental teaching of the first-century Jesus Movement—just as Golden-Rule-based denominations have been proclaiming all along.

Chapter Twelve

Too Many Cooks

All the New Testament authors taught salvation by brotherly love alone. So why don't conventional translations teach this unified message? Why do modern Bibles often teach *something else*? Where did these other ideas come from?

Consider the following competing concepts:

- **X**—The written Torah has been replaced with the spiritual Law of brotherly love.
- **Y**—All law has been replaced by “faith alone”.
- **Z**—The Torah's entire “moral code” remains in force.

The *Greek* New Testament solely contains X. However, conventional *English* translations contain a mixture of X, Y, and Z. An originally unified message has been transformed into a text abounding with *three opposing sets of statements*. This has created the illusion that “everything is open to interpretation.”

But how did this X, Y, Z mixture get created in the first place? Translation committees had members of both the “faith alone” and “moral code” camps. Each camp did their best to get their viewpoint inserted into the English translations:

- **“Faith Alone” Camp**—Rewrote some X statements as Y statements.
- **“Moral Code” Camp**—Rewrote some X statements as Z statements.

Thus, conventional translations now have X, Y, and Z statements throughout, causing modern Biblicists to scoff at the notion of salvation by brotherly love alone. But modern Biblicists should be scoffing at the English translators instead. After all, conventional English translations teach “brotherly love fulfills the entire law” (X),⁹³ yet salvation is by “faith apart from law” (Y),⁹⁴ yet converts must “fulfill the moral law” (Z).⁹⁵ This X, Y, Z mixture should've been scoffed out of existence a very long time ago.

⁹³ Cf. Galatians 5.14; Romans 13.8-9

⁹⁴ Cf. Galatians 2.16; Romans 3.28

⁹⁵ Cf. 1 Corinthians 6.9-10; 1 Timothy 1.9-10

The original New Testament *solely* contained X statements. It promoted a unified concept: salvation by *obedience* to *benevolence*. However:

- Evangelicals rewrote *obedience* as *belief*.⁹⁶
- Traditionalists rewrote *benevolence* as *religiousness*.⁹⁷

The original New Testament's message of salvation by *obedience* to *benevolence* has been turned into the dueling concepts of salvation by *faith alone* and salvation by *adhering to the entire Old Testament moral code*. That's why these two concepts are now the basis of the largest denominational debate in Christianity.

Yet, the debate isn't even over something that's in the original text. Both sides have added their own particular brand of rewrites. Then, after completely rewriting the message, they now argue over the meaning of their own rewrites. It's actually quite surreal.

The long-raging debate of "salvation by faith alone" vs. "salvation by a moral code" has caused the notion of "salvation by brotherly love alone" to seem *unbiblical*. And this is the core problem. The original New Testament message now sounds and feels *unbiblical* to most of the Christian community.

Although there are many modern books bearing the label "Bible," they point readers *away from* the original New Testament message. For there's barely any original references left to salvation by brotherly love alone. And the few remaining references are viewed as anomalies to be summarily dismissed out of hand. In rewriting *obedience* as *belief*, and rewriting *benevolence* as *religiousness*, the entire message has been rewritten to the point where it feels *unbiblical* and *wrong*.

But in documenting (and undoing) both sets of rewrites, we find something truly remarkable: **The original Greek text really did promote the Law of brotherly love as the entirety of Jesus' command. Salvation by brotherly love alone was the only *Biblical* method of salvation in the original New Testament.** Therefore, documenting (and undoing) both sets of rewrites is paramount.

⁹⁶ In this work, "faith alone" refers to the theological notion that God views a person as being perfectly righteous solely on the basis of what he believes.

⁹⁷ In this work, "moral code" refers to any behavioral code that requires more than brotherly love alone. "Justices" refers to a behavioral code based solely on brotherly love.

Chapter Thirteen

Obedience Rewritten as Belief

In conventional Bibles, Romans teaches:

the law brings wrath... the law freed me from sin and death⁹⁸

In conventional Bibles, Galatians teaches:

you are not under law... fulfill the law⁹⁹

Conventional Bibles portray Paul's letters as teaching opposite notions about the same law—the law. However, Paul was simply referring to two different laws: Torah and Jesus' Law. This is most clearly seen in 1 Corinthians 9.20-21:

I was not under Torah... but under King Messiah's Law.

When 1 Corinthians 9.20-21 is properly translated, we see that Paul considered himself to have switched from being under Torah to being under Jesus' Law instead. Paul's letters tell the simple story of one law which supersedes another. Paul's message was straightforward: Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, salvation now comes through Jesus' Law instead of Torah (in order for salvation to be equally available to Jew and non-Jew alike). When we acknowledge the existence of both laws, we find Paul's writings are just as simple as that.

Romans originally taught:

the **Torah** brings wrath... the **Law** freed me from sin and death¹⁰⁰

Galatians originally taught:

you are not under **Torah**... fulfill the **Law**¹⁰¹

The above is Paul's teaching in a nutshell: You are not under Torah but rather must fulfill Jesus' Law instead, because the Torah brings wrath whereas Jesus' Law frees people from sin and death. It's truly as simple as that.

But "salvation by Jesus' Law" repudiates the notion of "salvation by faith alone." (The evangelical camp teaches converts that man is saved *by faith apart from all law* instead of one law replacing another.) Therefore, this camp translates Paul's letters as if there was only one law—the law—and 'faith' has replaced 'it.'

But the one-law mentality transforms the simplicity of Paul's letters into a paradoxical mess. Nonetheless, evangelical scholars still embrace the one-law mentality while fully acknowledging the utter confusion this mentality produces. Consider the following *textbook* example:

⁹⁸ Romans 4.15, 8.2

⁹⁹ Galatians 5.18, 6.2

¹⁰⁰ Romans 4.15, 8.2

¹⁰¹ Galatians 5.18, 6.2

The basic problem in interpreting Paul's Christian view of **the Jewish law** is that he seems to say both positive and negative things about **it**. For example, apparently negative statements include the following... 'Christ redeemed us from the curse of **the law**' (Gal 3:13). But on the other hand, consider the positive statements:... 'through love become slaves to one another. For **the whole law** is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself"' (Gal 5:13-14).¹⁰²

This textbook teaches seminarians that Galatians 3.13 and 5.14 both refer to the same law rather than Galatians 3.13 referring to Torah and Galatians 5.14 referring to Jesus' Law. Meanwhile the textbook marvels at how paradoxical Paul's letters supposedly were. This is ridiculous. Ridiculous, but popular:

As Brice L. Martin's recent study highlights, the most striking feature about the data concerning the role of **the Law** in Paul's writings is that the apostle speaks about **it** in both negative and positive ways.

From a negative perspective, **the Law** brings a curse (Gal. 3:13), wrath (Rom. 4:15), sin (Rom. 7:7-13), and death (Rom. 7:9-11; 2 Cor. 3:6-9); produces transgressions (Rom. 4:15; Gal. 3:19); enslaves (Rom. 6:14; 7:4-6, 23-25; Gal. 3:23; 4:5, 21-31); and is fatal (Rom. 3:20; 6:14; Gal 3:11; 5:4).

From a positive point of view, **the Law** is of divine origin (Rom. 7:22, 25; 8:7, 9:4); contains the will of God (Rom. 2:17-18); is holy (Rom. 7:12, 14, 16) and loving (Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14); is established by faith (Rom. 3:31; 9:30-10:4); and is obeyed by the power of the Spirit (Rom. 8:4).

This sense of ambivalence about the role of **the Law** extends to Christians themselves, who on the one hand are no longer obligated to keep **the Law** (Rom. 6:14; 7:4, 6; Gal. 2:19; 3:13), but on the other hand are expected to fulfill **its** ideals (Rom. 2:12-16; 5:14; 6:2; 8:4; 13:8-10).¹⁰³

Evangelical translators do the unthinkable: **Paul originally wrote positively about Jesus' Law and negatively about Torah.**¹⁰⁴ **But since the evangelical camp promotes *faith apart from all law*, their Bibles can't have any law associated with Jesus. Jesus' Law must be expunged from the text. Therefore, evangelical translators portray Paul's positive statements about Jesus' Law as being positive statements about Torah instead, thereby creating the illusion that Paul wrote about one law and faith has replaced *it*. But their strategy has caused Paul to appear to have written *opposite* things about the very same law. Therefore they express bewilderment that Paul supposedly wrote *opposite* things about the same law—the law—it.**

It's critical to note that this is *precisely* what's been going on:

he seems to say **both positive and negative things about it**.—David Horrell

the apostle **speaks about it in both negative and positive ways**.—C. Marvin Pate

Rather than concede the existence of two laws, *leading evangelicals* portray Paul as writing opposite things about the same law. Their "faith alone" theology forces them to.

¹⁰² *An Introduction to the Study of Paul* by David G. Horrell, p. 91, Continuum International Publishing Group, Aug 30, 2006

¹⁰³ *The End of the Age has Come: The Theology of Paul* by C. Marvin Pate, pp. 125- 126, Zondervan, Feb 15, 1995

¹⁰⁴ This is a generally true characterization of Paul's positive/negative legal statements. For a more nuanced explanation of Paul's positive/negative statements see *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 25-60, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

There is one verse that is particularly challenging to the evangelical camp. Galatians 6.2 is particularly challenging because it specifically associates a law with Jesus. (The verse refers to “the law of Christ.”)

So what do evangelical scholars do with the reference to “the law of Christ”—the law directly attributed to Jesus himself? Do they use it as an opportunity to reassess the whole paradoxical positive/negative law thing? Not at all! Rather, they continue to embrace the paradoxes created by all the other passages and simply cry “*muy curiosa!*” at the Law of Christ:

Nearly three centuries ago J. A. Bengel referred to the Law of Christ as a *rara appellatio*. Recent interpreters, however, have been less discreet. They now refer to the Law of Christ as ‘most remarkable,’ ‘arresting,’ ‘strange,’ ‘*muy curiosa*,’ ‘striking,’ ‘extremely baffling,’ ‘doubly astonishing,’ a ‘breathtaking paradox,’ a ‘much-puzzled-over-term,’ and ‘paradox *étonnant*,’ indeed ‘a phrase more likely to mislead than instruct.’¹⁰⁵—Todd A. Wilson

The evangelical camp treats the Law of Christ as an anomaly—something to be summarily dismissed out of hand. It bears great emphasis that this camp’s *leading scholars* refer to this phrase as:

- Most remarkable
- Arresting
- Strange
- *Muy curiosa* (very puzzling)
- Striking
- Extremely baffling
- Doubly astonishing
- A breathtaking paradox
- A much-puzzled-over-term
- Paradox *étonnant*
- A phrase more likely to mislead than instruct

Conventional Bibles are translated by men who’ve turned Paul’s simple message into an untold number of positive/negative paradoxes, and then cry “*muy curiosa!*” over their own self-created mess. The Christian community needs to awaken to the mental gamesmanship behind conventional translations.

Paul’s requirement of obedience to Jesus’ Law has been removed in order to promote salvation by faith apart from all law. Thus, **‘Torah/Law’ rewritten as “the law” is an example of obedience rewritten as belief.**

But doesn’t the Bible say that we are saved by faith in Jesus? Actually, it doesn’t. Rather, it says that we are saved by *Jesus’ Faith*. That’s a different matter altogether.

The term *Jesus’ Faith* refers to the Faith (doctrine) established by Jesus. The most fundamental component of Jesus’ Faith is Jesus’ Law—the utterance, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” The relationship between Jesus’ Faith and Jesus’ Law was so tight that Paul often treated the two interchangeably.

¹⁰⁵ *The Curse of the Law and the Crisis in Galatia: Reassessing the Purpose of Galatians* by Todd A. Wilson, pp. 100-101, Mohr Siebeck, Jun 30, 2007

For example: In Galatians 3, Paul wrote that Jesus' *Faith* supersedes the Torah; whereas in Galatians 5, he wrote that Jesus' *Law* supersedes the Torah.¹⁰⁶ In other words, Paul treated Jesus' Faith and Law interchangeably:

- **Galatians 3**—Torah has been superseded by Jesus' *Faith*.
- **Galatians 5**—Torah has been superseded by Jesus' *Law*.

This was a typically Jewish way of thinking: **Anyone who keeps the Law is a member of the Faith.** Thus, anyone who keeps Jesus' Law is a member of Jesus' Faith.

Paul was a Jew, and he remained a Jew his entire life. In fact, his mission was to convert Gentiles *to Judaism* when he converted them *to Jesus' Faith*. Therefore, Paul taught his Gentile converts to keep Jesus' Law so that they could receive forgiveness of sins by adhering to Jesus' Faith.

Paul's teaching on forgiveness of sins was simple:

- Forgiveness of sins is granted to every member of Jesus' Faith.
- Everyone who keeps Jesus' Law is a member of Jesus' Faith.

That's it. It was just as simple as that. Romans 3 and 8 are a perfect case in point. Romans 3 says that Jesus' blood covers the sins of everyone who belongs to *Jesus' Faith*. Romans 8 says that *Jesus' Law* frees people from sin. Deliverance from sin comes through Jesus' Faith/Law:

whom God designated as an appeasement in his own blood through **the Faith**... because in his forbearance, **God passed over the sins previously committed**... For **the Law** of the Spirit of life in King Jesus **set me free from the principle of sin**¹⁰⁷

Jesus' Faith/Law sets people free from sin:

- **Romans 3**—Jesus' *Faith* frees people from sin.
- **Romans 8**—Jesus' *Law* frees people from sin.¹⁰⁸

Notice that Paul treated Jesus' Faith and Law interchangeably in Romans and Galatians both:

- **Romans**—Deliverance from sin comes through Jesus' Faith/Law.
- **Galatians**—Torah has been superseded by Jesus' Faith/Law.

¹⁰⁶ Galatians 3 portrays the Torah as superseded by Jesus' Faith: "Before **the Faith** came, we were prisoners of **Torah**, locked up together awaiting the disclosure of **the Faith** that was to come" (Galatians 3.23 GRB); whereas Galatians 5 portrays the Torah as superseded by Jesus' Law: "you have fallen from the favor, you who are seeking to be exonerated by **Torah**... enslave yourselves to one another through love because the entire **Law** is fulfilled in one utterance—'Love your neighbor as yourself.'... you are not under **Torah**... fulfill King Messiah's **Law**" (Galatians 5.4, 13b-14, 18; 6.2 GRB).

¹⁰⁷ Romans 3.25-26, 8.2

¹⁰⁸ Paul even explained *how* Jesus' Law frees people from sin. In Romans 7, Paul wrote that written commandments such as "do not covet" actually inflame coveting, causing people to sin even more. His remedy was *Jesus' Law of brotherly love*. He taught that everyone *who focuses on brotherly love automatically doesn't covet*. [Romans 13.8-9] This was his explanation on how *Jesus' Law* frees people from sin, that which the Torah couldn't do. [Cf. Romans 8.2-3]

Now we finally come to Paul's core theology: **Jesus' Faith is the Law which superseded the Torah; everyone who adheres to Jesus' Faith/Law is delivered from sin. Jesus' Faith/Law is the fundamental basis of Paul's theology. But even though this is the core of Paul's theology, both Faith and Law are censored from conventional translations.** In modern books bearing the label "Bible":

- Paul's positive statements about *Jesus' Law* are rewritten as positive statements about Torah instead.
- Paul's references to *Jesus' Faith* are rewritten as statements about believing in Jesus instead.

Evangelical translators have literally censored the original Faith/Law teaching—the very heart and soul of Paul's theology—the very foundation upon which all of his letters originally stood. Their extermination of the Faith/Law construct was an extermination of Paul himself. The entirety of Paul's original message has been extinguished by modern books bearing the label "Bible."

In conventional Bibles, forgiveness of sins is no longer procured by keeping the Faith; rather, it is depicted as being passively received "by faith" instead:

whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood **through faith**... because in the forbearance of God **He passed over the sins previously committed**... the justifier of the one who has **faith in Jesus**.¹⁰⁹

Conventional Bibles change "Jesus' Faith" to "faith in Jesus" and they change "the Faith" to "faith", completely rewriting Paul's message. Paul's requirement of adhering to Jesus' Faith by keeping Jesus' Law has been replaced with the notion of salvation by belief instead.

Not only has the evangelical camp exterminated Jesus' Law through its one-law translation, it also **rewrote "the Faith" as "faith" and rewrote "Jesus' Faith" as "faith in Jesus"—two more examples of *obedience* rewritten as *belief*.**

¹⁰⁹ Romans 3.25-26 NASB

Chapter Fourteen

Benevolence Rewritten as *Religiousness*

The New Testament’s most fundamental teaching was simple: salvation by obedience to Jesus’ Faith/Law—the utterance, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” In other words, the New Testament taught: salvation by *obedience* to *benevolence*. But the evangelical camp rewrote *obedience* as *belief*; and the traditionalist camp rewrote *benevolence* as *religiousness*. Together, the two camps have completely rewritten the New Testament’s most fundamental teaching, pointing the modern reader *away from* the original salvation message.

We’ve briefly touched upon the evangelical camp’s contribution to the translation debacle. So how, exactly, has the traditionalist camp rewritten *benevolence* as *religiousness*?

The traditionalist camp is currently chastising Golden-Rule-based denominations for their acceptance of homosexual members.¹¹⁰ And they are making a public spectacle of the issue. Given the traditionalist camp’s focus on homosexuality, it would be most enlightening to use their chosen issue to demonstrate their contribution to the Bible translation debacle.

Traditionalists often appeal to 1 Corinthians 6.9 and 1 Timothy 1.9 in their condemnation of homosexuality. In the Greek, both of these verses condemn the *arsenokoitai*. So who were the *arsenokoitai* that these verses condemn? Were these *arsenokoitai* guilty of violating *benevolence* or a *religious sexual taboo*?

When the 16th-century German monk Martin Luther translated the New Testament, he translated *arsenokoitai* as referring to the rapists of young boys.¹¹¹ Even into the late 1800’s, eminent scholars such as Dods, Roberts, and Donaldson all translated *arsenokoitai* as referring to the rapists of young boys.¹¹² The recognition of *arsenokoitai* as the rapists of young boys persisted at least until 1914, as seen in Pape’s highly respected Greek-German dictionary.¹¹³ Thus, the *arsenokoitai* were guilty of the grotesque *injustice* of raping young boys.

¹¹⁰ For example, the traditionalist camp has recently been making a public issue over its assertion that the Torah’s prohibition on homosexuality remains in force. They often cite Leviticus 18.22: “You shall not lie with a male as one lies with a female; it is an abomination.” [Leviticus 18.22 NASB] The traditionalist camp cites this Torah precept *as if* this proscription remains in force. However, Golden-Rule-based denominations say that this precept *isn’t* in force, because it’s not one of the precepts summed up in “Love your neighbor as yourself.” The Leviticus 18.22 precept illustrates the very real-world differences between requiring adherence to the entire Old Testament moral code vs. solely requiring adherence to “the Golden Rule.”

¹¹¹ *Das Problem kirchlicher Amtshandlungen an gleichgeschlechtlichen Paaren: Sozialwissenschaftliche, theologische, ethische, poimenische und liturgiewissenschaftliche Perspektiven* by Wiebke Krohn, p. 124, V&R unipress GmbH, Aug 15, 2011

¹¹² In *Theophilus to Autolycus* 1.1.2, Dods, Roberts, and Donaldson all translate *arsenokoitai* as corruptors of young boys—not homosexuals.

¹¹³ “ἄρρενο-κοιτέω , mit Knaben Unzucht treiben, Orac. Sibyll.” (Wörterbucheintrag Griechisch-Deutsch zu »ἄρρενο-κοιτέω«. Wilhelm Pape: *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*. Braunschweig 1914, Band 1, S. 359.)

Also, “ἄρρενο-κοίτης , ὁ , Knabenschänder” (Wörterbucheintrag Griechisch-Deutsch zu »ἄρρενο-κοίτης«. Wilhelm Pape: *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*. Braunschweig 1914, Band 1, S. 359.)

But conventional Bibles have now assigned a completely new meaning to this word. They translate *arsenokoitai* as a reference to “homosexuals”—not “rapists of young boys.” They’ve turned a grotesque violation of *benevolence* into a violation of a *religious sexual taboo* instead. This is a perfect example of *benevolence* being rewritten as *religiousness*.

The traditionalist camp defends the rewrite in three ways:

- They accuse “liberals” of wanting to write a “new” meaning of the word.
- They appeal to the etymology of the word.
- They appeal to the position of the word in the sin list of 1 Corinthians 6.9.

All three arguments are dubious at best. We shall briefly touch on each.¹¹⁴

James B. De Young has written an oft-cited work entitled, “The Source and NT Meaning of *Arsenokoitai*, with Implications for Christian Ethics and Ministry.” Immediately after the introduction, Young dives into a section entitled: “Survey of New Interpretations of *Arsenokoitai*.” Young tells the reader that each of the meanings in his list are the “new” ones—the newest meaning being rapists of young boys.

The only problem with Young’s claim is that it’s literally the opposite of reality. As documented above, the translation “rapists of young boys” *preceded* the translation “homosexuals” *by many centuries*. It is the translation “homosexuals” that is the new kid on the block. Nonetheless, Young audaciously portrays the situation as the literal opposite of reality, *and then proceeds to build his argument from there*.

The common appeal to etymology is equally dubious. How so? Having a stable of slave boys for sexual use was a status symbol during Paul’s day. Therefore, all the words referring to the rape of young boys were either neutral or praiseworthy. From an etymological standpoint, Paul was in desperate need to coin *a derogatory term for the oft-praised practice of raping boys*.

The frequency in which young slave boys were raped was on par with the frequency in which men had sex with adult women. That’s how common it was, yet there weren’t any derogatory terms for it. Therefore Paul coined a derogatory term: *arsenokoitai*.

So how do leading etymology advocates address the then-pressing need for a derogatory word? They literally write the opposite of historical reality. They audaciously assert that Paul already had a slew of derogatory words to choose from, and therefore conclude that *arsenokoitai* couldn’t have been developed as a derogatory word for raping boys:

If Paul had wanted to condemn (a kind) of pederasty, **why did he not use one of the several Greek words or phrases for it current in Hellenistic Jewish writings** [e.g., *paidophthoreseis*]?¹¹⁵—Wright

Just like Young, Wright is an oft-cited scholar. It is Wright who is often cited as the etymology expert. Yet, just like Young, Wright literally wrote the *opposite* of reality. For there were *no* derogatory words for the rapists of young boys at the time Paul wrote his letters. Yet Wright audaciously asserted there were *several*.

¹¹⁴ A full exposé on all three arguments is presented in *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded*, “Section IX—Law and Pederasty,” pp. 273-340, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

¹¹⁵ D.E. Wright as cited in “HERMENEUTICAL ISSUES IN THE USE OF THE BIBLE TO JUSTIFY THE ACCEPTANCE OF HOMOSEXUAL PRACTICE” by Guenther (Gene) Haas (Redeemer College), as cited in http://www.phc.edu/gj_haas_hermen.php, January 3, 2013.

The derogatory term *paidophthoros* (corrupter of boys) was created by the Christian community *after* Paul's death.¹¹⁶ And here's a remarkable historical fact that traditionalist etymologists brush aside: *paidophthoros* (corrupter of boys) was the word created by the Christian community to explain *arsenokoitai* to the general Greek public!¹¹⁷ Thus, we have empirical documentation on who the *arsenokoitai* were. According to the earliest Christians, the *arsenokoitai* were the "corrupters of young boys." (Notice that this was correctly understood by Martin Luther, Dods, Roberts, Donaldson, and Papes' German/Greek dictionary.)

Regardless how Wright may appeal to the potential Levitical origins of the word, it's the *actual real-world use* of a word that matters, not theoretical conjecture (or worse still: theoretical conjecture that claims a meaning opposite of the actual historical use).¹¹⁸

The traditionalist camp lastly appeals to the position of *arsenokoitai* in 1 Corinthians 6.9. (They use a word right next to *arsenokoitai* to bolster their rewrite of "rapists of young boys" as "homosexuals.") Yet, once again, their approach is literally the *opposite* of reality. How so? 1 Corinthians 6.9 is an *unordered* list. One cannot legitimately appeal to the word order of an unordered list. Consider the following example:

Don't you know that the selfish cannot inherit God's Kingdom? Don't be deceived. Neither... **thieves**, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor abusive people, nor **robbers**...¹¹⁹

In an ordered list, "thieves" and "robbers" would appear side by side. Yet notice that "the covetous" and "drunkards" and "abusive people" are all between "thieves" and "robbers." Why is this? 1 Corinthians 6.9 simply isn't an ordered list. It's an *unordered* list.¹²⁰ Therefore, the traditionalist camp is appealing to word order in an unordered list! This is patently ridiculous.

There's only one thing that matters when assessing the meaning of a word: How was that word used during the time period in which it was written? We already know that the early Christians *defined* the term *arsenokoitai* as "corrupters of young boys." Thus, we *know* the historical real-world use of the word.

The real-world use is not only documented in the early Christian's own *definition* of the word, but is also seen in the way that early Christians used *arsenokoitai* in their own writings. Four extant Christian manuscripts from the same language period as Paul contain the word *arsenokoitai*.

¹¹⁶ The earliest known appearances of the Greek term *paidophthoria* are found in the Epistle of Barnabas, the Didache, and the writings of Justin Martyr. (Source: Dr. William Berg) All of the texts in which this word is found were written after Paul's death.

¹¹⁷ The Greek terms *arsenokoitai* and *paidophthoroi* (corrupters of young boys) were used interchangeably in the formulaic Triple Prohibition found throughout early Christian writings: *moichoi, pornoi, arsenokoitai/paidophthoroi*. Some texts used *arsenokoitai*. Others used *paidophthoroi*. Given the interchangeability of these terms in the Triple Prohibition, it is abundantly clear that *arsenokoitai* and *paidophthoroi* were synonyms—both terms quite specifically condemned *pederasts*. *Paidophthoroi* was coined after *arsenokoitai*. (See footnote above.) Thus, the Christian community turned Paul's highly Judeocentric word (*arsenokoitai*) into a word which the general Gentile public could relate to (*paidophthoroi*).

¹¹⁸ For an explanation of the dubious nature of the all-too-common etymological appeal to Leviticus see *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 310-320, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

¹¹⁹ The Greek word *adikia* referred to any lack of kindness, whether active malice or passive selfishness. Given the presence of "drunkards" and others in Paul's list, it is this passive sense that's being appealed to.

¹²⁰ An in-depth analysis of the unordered nature of 1 Corinthians 6.9 is provided in *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 321-327, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

And **all four Christian works solely used *arsenokoitai* in reference to the rape of young boys.**¹²¹

The historical use of the word is *unequivocal*. Therefore, it is the historical use of the word that traditionalist advocates seek to distract attention away from. Is this an overly harsh assessment? Consider the following realities:

- **The translation “rapists of young boys” preceded the translation “homosexuals” by hundreds of years.**—Yet Young builds his argument on the notion that “rapists of young boys” is the new translation and “homosexuals” is not.
- **All other derogatory terms for the rape of young boys were developed *after* Paul’s death.**—Yet Wright builds his argument on the notion that Paul had “several” derogatory terms to choose from.
- **1 Corinthians 6.9 is an unordered list.**—Yet many theologians still build their argument on the word order of this unordered list.

One cannot help but believe that the experts in this matter are fully aware of the above realities. Therefore, one cannot help but believe that they are counting on the fact that their readers aren’t aware of these realities. If this is indeed the case, then their publications are truly works of deception—nothing more, nothing less.

And we have only scratched the surface regarding the *immense* documentation that *arsenokoitai* originally referred to the rapists of young boys. There is much, much more.¹²²

The traditionalist camp correctly considers the issue of homosexuality as biblically important. But the issue is important for different reasons than they think. The issue strikes at the heart of whether Paul was consistent or not.

The Apostle Paul didn’t write that brotherly love fulfills *part* of the Law. On the contrary! Paul repeatedly taught that brotherly love fulfills the *entire* Law. Therefore, if he wrote that no homosexual shall enter God’s Kingdom, then he repudiated his own teaching. There’s truly no two ways about it. Either brotherly love fulfills the entire Law or it doesn’t.

The traditionalist camp has produced translations which teach two opposing notions:

- **X**—Brotherly love is the totality of the Law.
- **Z**—No homosexual shall enter God’s Kingdom.

The traditionalist camp *cannot* assert biblical superiority when their own translations contain both X and Z statements. The fact that their own translations teach two *opposite* perspectives strongly testifies that they haven’t reconciled Paul’s teachings into a coherent whole. For there is nothing coherent in:

¹²¹ Four *context-defined* instances of *arsenokoites* exist in extant Koine manuscripts: Aristides’ *Apology*, Hippolytus’ *Refutatio*, *Acts of John*, and *Sibylline Oracles*. All four solely used the word in reference to the rapists of young boys. It should be noted that *arsenokoitai* is found in other Koine works, works where there is no contextual indication of word meaning. (*Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 305-307, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.)

¹²² For in-depth documentation on *arsenokoitai* as referring to the rapists of young boys, see *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded*, “Section IX—Law and Pederasty,” pp. 273-340, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

The entire Law is fulfilled in one statement, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

No homosexual shall enter God’s Kingdom.

He who loves others has fulfilled the law.

Law wasn’t created for a righteous person, but for people such as homosexuals.¹²³

Does brotherly love fulfill the entire law, or are homosexuals excluded from God’s Kingdom? Does he who love others fulfill the Law, or was law created to condemn unrighteous homosexuals? One cannot have it both ways. Yet conventional translations promote both opposing notions (twice over) *anyway*.

Today’s most recognized scholars are finally acknowledging the incoherence of their own translations:

There is nothing self-evident, on the basis of the principle “love your neighbor,” about saying that homosexuals would not inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6.9-11).¹²⁴—EP Sanders

Sanders is perfectly correct. If Paul wrote both statements, then Paul was inconsistent. However, Sanders assumes that Paul did exclude homosexuals, and therefore he concludes that Paul was indeed inconsistent.

Rather than check to see if the problem is with his own ideology, Sanders opts to assume the problem is with Paul instead. And, whether traditionalist advocates realize it or not, they too are advocating Paul’s *inconsistency*. If they are right about Paul’s view of homosexuality, then Paul truly repudiated his teaching on brotherly love as the fulfillment of the entire Law.

Meanwhile, the Golden Rule Bible™ simply uses the historical meaning of the word, preserving Paul’s consistency as well:

The entire Law is fulfilled in one utterance, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

No rapists of young boys shall enter God’s Kingdom.

He who loves others fulfills the Law.

Law wasn’t created for the compassionate, but for people like the rapists of young boys.¹²⁵

Notice how the Golden Rule Bible™ reads seamlessly, fluidly, without the slightest hint of contradiction. And the reason for this is straightforward: When the New Testament is translated using the actual historical meanings, it reads seamlessly, fluidly, without the slightest hint of contradiction.

The inconvenient truth is that *no prior English translation was made using the actual historical meanings*. Rather, translators have been arguing that the “context” demands something different than the historical meanings. Then they write *paradoxical statements in the name of preserving the consistency of context*. Meanwhile, the context has always read seamlessly with the historical meanings, and *it only becomes a paradoxical mess with the self-invented meanings*. Therefore, the appeal to “context” is dubious at best.

¹²³ Cf. Galatians 5.14; 1 Corinthians 6.9; Romans 13.8-9; 1 Timothy 1.9

¹²⁴ *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* by EP Sanders, p. 95, Fortress Press, 1985

¹²⁵ Galatians 5.14; 1 Corinthians 6.9; Romans 13.8-9; 1 Timothy 1.9 GRB

Simply by using the actual historical meanings of words, Paul is perfectly consistent. So why, then, do translators go out of their way to advocate non-real-world meanings which only end up making Paul inconsistent as a result? Traditionalist theology requires it. Traditionalist advocates strongly believe that homosexuals cannot enter God's Kingdom, and yet this notion isn't found in the original Greek New Testament. Therefore, they've inserted the notion into their English translations. **“Rapists of young boys” rewritten as “homosexuals” is an example of a requirement of benevolence rewritten as a requirement of religiousness instead.**¹²⁶

Traditionalists strongly believe that God requires much more than brotherly love alone. And they are particularly concerned about *human sexuality*. Therefore, they've taken a particular interest in rewriting the New Testament's sexual terminology. The rewriting of “rapists of young boys” as “homosexuals” is a perfect example of this. 1 Thessalonians 4.1-6 is another case in point.

In 1 Thessalonians 4.1-6, Paul condemned the *malevolent* practice of having sex with other men's wives:

Here is the will of God, **here is what makes you holy: stay away from sex with another man's woman**, each one of you knowing how to keep your own body in a state of holiness and honor, and not in covetous passion like the Gentiles who don't know God—which means **not trying to get around and cheat your brother in the process**¹²⁷

The passage discusses a form of sex which “cheats a brother in the process.” Therefore, it is exceedingly clear that Paul originally wrote a passage demanding *benevolence* (instead of having sex with other men's women thereby cheating them in the process).

Yet, *against the context*, the traditionalist camp has rewritten the passage as prohibiting *fornication* instead. Not only does this rewrite violate Paul's teaching that brotherly love fulfills the entire Law, but the rewrite doesn't even fit within the local context either.

In the passage, Paul used the Greek word *porneia* which the traditionalist camp often rubberstamps as “fornication” or “sexual immorality.” Yet, in the first century, this word commonly referred to “sex involving another man's woman.” This was one of the most common uses—if not the most common use—of the word at the time Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians.¹²⁸

But let's call a spade, “a spade.” The translators didn't even need to know any of the historical documentation to realize that Paul *must* have used the word this way. Why not? Because only “sex with another man's woman” *cheats a brother in the process*. Had they solely applied their own stated criteria (“context”) then they would've ended up with the historical meaning (“sex with another man's woman”). The reality is that neither context nor historical meaning drives the translators' choice of words. Theological ideology is their sole consideration and they let both context and historical meaning be damned. **“Sex with another man's woman” rewritten as “fornication” is another example of a requirement of benevolence rewritten as a requirement of religiousness instead.**

¹²⁶ We use the word ‘ethics’ in the limited sense of that which involves caring for others, and we use ‘morality’ in the broad sense of any code of behavior that requires more than adherence to brotherly love alone.

¹²⁷ 1 Thessalonians 4.3-6.

¹²⁸ See *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 211-272, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

The traditionalist camp's preoccupation with human sexuality has led to a number of ethical terms being *sexualized* during the translation process. For example, Paul's condemnation of "contemptible behavior" is often sexualized as condemnation of "sensuality" instead—even in passages where the infraction is specifically related to a lack of brotherly love.¹²⁹ **This sexualizing of many ethical terms is another example of the requirement of *benevolence* rewritten as a requirement of *religiousness* instead.**

This sexualizing of New Testament terminology betrays each authors' original commitment to brotherly love as the entirety of the Law, making it impossible for the modern reader to know that salvation by brotherly love alone runs throughout the Greek New Testament from beginning to end. The Golden Rule Bible™ has been produced to rectify this unfortunate situation.

¹²⁹ See *Pauline Paradoxes Decoded* by Michael Wood, pp. 523-525, Tubi Publishing, LLC, 2013.

Chapter Fifteen

Biblical Salvation

The original New Testament taught a simple message: *salvation by obedience to benevolence*. This was the seamless, unified message of the original Greek text.

Salvation by obedience to benevolence is a simple concept. However, evangelicals rewrote *obedience* as *belief*, and traditionalists rewrote *benevolence* as *religiousness*. Translations now contain three competing teachings:

- Brotherly love fulfills the entire law;
- Yet salvation is by faith apart from law;
- Yet converts must fulfill the entire Old Testament moral code.

The original Greek text communicated one seamless message:

- Brotherly love fulfills the entire law;
- Therefore salvation is by faith apart from the Torah's Jobs (precepts unrelated to brotherly love);
- Therefore fulfill the Torah's Justices (the precepts related to brotherly love).

It's truly never been any more complicated than that. And the very first Christians preached this simple message.¹³⁰ The *Golden Rule Bible™* restores the seamless message that originally launched the Faith in the first place.

¹³⁰ “Redeem Your Sins by the Giving of Alms: Sin, Debt, and the “Treasury of Merit” in Early Jewish and Christian Tradition” by Gary A. Anderson (University of Notre Dame).