

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* (*dikaionomata*). (*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.

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Excerpted from *Golden Rule Bible™:An Introduction*.

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).