

Romans 3:29-31 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Romans 3:1](#)
[Romans 3:2](#)
[Romans 3:3](#)
[Romans 3:4](#)
[Romans 3:5](#)
[Romans 3:6](#)
[Romans 3:7](#)
[Romans 3:8](#)
[Romans 3:9](#)
[Romans 3:10](#)
[Romans 3:11](#)
[Romans 3:12](#)
[Romans 3:13](#)
[Romans 3:14](#)
[Romans 3:15](#)
[Romans 3:16](#)
[Romans 3:17](#)
[Romans 3:18](#)
[Romans 3:19](#)
[Romans 3:20](#)
[Romans 3:21](#)
[Romans 3:22](#)
[Romans 3:23](#)
[Romans 3:24](#)
[Romans 3:25](#)
[Romans 3:26](#)
[Romans 3:27](#)
[Romans 3:28](#)
[Romans 3:29](#)
[Romans 3:30](#)
[Romans 3:31](#)

Romans 3:29 [Or is God the God of Jews only ? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, \(NASB: Lockman\)](#)

Greek: e loudaion o theos monon; ouchi kai ethnon; nai kai ethnon,

Amplified: For we hold that a man is justified and made upright by faith independent of and distinctly apart from good deeds (works of the Law). [The observance of the Law has nothing to do with justification.] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Phillips: And God is God of both Jews and Gentiles, let us be quite clear about that! ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Or, of Jews only is He God? Is He not also of Gentiles? Yes, also of Gentiles,

Young's Literal: Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too,

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS

[Romans 1:18-3:20](#)

[Romans 3:21-5:21](#)

[Romans 6:1-8:39](#)

[Romans 9:1-11:36](#)

[Romans 12:1-16:27](#)

SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	God's Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " Jensen's Survey of the NT "				

OR IS GOD THE GOD OF JEWS ONLY? IS HE NOT THE GOD OF GENTILES ALSO?

- Ro 1:16; 9:24, 25, 26; 11:12,13; 15:9, 10, 11, 12, 13,16; Ge 17:7,8,18; Ps 22:7; 67:2; Ps 72:17; Is 19:23, 24, 25; 54:5; Je 16:19; 31:33; Ho 1:10; Zec 2:11; 8:20, 21, 22, 23; Mal 1:11; Mt 22:32; 28:19; Mk 16:15,16; Lk 24:46,47; Acts 9:15; 22:21; 26:17; Gal 3:14,25, 26, 27, 28, 29; Ep 3:6; Col 3:11
- [Romans 3 Resources](#) - multiple sermons and commentaries

To paraphrase...

Or is God the God of the Jews only? (as He must be, if justification is by the Law: for only to the Jews did God give the Law). Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yea, of Gentiles also: since God is One (in His being, and alike to all nations). And He shall justify the circumcision (Jewish believers) out of simple faith (and not by their keeping Moses' Law though they had it from God), and the uncircumcision (Gentiles, who had nothing) through their faith (apart from His giving them the Law).

Vine observes that "Faith is not a national quality, so neither is God merely a national God. Justification is not granted on a condition which only those under the Law can fulfill. ([Collected writings of W. E. Vine](#))

The Old Testament is replete with allusions to the Gentiles being included in God's plan of salvation...

And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants (which would include both Jews and Gentiles) after you. (Genesis 17:7)

That Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation among **all nations** (goyim = Gentiles). (Psalm 67:2-[Spurgeon's note](#))

May his name endure forever; May his name increase as long as the sun shines; And let men bless themselves by him; Let **all nations** (goyim = Gentiles) **call him blessed**. (Ps 72:17-[Spurgeon's note](#))

Paul was in fact an apostle to the Gentiles, for Jesus clearly commissioned him as...

a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the **Gentiles** and kings and the sons of Israel (Acts 9:15)

Paul had already declared the Gentiles were not excluded writing...

I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek (see **note** Romans 1:16)

In Galatians Paul explained that...

in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Galatians 3:14+)

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:26-29+)

In Ephesians Paul emphasized...

that the Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel, (See note Ephesians 3:6)

Writing to the **Colossians** he declared that...

there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. (see **note** Colossians 3:11)

Salvation for the Gentiles was not a new teaching, the psalmist praying...

God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us-- Selah. That Thy way may be known on the earth, Thy salvation among all **nations** (goyim ~ the heathen, the Gentiles). (Ps 67:1-2) (Spurgeon's notes on [Ps 67:1](#); [67:2](#))

Comment: the prayer invokes God's continued blessing on Israel so that the Gentiles might experience His salvation and also praise Him.

Paul explains to the **Galatians** that

you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither **Jew** nor **Greek** (Gentile), there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. (Galatians 3:25-29+)

J Vernon McGee explains this passage - In other words, does God belong to the Jews alone and not also to the Gentiles? And Paul says, "Yes, to the Gentiles also." Now, listen to this. This is a very cogent argument. Paul says, "If justification is by the law, then God does belong to the Jews. But if justification is by faith, then He is the God of both Jews and Gentiles." Now, notice the logic of this. If the Jew persisted in this position, then there must be two Gods-one for the Jews, one for the Gentiles. But the Jew would not allow this. He was a monotheist, that is, he believed in one God. Probably the greatest statement that ever was given to the nation Israel was Dt 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: Jehovah, our Elohim is one Jehovah" (literal translation mine). That was the clarion message He gave in the pagan world before Christ came. ([McGee, J V: Thru the Bible Commentary](#))

YES, OF GENTILES ALSO: nai kai ethnon:

There is only one true God as **Paul** explained in a parallel thought in his letter to the Corinthians writing that...

"For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but **one God**, the Father, from Whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and **one Lord**, Jesus Christ, by Whom are all things, and we exist through Him." (1Corinthians 8:5-6)

It is tragic that Israel refused for the most part to fulfill her purpose in the Old Testament. Despite the Old Testament commission to be a blessing to the nations (Ge 12:3) and a kingdom of priests (Ex 19:6), the Jews isolated themselves from the world and wanted God to be the God for one nation. Paul used their basic teaching--only one God exists--to convince them God was just in admitting non-Jews to salvation.

Romans 3:30 [since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.](#) (**NASB:**

Greek: eiper eis o theos os dikaiosei (3SFAI) peritomen ek pisteos kai akrobustian dia tes pisteos.

Amplified: Since it is one and the same God Who will justify the circumcised by faith [which germinated from Abraham] and the uncircumcised through their [newly acquired] faith. [For it is the same trusting faith in both cases, a firmly relying faith in Jesus Christ]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Phillips: The same God is ready to justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised by faith also. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: assuming that there is one God who will justify the circumcision out of a source of faith and the uncircumcision through the intermediary instrumentality of faith.

Young's Literal: since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith.

SINCE INDEED GOD WHO WILL JUSTIFY THE CIRCUMCISED BY FAITH AND THE UNCIRCUMCISED THROUGH FAITH IS ONE: eiper eis o theos os dikaiosei (3SFAI) peritomen ek pisteos kai akrobustian dia tes pisteos

- Ro 3:28; 4:11,12; 10:12,13; Galatians 2:14, 15, 16; 3:8,20,28; 5:6; 6:15; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 2:10,11
- [Romans 3 Resources](#) - multiple sermons and commentaries

Justify (1344) (dikaioo) from **dike** = right) (Click for more discussion of dikaioo). Dikaioo in this context means to cause men to be in a proper or right relation with God. To declare righteous.

Vine adds that...

The future tense "shall justify" does not indicate mere futurity, it suggests an unalterable principle, upon which God acts, a principle with which His acts are ever consistent. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

Circumcised (4061) (peritome from **perí** = around + **témno** = cut off) refers literally to cutting and removal of the foreskin. (See exposition of Scriptures on Circumcision) The Hebrew people came to take great pride in circumcision and in fact, it became a badge of their spiritual and national superiority. Here Paul uses "circumcised" as a term for "Jew".

Why does Paul say "**by faith**" for the Jews and "**through faith**" for the Gentiles? Cranfield points out that attempts to find a very subtle difference are not convincing. Augustine was probably correct in ascribing the change to rhetorical variety.

Although other commentators see no major difference in "by" and "through", **Vincent** writes that...

Some make the two prepositions equivalent. The difference may be explained from the fact that the real Jew has already a germinating faith from the completion of which justification arises as fruit from a tree. So Wordsworth: "The Jews are justified out of (**ek**) the faith which their father Abraham had, and which they are supposed to have in him. The Gentiles must enter that door and pass through (**dia**) it in order to be justified."

Uncircumcised (203) (akrobustia from **ákrōn** = the extreme + **búō** = cover) means uncircumcised or uncircumcision and thus referred to the **prepuce** or **foreskin**. **Akrobustia** here is the term of scorn and derision by Jews, for they equated the "**uncircumcised**" with being a pagan Gentiles.

There are 20 uses of **akrobustia** in the NT - Acts 11:3; Rom. 2:25, 26, 27; 3:30; 4:9, 10, 11; 1 Co. 7:18, 19; Gal. 2:7; 5:6; 6:15; Eph. 2:11; Col. 2:13; 3:11. There are 14 uses of **akrobustia** Ge 17:11, 14, 23, 24, 25; 34:14, 24; Ex 4:25; Lv 12:3; Jos. 5:3; 1Sa 18:25, 27; 2Sa 3:14; Je 9:25.

By faith or **through faith** signify that both Jew and Gentile find acceptance with God in the same way -- on the basis of faith -- a personal committal to Him, a personal trust in Him.

Faith (4102) (pistis) (Click study of pistis) means a firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness. Saving faith is not just mental assent but firm conviction, surrender to the truth and conduct emanating from that surrender. In sum, faith shows itself genuine by a changed life.

MacDonald adds "Whatever the reason for the use of different prepositions here (**by** and **through**), there is no difference in the

instrumental cause of justification; it is **faith** in both cases. ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

One (1520) (heis) is the first cardinal number and defines that which is united as one in contrast with being divided or consisting of separate parts. There is only one God. There is not one God for the Jew and one for the Gentile. Paul's point is that righteousness through faith means we are all on equal footing. There is not one way of salvation for the Jew and another way for the Gentiles. His plan of salvation is the same for both groups! We Gentiles thank Him for this great truth!

Vine writes that "faith is regarded as a law, or principle, which excludes all human glorying. It shuts out all possibility of works as a means of justification (Ro 3:27, 28-note). Hence in the matter of faith Gentiles are on the same ground as Jews, and the confirmation of this lies in the fact that "God is One"; that is to say, there is not one God for the Jew and one for the Gentile. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

The oneness of God was a belief basic to Judaism and proclaimed by every devout Jew each day (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4). Here Paul appeals to this doctrine, claiming that since God is one, He must have the same concern for the salvation of the Gentile as he does for the Jew. The Judaism of Paul's day, however, did not draw the same conclusion from God's essential unity. They taught that the only way a Gentile could be rightly related to God was to become a proselyte to Judaism, including coming under the **yoke of the law**. And even then, they were always Gentiles, never quite up to the level of Jews by birth. In the eyes of the Jew, they had no natural claim on God. Paul says, however, that God is interested in the Gentiles apart from the law and that contrary to certain Jewish expectations, the Gentiles are saved through the same faith that saves a Jew.

Romans 3:31 Do we **then nullify** the **Law through faith** ? May it **never** be! On the **contrary**, we **establish** the **Law**. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: nomon oun katargoumen (1PPAI) dia tes pisteos; me genoito (3SAMO) alla nomon histanomen (1PPAI)

Amplified: Do we then by [this] faith make the Law of no effect, overthrow it or make it a dead letter? Certainly not! On the contrary, we confirm and establish and uphold the Law. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Phillips: Are we then undermining the Law by this insistence on faith? Not a bit of it! We put the Law in its proper place. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Then are we making law of none effect through this aforementioned faith? Let not such a thing be considered. Certainly, we are establishing law.

Young's Literal: Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

DO WE THEN NULLIFY THE LAW THROUGH FAITH: nomon oun katargoumen (1PPAI) dia tes pisteos:

- Ro 4:14; Ps 119:126; Je 8:8,9; Mt 5:17; 15:6; Gal 2:21; 3:17, 18, 19
- [Romans 3 Resources](#) - multiple sermons and commentaries

Why does Paul make this statement about the Law at this point? He knows that in view of the fact that he has been arguing that a man is justified apart from keeping the Law, he would undoubtedly be accused of being against the Law (anti-nomianism). He refutes the hypothetical charge as absurd.

As **MacArthur** explains "Salvation by grace through faith does not denigrate the law, but underscores its true importance: (1) by providing a payment for the penalty of death, which the law required for failing to keep it; (2) by fulfilling the law's original purpose, which is to serve as a tutor to show mankind's utter inability to obey God's righteous demands and to drive people to Christ (Gal. 3:24); and (3) by giving believers the capacity to obey it (Ro 8:3, 4). ([MacArthur Study Bible](#))

Nullify (2673) (katargeo from **kata** = intensifies meaning + **argeo** = be idle from **argos** = ineffective, idle, inactive from **a** = without + **ergon** = work) (Click in depth study of katargeo) literally means to reduce to inactivity. The idea is to make the power or force of something ineffective and so to render powerless, reduce to inactivity. To do away with. To put out of use. To cause to be idle or useless. To render entirely idle, inoperative or ineffective. Cause something to come to an end or cause it to cease to happen. To abolish or cause not to function. To free or release from an earlier obligation or relationship.

Here **katargeo** means to make ineffective the power or force of the Law. Someone has written that **katargeo** is pictured by phrases

like "pull the teeth out of," or "declaw."

The **Amplified** Version renders it do we

"make the Law of no effect, overthrow it or make it a dead letter?"

Phillips explains it this way "Are we then undermining the Law by this insistence on faith?"

Paul undoubtedly knew that he would be accused of antinomianism (being against the law) for arguing that a man was **justified apart from keeping the law**. The detractors might argue something like this:

"If men have never been saved on any other basis than faith in God, then the Law not only is useless now but was always useless."

The problem is that they have a misunderstanding of the purpose of God's Law. It was never meant to save us but to show us that we need salvation.

John Piper comments...

O, how many times this happens in serious theological discussion! You take a stand on some truth and someone says, "Oh, but if you believe that, then you can't believe this. You are nullifying this truth to hold that other truth." Someone has been taught, perhaps, that if you believe in the sovereignty of God in conversion, then you must nullify human accountability to believe. So they say, "You are nullifying human accountability." Or, if you say you believe in the providence of God over all things - from the turning of hairs white or black to the fall of every bird from the sky - someone will say, "Then you are nullifying prayer - why pray if God rules all things so completely?" But just because someone cannot see how two truths can fit together doesn't mean they may not fit together. So it is here in this text. Someone is saying, "Paul you are nullifying the Law. What you teach is abolishing the Law of God." Paul does not agree with this. (See full sermon text [Justification By Faith Establishes the Law](#))

MAY IT NEVER BE: me genoito (3SAMO):

- [Romans 3 Resources](#) - multiple sermons and commentaries

Again Paul responds with the powerful repudiation, "A thousand times no," is the idea. Let not such a thing be considered.

William Newell rightly remarks that...

"It is the constant cry of those who oppose grace, and most especially that declaration of grace that our justification is apart from law-apart from works of law-apart from ordinances, that it overthrows the Divine authority. But in this verse Paul says, "We establish law" through this doctrine of simple faith.

To illustrate: In the wilderness a man was found gathering up sticks to make a fire on the Sabbath day. Now, the Law had said, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations on the Sabbath day." How, then, was this Law to be "established"? By letting the law-breaker off? No. By securing his promise to keep the Law in the future? No! By finding someone who had kept this commandment always, perfectly, and letting his obedience be reckoned to the law-breaker? No, in no wise!

How then, was the Law established? You know very well. All Israel were commanded by Jehovah to stone the man to death. We read:

"And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him in ward, because it had not been declared what should be done to him. And Jehovah said unto Moses The man shall surely be put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him to death with stones; as Jehovah commanded Moses" ([Numbers 15:33ff](#)).

Thus and thus only was the commandment of Jehovah established-by the execution of the penalty.

Paul preached Christ crucified: that Christ died for our sins, that "He tasted death for every man." And that Israel, who were under the Law, He redeemed from the curse of that Law by being made a curse for them. Thus the cross established law; for the full penalty of all that was against the Divine majesty, against God's holiness. His righteousness, His truth, was forever met, and that not according to man's conception of what sin

and its penalty should be, but according to God's judgment, according to the measure of the sanctuary, of high heaven itself!

The Jew, prating about his own righteousness, went about to kill Paul, crying that he spake against the Law; whereas it was that very Jew who would lower the Law to his own ability to keep it, instead of allowing it its proper office; namely, to reveal his guilt, curse him, and condemn him to death, and thus drive him to the mercy of God in Christ, whose expiatory death established law by having its penalty executed! ([Romans: Verse by Verse](#)).

Spurgeon's Morning and Evening Devotional on Romans 3:31 -When the believer is adopted into the Lord's family, his relationship to old Adam and the law ceases at once; but then he is under a new rule, and a new covenant. Believer, you are God's child; it is your first duty to obey your heavenly Father. A servile spirit you have nothing to do with: you are not a slave, but a child; and now, inasmuch as you are a beloved child, you are bound to obey your Father's faintest wish, the least intimation of his will. Does he bid you fulfil a sacred ordinance? It is at your peril that you neglect it, for you will be disobeying your Father. Does he command you to seek the image of Jesus? Is it not your joy to do so? Does Jesus tell you, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"? Then not because the law commands, but because your Saviour enjoins, you will labour to be perfect in holiness. Does he bid his saints love one another? Do it, not because the law says, "Love thy neighbour," but because Jesus says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" and this is the commandment that he has given unto you, "that ye love one another." Are you told to distribute to the poor? Do it, not because charity is a burden which you dare not shirk, but because Jesus teaches, "Give to him that asketh of thee." Does the Word say, "Love God with all your heart"? Look at the commandment and reply, "Ah! commandment, Christ hath fulfilled thee already-I have no need, therefore, to fulfil thee for my salvation, but I rejoice to yield obedience to thee because God is my Father now and he has a claim upon me, which I would not dispute." May the Holy Ghost make your heart obedient to the constraining power of Christ's love, that your prayer may be, "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight." Grace is the mother and nurse of holiness, and not the apologist of sin.

ON THE CONTRARY, WE ESTABLISH THE LAW: *alla nomon histanomen* (1PPAI);

- Ro 7:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14,22,25; 8:4; 10:4; 13:8, 9, 10; Ps 40:8; Isaiah 42:21; Jer 31:33,34; Matthew 3:15; 5:20; 1Cor 9:21; Gal 2:19; 5:18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23; Hebrews 10:15,16; James 2:8, 9, 10, 11, 12)

Spurgeon comments that "There is no one who so much loves the law of God, and delights in it after the inward man, as the one who is justified by faith. There is nothing that so honors the law as "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ." It establishes for ever the law, even as Christ said to his disciples, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."

On the contrary ([235](#)) (*alla*) is a conjunction indicating contrast marking opposition, antithesis, or transition.

Establish ([2476](#)) (*histemi*) means to cause to stand.

Establish the Law is paraphrased by Phillips as "We put the Law in its proper place".

The point is that salvation by grace through faith does not make the Law ineffective, but in fact brings into clearer focus the real purpose and importance of the Law: The role of the law in making men conscious of sin is confirmed by everyone who acknowledges sin and turns to Christ in faith. Writing to the Galatians Paul explained that "the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24+)

John Piper - "This is remarkable. He turns the table on his critics. He says, "Not only do we not nullify the Law when we teach justification by faith alone apart from works of the Law, but we establish the Law when we teach this. Justification by faith alone, apart from works of the Law, does not knock the Law down, it stands the Law up. Getting right with God by faith, not works, establishes the Law. Now what does that mean? I think it means that what the moral law of God requires of us, we will do, if we pursue it by faith, as those who are already justified, and not by works, in order to be justified. If we get right with God first by faith alone, and then live in that freedom of love and acceptance and justification, we will be changed from the inside out and will begin to love the very things the moral law requires so that they become established in our lives - not as works of merit, but as the fruit of faith (1 Th 1:3-note; 2Th 1:11) and the fruit of the Spirit." (See full sermon text [Justification By Faith Establishes the Law](#))

John MacArthur explains the purpose of the Law writing...

As far as salvation is concerned, the gospel does not replace the law, because the law was never a means of

salvation. **The law was given to show men the perfect standards** of God's righteousness and to show that those standards are impossible to meet in man's own power. **The purpose of the law** was to drive men to faith in God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared God's perfect standards to be higher even than those of the Old Covenant. A person breaks God's law, He said, not only by killing but even by hating (Matthew 5:21, 22-note), not only by committing adultery but by having lustful thoughts (Matthew 5:27, 28-note). If it is impossible to fulfill perfectly the Mosaic law, how much more impossible is it to keep the standards set forth by Christ in His earthly ministry.

The cross establishes, or confirms, the law in three ways:

First, it establishes the law by paying the penalty of death, which the law demanded for failing to fulfill perfectly and completely its righteous requirements. When Jesus said that He had come not to abolish the law or the prophets but to fulfill them (Matthew 5:17), He was speaking not only of His sinless earthly life but of His sin-bearing death.

Second, the cross establishes the law by fulfilling its purpose of driving men to faith in Jesus Christ. Paul had already declared that "by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified" (Ro 3:20). "Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point," James says, "he has become guilty of all" (Ja 2:10). "The Law has become our tutor," Paul told the Galatians, "to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24+).

Third, the cross establishes the law by providing believers the potential for fulfilling it. "For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirements of the Law might be fulfilled in us" (Romans 8:3-4). (Bolding added) ([MacArthur, J: Romans 1-8. Chicago: Moody Press](#))