

Law of Faith

This week, terrible fires raged in California in and around Los Angeles. Continued prayers for those affected are requested. But not just for their safety and recovery from the fire. There is a spiritual aspect to this as well.

What happens in heaven has effect on earth. What happens on earth has an effect in heaven. Herman taught that in the lessons on the book of Revelation. Is it possible that the area had delved into evil like Sodom and Gomorrah? Was it possible that there were not 10 righteous people found (paraphrasing Abraham)? So pray that God uses the fire to evangelize the unbelievers and to provide Bible answers to the many questions people there may have. Also pray that any believers there will learn to walk by faith dependence on the Holy Spirit. God is merciful. He responds to faith, even if it seems a little late. Just ask king David.

We know that God causes all events to work together for good to those who love Him.

Romans 8:28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

This event in Los Angeles reminded me of the Great Chicago fire of 1871. My mom, who lived in Chicago as a child was told stories by residents about the great rebuilding after the fire. It changed the nature of the city. Many new buildings were built to replace destroyed structures. She suggested that the rebuilding revitalized Chicago. So it may be with Los Angeles.

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Another story that came out of the Great Chicago fire was Horatio Spafford. He had invested in Chicago prior to the fire. As a result of the fire he suffered great losses. That combined with losing his children to a shipping accident caused him to eventually relocate to Jerusalem where he and others established the Jerusalem Colony. We sometimes sing a song he composed, "It is Well with My Soul."

Now for a little review.

Romans 3:21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

The Old Testament stands as a witness to events prophesied and then fulfilled in time, even if people don't believe. We who do believe look forward to future events prophesied, including the Rapture.

Romans 3:22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;

Romans 1:18-2:29 there is no mention of faith. Now Paul repeats that word over and over again. Martin Luther understood that it was by faith alone that salvation is received. God revealed it. Paul said it. Martin Luther believed.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 3:24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

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Romans 3:25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

I was going to spend another few weeks dwelling on the doctrines of redemption, propitiation and reconciliation. However, since these topics will appear again in chapter 5, I'll address them in more detail there.

Just for the purpose of a reminder:

1. **Redemption:** purchase from the slave market of sin: Sin-ward focus of Christ's work on the cross.
2. **Propitiation:** God is satisfied with Christ's work on the cross: God-ward focus of Christ's work
3. **Reconciliation:** The status of the one believing is changed such that he can have fellowship with God based upon righteousness and life: Man-ward focus of Christ's work

Romans 3:26 for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:27 Where then is boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? Of works? No, but by a law of faith.

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Boasting. I have become comfortable using word definitions from BibleHub.com.

“Usage: The term "kauchesis" refers to the act of boasting or taking pride in something. In the New Testament, it is often used in the context of boasting in one's achievements, status, or spiritual accomplishments. However, it is also used positively to denote boasting in the Lord or in the work of Christ, emphasizing a reliance on divine rather than human strength.¹”

Law of faith. Interesting that the word for “law” is used in conjunction with faith. So here it is contrasted with law of works. Most often we see the word “law” used in reference to the Mosaic Law. That law is based upon works. In this context, although there may be an oblique reference to the Mosaic Law, it is the “principle” of works versus the “principle” of faith that is emphasized in this context. We need to avoid getting locked into a single meaning for a word but understand the influence of context. We have encountered this phenomena repeatedly of late. A word that usually means one thing and is constantly translated as such may actually be used to communicate a different nuance. So here with “law.”

“Usage: In the New Testament, "nomos" primarily refers to the law of God as given to Moses, encompassing the commandments, statutes, and ordinances found in the Torah. It can also refer to law in a more general sense, including human laws or principles. The term is used to describe the entire Old Testament legal system, the moral law, and sometimes the principle of law as opposed to grace.²” (my emphasis)

Listen to Dr. Bruce Waltke, a Hebrew expert concerning Genesis 2:15 concerning work and faith:

1 <https://biblehub.com/greek/2746.htm>

2 <https://biblehub.com/greek/3551.htm>

Genesis 2:15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate (work) it and keep it (take care of it).

Cultivate and keep. “Work is a gift of God, not a punishment for sin. Even before the Fall humanity has duties to perform. Elsewhere in the Pentateuch this expression describes activity only of priests. The latter term entails guarding the garden against Satan’s encroachment (see 3:1-5). As priest and guardians of the garden, Adam and Eve should have driven out the serpent; instead it drives them out.”³

Genesis 2:16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

Commanded. “These first words of God to man assume man’s freedom to choose and thus his formed moral capacity. In this covenant arrangement, God graciously offers human beings life, but he demands an active faith-obedience to keep his commands.”⁴ Faith-obedience.

Genesis 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.”

Faith started in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were given instructions on how to live. For a while they trusted God and functioned as Dr. Waltke suggested, in faith-obedience. Assuming the person that visited them daily in the Garden was the second person of the Trinity, then they had faith dependence on the pre-existent Christ. Then, when tempted, they sinned by trusting on Satan. Again faith. In “Star Wars”

3 Waltke, B.K. and Fredricks, C.J. (2001). *Genesis: a Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. 87

4 Waltke, B.K. and Fredricks, C.J. (2001). *Genesis: a Commentary*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan. 87

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terminology, they operated within “the force” or by faith. They ended up going to the dark side of the force by expressing faith in Satan’s words. Remember, the object of faith is where the merit is. When we decide to not follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, when we decide to not depend on the Holy Spirit, we escape the plan of God and enter into the Devil’s world. We are no better than Adam. But like Adam, there is a way back. Faith in God the Holy Spirit.

I find it intriguing that the more I study Romans, the more I keep returning to Genesis, especially chapters 2-3. They are foundational in the study of sin and salvation.

Romans 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified (declared righteous) by faith apart from works of the Law.

“In this verse (Romans 3:28 in the context of 3:27) Paul explains “the *nomos* of faith.” It is a “rule” or “principle” pertaining to faith that a “person is justified by faith apart from works of the law.” Paul here promulgates no new rule; the first person plural “we reckon” probably indicates that he assumes that his readers would join him in this assessment. Paul’s concern to meet Jewish views is evident in his addition “apart from works of the law.” As in 3:20, what is meant is not certain kinds of works, or works viewed in a certain light, but anything a person does in obedience to the law and, by extrapolation, anything a person does. This being the case, Luther’s famous addition of *sola* (“alone”) to *fide* (“faith”)—in which he was preceded by others, including Thomas Aquinas—brings out the true sense intended by Paul. A serious erosion of the full significance of Paul’s gospel occurs if we soften this antithesis; no works, whatever their nature or their motivation, can play any part in making a sinner right with God.⁵”

5 Moo, D.J. (1996). The Epistle to the Romans. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 250-251

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Romans 3:29 Or is God the God of Jews only? Is He not the God of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also,

Romans 3:30 since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one.

Robby Dean's comments on Romans 3:27:

“The three elements righteousness, justice, and love of God, along with His truth, comprise the integrity of God. They work together, and they always have to. You minimize one, you destroy the other three. They have to be in a perfect balance. What this means is that God can provide a perfect salvation offered equitably to every human being because it is not dependent at all on anything anybody does. It does not depend on one person having a higher or lower IQ, one person having a greater or lesser motivation. No human factor can enter in to create an inequitable situation.”

“This is why Paul can summarize this the way he does in Romans 3:27-31. He asks three rhetorical questions in verse 27 in order to drive home the point. A rhetorical question is a question that is asked without expecting an answer because the answer is apparent. So he says, “Where is boasting then?” It is obvious; it is excluded. If it is totally dependent on God, there is nothing for man to crow about. “Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law?” Now, look at this. I just saw this this afternoon, and I have to work through this and some other passages. Every now and then, you see something and say, “Isn't that interesting?””

““By what law?” The law of works or the law of faith? Let me ask you a question. Most of you have been around Christianity since you were a

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small or large child. What is always contrasted with the Law? Grace. The Old Testament is the age of law. We are in the age of grace. Again and again, it is grace vs. law. What do we have here? Faith. Is it the law of works or the law of faith? It is not works vs. grace. It is the law of works and the law of faith. There is still a law operating because the Law establishes the fact that there are external, unchangeable absolutes. It is not a law that is based on works, that is, human effort, but it is a law of faith, depending on God to provide the blessing.⁶”

At this point I find myself unable to continue in Romans today. Sometimes I hit a “wall.” It often means God is sending me on a detour.

Instead, let us again review information about the “New Apostolic Reformation.”

The reason I bring this up is my encounter with this topic in the news. I sometimes look at diverse news websites. I have no fear of looking at liberal websites, since I understand and believe in conservative principles and have some discernment. Indeed, there are times when liberals stumble onto something that conservatives should be asking questions about.

There was an article on dnyuz.com titled “The Army of God Comes Out of the Shadows,” by Stephanie McCrummen⁷. The article was originally posted on the Atlantic website⁸.

“Stephanie McCrummen is an American journalist who has worked for The Washington Post and The Atlantic. She has won several awards for her political journalism, including two George Polk Awards and a Pulitzer Prize.⁹”

6 <https://deanbible.org/new-testament-menuitem/romans-menuitem/message/2010-romans-037b/read>

7 <https://dnyuz.com/2025/01/09/the-army-of-god-comes-out-of-the-shadows/>

8 <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2025/02/new-apostolic-reformation-christian-movement-trump/681092/>

9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephanie_McCrummen

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Ms McCrummen has written previous articles on the New Apostolic Reformation (NAR). This is the latest on that topic. The reason is that some around president-elect Trump subscribe to that theology. NAR is very political. There is no headquarters for NAR. There is no leading church that dominates NAR. Instead it is an amorphous movement that believes in specific things.

“What was happening in the barn¹⁰ in Lancaster County did not represent some fringe of American Christianity, but rather what much of the faith is becoming. A shift is under way, one that scholars have been tracking for years and that has become startlingly visible with the rise of Trumpism. At this point, tens of millions of believers—about 40 percent of American Christians, including Catholics, according to a recent Denison University survey—are embracing an alluring, charismatic movement that has little use for religious pluralism, individual rights, or constitutional democracy. It is mystical, emotional, and, in its way, wildly utopian. It is transnational, multiracial, and unapologetically political.¹¹”

I am covering this topic because if you have not yet encountered this movement, you will likely read about it in the future.

Here is a quotation from Robby Dean which I used last year:

“You have a heretical movement today that is called the New Apostolic Reformation. And it is very very sad because you find a lot of the people that are associated with that to be extremely focused on politics. Yet we are not having an apostolic reformation. As we’ll see this morning there has been no apostle since the death of the apostle John in approximately 95, 96 AD. And yet, many of these individuals are out there. And they are often linked with dominion theology and post-millennial theology

¹⁰ Reference was to a prayer meeting in a barn

¹¹ <https://dnyuz.com/2025/01/09/the-army-of-god-comes-out-of-the-shadows/>

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and theonomy which emphasizes bringing back the Mosaic Law for today. And there are a lot of problems with all those things. The New Apostolic Reformation isn't restricted to a denomination or a particular group. It's just sort of a fluid group. There actually is an outstanding book that has been written about this on the New Apostolic Reformation, written by a couple of graduates from Talbot Seminary and Biola. And it's outstanding. And it indicates what a lot of the problems are. And one of the problems that I had during the previous presidential administration was a large number of those, not everyone, but a large number of those who were a part of the so called Christian Council or Evangelical Council that surrounded President Trump all bought into the New Apostolic Reformation. Now not everyone did but a number of them did. And as I always say, we have to remember that a right thing done in a wrong way or for a wrong reason is wrong. Only a right thing done for the right reason and the right way is right. And this was extremely troublesome to me when I understood just how theologically flaky and heretical some of those people were that surrounded the president. Now not all of them. Franklin Graham and Robert Jeffers up at First Baptist in Dallas and several others were fairly solid. But a large number were very fringe, at best. OK. So we have to understand some of these particular issues.¹²

1. What is NAR? NAR is not a “revival” but a “world-wide” reformation. “The New Apostolic Reformation (NAR) is a theological belief and controversial movement that combines elements of Pentecostalism, evangelicalism and the Seven Mountain Mandate to advocate for spiritual warfare to bring about Christian dominion over all aspects of society, and end or weaken the separation of church and state. NAR leaders often call themselves apostles and prophets. The movement was

¹² <https://www.deanbible.org/bible-class-listing/message/139-the-apostles-and-prophets-b> (transcribed from the audio)

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founded by and is heavily associated with C. Peter Wagner. Long a fringe movement of the American Christian right, it has been characterized as "one of the most important shifts in Christianity in modern times." The NAR's prominence and power have increased since the 2016 election of Donald Trump as US president. Theology professor André Gagné, author of a 2024 book on the movement, has characterized it as "inherently political" and said it threatens to "subvert democracy." American Republican politicians such as Mike Johnson, Doug Mastriano, Marjorie Taylor Greene, and Lauren Boebert and activists such as Charlie Kirk have aligned with it. Some groups within the broader Apostolic-Prophetic movement have distanced themselves from the NAR due to various criticism and controversies.¹³

2. Historical Background

“Primarily "influenced and driven by North American evangelicals," the NAR is rooted in the Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity movements: namely, the first-wave Pentecostalism of the 1900s, the Latter Rain movement of the 1940s, the second-wave Charismatic Christianity of the 1960s through 1980s, and the Shepherding movement of the 1970s and 1980s. The NAR has been described as taking the restorationism, dominionism, and "end-times revival" focus of the Latter Rain movement – thought to lead to a new Christian influence on the world – and the authoritarian nature of the Shepherding movement, described as "a kind of pyramid of power and accountability whereby authority (usually male) would flow down from a leading national (or global) figure to local pastors, and even through a chain of pastoral command between congregants".¹⁴

13 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Apostolic_Reformation

14 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Apostolic_Reformation

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3. Theology:

The New Apostolic Reformation acquires its name in part because the movement espouses the renewal of the temporary spiritual gifts, in particular prophets and apostles.

There is an emphasis on spiritual battle that Christians are engaged in. They intend to take the battle against the demonic realm in an aggressive offense. We believe that Christians must grow to maturity and defend themselves but do not attack the demonic realm. Jesus Christ is the person who takes the battle on offense.

NAR is “post-millennial” in that they believe that it is necessary for Christians to clean up the world in preparation for Christ’s return. We are “pre-millennial” in that we believe Christians will be “snatched up” by Jesus Christ at the rapture and that Jesus will “clean up” the world in preparation for the Millennium.

It is interesting that Islam believes something similar in the Mahdi:

“The Mahdi (Arabic: **لَمَّهْدِي**, romanized: al-Mahdī, lit. 'the Guided'; Persian: **مهدي**) is a figure in Islamic eschatology who is believed to appear at the End of Times to rid the world of evil and injustice. He is said to be a descendant of Muhammad, who will appear shortly before Jesus.¹⁵”

This emphasis on cleaning up the world leads them to emphasize the challenge of the Seven Mountains. These are seven areas of human society that NAR intends to dominate in order to clean up the world. These are government, business, education, family, arts, media, and religion.

4. Politics/Government:

¹⁵ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahdi>

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NAR propounds the “Seven Mountains.” NAR wants to dominate seven areas of life: government, business, education, family, arts, media, and religion.

“The Seven Mountain Mandate is part of dominionism.

“The biblical base for the movement is derived from Revelation 17:1–18, wherein verse 9 reads, "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains". The seven areas that the movement believe influence society and that they seek to influence are family, religion, education, media, entertainment, business, and government. They believe that their mission to influence the world through these seven spheres is justified by Isaiah 2:2 "Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains."”

“By using strategic spiritual warfare, adherents attempt to gain control of the seven mountains by researching and mapping the geographical strongholds of territorial spirits, using prophecy from the movement's prophets to determine the demons' names and roles, and intercession in which they pray on-site to rid the location or "mountain" of demons.”

“Followers believe that by fulfilling the Seven Mountain Mandate, they can establish the kingdom of God on earth and bring about the end times.¹⁶”

¹⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seven_Mountain_Mandate