

GRACE BIBLE CHURCH

Robert R. McLaughlin Bible Ministries

The Doctrine of "a fortiori"

Throughout the Bible there is a Greek phrase in which the words "*pollos*" (which means much, many or largely) and "*mallon*" (which means more or in a greater degree) are used, this is where we get the principle of "*a fortiori*."

The phrase "*a fortiori*" is actually Latin and means with stronger reason.

As an example of how the Word of God uses this let's look at the following passages; Mat 6:30 "*But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more [pollos mallon] do so for you, O men of little faith?*"

Rom 5:9-10 "*Much more [pollos mallon] then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*"

Rom 5:15 "*But the free gift is not like the transgression. For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more [pollos mallon] did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many.*"

Rom 5:17 "*For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more [pollos mallon] those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.*"

2Co 3:9 "*For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more [pollos mallon] does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.*"

2Co 3:11 "*For if that which fades away was with glory, much more [pollos mallon] that which remains is in glory.*"

In all of these verses this principle of a fortiori is used and again it means "*with stronger reason.*"

Webster's dictionary gives this definition: "with greater reason or more convincing force."

The New Twentieth Century Webster's dictionary, Second Edition defines it this way: "all the more, said of a conclusion that follows with even greater logical necessity that another is already accepted in the argument."

As an example, we could say that if a friend is capable of giving as a gift one million dollars, it follows under the principle of "a fortiori" that they would have the capacity to give one hundred dollars as a gift. Under the principle then of a fortiori we have a system of logic where a comparison is used as an argument. It is a conclusion compared with some other recognized fact. We could say that if someone can run twenty miles, it follows, a fortiori, (with stronger reason or much more) that that person can run five miles.

This system of argument uses an inferential conclusion as being more conclusive than another reasoned conclusion. In setting up a comparison, this establishes reality in both conclusions as they are inferentially related. As a system of debate it takes an accepted fact and by comparison produces another inescapable fact and therefore a confident conclusion. The phrase is used in an argument or debate to produce several categories of conclusions. It can be used to illustrate that something takes place because there are causes present that are much weaker than those that are present and accepted in other cases. As another illustration, if a weak man is dangerous, it follows, with stronger reason or much more, (a fortiori), that a weak and evil man is even more dangerous.

The principle of a fortiori is the only way to explain certain passages of scripture. Unfortunately, not too many pastors and therefore Christians understand it.

The a fortiori principle in Logistical Grace, Mat 6:28-30.

Mat 6:26-28 "Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and {yet} your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth more [mallon] than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a {single} cubit to his life's span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,"

If God can provide for the birds and the grass, God take care of us, because we as believers are more important to Him than birds and grass. The principle is that we as believers have no reason to ever be worried about the logistics of life. If God clothes the grass, it follows, a fortiori, that He will clothe the believer. This is great

principle to remember in times of pressure. Many of God's people live in fear and worry about the future. Look at this entire passage and think about that principle.

Mat 6:25-34 "For this reason I say to you, do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? Do not be anxious then, saying, what shall we eat?' or what shall we drink? Or With what shall we clothe ourselves? For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Prayer is one of the weapons that the believer can use against anxiety and worrying about certain things and understanding the principle behind a fortiori.

Phi 4:6 "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

The a fortiori principle in Deliverance from the Last Judgment.

Rom 5:8-10 "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more [pollo mallon] then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

Here we see the first principle of having God's perfect righteousness: a believer cannot ever go to the lake of fire or be judged at the last judgment that is impossible! This implies that those with relative righteousness will go to the last judgment, not for their sins, but because relative righteousness cannot have fellowship with perfect divine righteousness.

Rev 20:11-15 "And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the

dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."
All unbelievers are judged not according to their sins but according to their works.
The

Greek word here is "ergon" meaning deeds, labor or work. It is not the Greek word for sin "hamartia" referring to the sins that both believers and unbelievers commit. Unbelievers go to the place of torment, Luk 16:28, and then the eternal lake of fire, Rev 20:15, because of self-righteousness, not because of sin. All unbelievers depend on their own self-righteousness to somehow get them into heaven but it is impossible for anyone to get to heaven based upon their good deeds.

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

Ecc 7:20 "Indeed, there is not a righteous man on earth who continually does good and who never sins."

Rom 3:9-12 "What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, not even one; There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, there is not even one."

If the believer is justified by the blood of Christ, it follows, a fortiori, that the believer will be delivered at the last judgment, justification means having God's perfect righteousness and with perfect righteousness, there's no way a believer can be at the last judgment or go to hell. No one can take away that perfect righteousness from a believer, and that is all that is required to go to heaven. If the greater benefit has been given (justification), God will not withhold the lesser (the avoidance of the Lake of Fire).

The a fortiori principle in Reconciliation, Rom 5:10.

Rom 5:10 For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, [pollos mallon] having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

If we were reconciled to God as His enemies, it follows, a fortiori, that we will be delivered as sons by His life. Again, if the greater benefit has been given (reconciliation), the lesser (deliverance by His life) will not be withheld. If God can do the greater, it follows, A fortiori, that God can accomplish the lesser. Greater or lesser is not a matter of quality but of effort required.

The a fortiori principle in Temporal Blessing, Rom 5:15.

Rom 5:15 "But the free gift [the first advent] is not like the transgression [of the one Adam] For if by the transgression of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abound to the many [mature believers]."

If God provides the greater in justification (imputation of perfect righteousness), it follows, a fortiori, that the justice of God can provide the lesser, (the imputation of special blessings at maturity) and thereafter. These special blessings are sometimes called supergrace blessings and they glorify God in time. The logistical grace rationale takes a believer from the point of justification to the point of maturity and links the two. All logistical grace is imputed to the perfect righteousness in the believer. The Lord will provide logistically everything that a believer needs to reach spiritual maturity. The formation and preservation of the canon of Scripture, the freedom and authority to learn in local church, a right pastor, the royal priesthood of the believer for privacy and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the metabolization of doctrine are all provided logistically by the Lord so a believer can reach spiritual maturity.

The a fortiori principle in Eternal Blessing, Rom 5:17.

Rom 5:17 "For if by the transgression of the one [Adam] spiritual death reigned through the one [and it did], much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ."

The abundance or the surplus from grace refers to the fantastic blessings that a believer receives in time. If the justice of God provided the greater at spiritual maturity, which is the imputation of special blessings, it follows, a fortiori, that the justice of God will not withhold the lesser, which is the eternal blessings and rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. This parlays special blessings into eternal blessings, and sets up the motivation that jumps from time all the way into eternity.

The categories of supergrace blessings in time form the absolute confidence that the believer will have great blessings and rewards in eternity. That's the meaning of the phrase, "much more they shall rule through that one, Jesus Christ." All this development is the rationale with which Paul starts the book of Romans.

Principles Behind a fortiori in Romans Chapter Five.

If a believer has God's perfect righteousness, they also have logistical blessings that support the believer so they can advance and receive the special blessings. If a believer has these special blessings in time, that is a guarantee that they will have something even greater in eternity because it's easier to provide the lesser than the greater and eternal blessings and rewards glorify God forever.

The a fortiori rationale for in dealing with disaster, Romans 8:31-32.

These a fortiori blessing rationales combine into one so that a believer will have the perfect rationale for disaster, Rom 8:31-32, "*What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*"

The last phrase, "*how will He not also*" combines the temporal and eternal a fortiori rationales. Both are administered through the grace policy of God. They are the means of glorifying God, one in time and one in eternity. There is blessing in time and in eternity for the believer. The believer will never glorify God apart from these two imputations of special blessings in time and in eternity. God cannot be glorified in time by what a believer does. God can only be glorified by what He has done for the believer. We are not here to do great things for God, we are here to learn and grow in God's grace and knowledge. If we do glorify God, it's not because of what we do, what we give up, how righteous or moral we are, or how great people say we are, it is because we have maximum doctrine resident in our soul.

The a fortiori principle in Rom 8:31-32 is designed to show us that there are only two ways to glorify God;

- 1. To receive in grace special blessings in time under six separate categories.**
- 2. To receive in grace at the judgment seat of Christ the imputation of eternal blessing and reward.**

The first glorifies God in time and is tactical, it requires a certain method and approach, the second glorifies God in eternity and is strategic and essential. This summarizes the whole purpose for the believer remaining on the earth.

The special blessings in time are the blessings the Lord desires to give His people under the principle of a fortiori and include:

Spiritual blessings, For example, sharing the perfect happiness of God and occupation with the person of Jesus Christ. This means that no matter what goes on

in our life we are occupied with The Lord Jesus Christ and we are totally content in our confidence that He has everything under control.

Capacity for life, love, happiness, blessing, and total appreciation for grace. This is the ability to be totally appreciative, grateful and thankful for all that the Lord has done, is doing, and will do for us.

The ability to face undeserved suffering in life with no self-justification no defending ourselves. No excuses, no complaining, just allowing the justice of God to vindicate us.

The ability to correctly interpret contemporary history, to evaluate current events in light of the Word of God. This means that without a doubt we know that The Lord Jesus Christ controls history and so we are completely relaxed about the future.

Freedom from slavery to circumstances in life and adaptability to changing circumstances. The mature believer is the greatest innovator in time of historical disaster. The mature believer, who realizes that God loves him, under the principle of a fortiori, also realizes that God has a fantastic plan for his life and the mature believer will not let any hindrance or obstacle stop his momentum in the Pre-Designed Plan of God.

Grace orientation, freedom orientation, authority orientation and common sense. Here is complete relaxation in life. It is the ability to treat others graciously, to give them their freedom and to respect the privacy of the priesthood and most of all to operate with common sense.

The second category of special grace blessings in time that the Lord desires to give his people under the principle of a fortiori is the temporal blessings. These include wealth, either received or acquired. Professional prosperity, where there is influence, leadership dynamics, success, promotion, recognition in one's sphere of life and the ability to assume responsibility and authority without emotional inspiration or pseudo motivation.

Social prosperity, where the believer has great friends. Usually it takes a disaster or a very unusual situation to discover who the true friends are.

Sexual prosperity with one's right man or right woman.

Technical prosperity or mental prosperity where the ability to think, and concentrate increase.

Cultural prosperity: maximum enjoyment of drama, art, literature, music, history.

Establishment prosperity where there is an enjoyment of freedom, privacy, protection of life and property from criminals and reprisal.

The third category of blessings in time under the principle of a fortiori is blessings by association. Those around a mature believer are blessed by their association or relationship with that person. They are blessed either directly by God or indirectly from the supergrace believer as a result of the overflow of supergrace blessings. The supergrace believer shares his blessings with others.

There are peripheral areas of blessing by association such as loved ones, in business life, in social life, and to those in a local church. There are also geographical blessings to the supergrace believer's city, state and nation.

The fourth category of blessings in time under the principle of A fortiori is Historical blessings, 2 Tim 1:5. The mature believer carries and stabilizes his generation and becomes a stabilizer for future historical generations. The ebb and flow of history does not disturb the tranquility or impact of the mature believer. The mature believer is on the right side of history while the apostate is on the wrong side of history. The apostate is caught up in the disasters of history and swept along with them. The supergrace believer rides on the crest of the wave of blessing and rises above historical disaster.

The fifth category of blessings in time under the principle of a fortiori is dying blessings or dying grace. Every believer has a choice in time of being positive to bible doctrine and receiving dying grace, or being negative to doctrine and dying the sin unto death. Under this type of blessing, the curse of death with its pain and fear is removed and it is the greatest experience in life. It is the antithesis of the sin unto death because the perfect happiness of the supergrace believer in time is exceeded by having God's Happiness in dying grace. Therefore, the mature believer has the best of life, better in dying, and better than the best for all of eternity, Psa 116:15 "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Godly ones."

The sixth category of blessings in time under the principle of a fortiori is undeserved suffering. It is necessary for a believer who truly does love God to go through undeserved suffering? Only in time does God have the opportunity to give us pressure, disaster, and undeserved suffering to prove to Satan and the fallen angels

that bible doctrine can handle any situation. As a part of the a fortiori principle, God allows us to have the privilege of experiencing undeserved suffering. God gives us the ability to handle suffering and turn suffering into blessing, Rom 8:28. No rebound or soul searching is involved because a mature believer knows when he is under divine discipline, where there is unbearable suffering, or undeserved suffering which is bearable. The supergrace believer also has the ability to handle undeserved suffering glorifies God and becomes evidence against Satan in his appeal trial. This is how the principle of a fortiori and blessing is involved. There is fantastic blessing for those believers who go through undeserved suffering and glorify God in the midst of the Angelic Conflict.

Undeserved suffering is also used by God to help us keep our eyes on God and our focus on eternity, Rev 2:10, 2 Co 12:9?10. Undeserved suffering also teaches us the value of bible doctrine, Psa 119:67?71.

Undeserved suffering is designed to manifest the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, 2 Co 4:8?11. It is designed to put muscle on our faith and occupy the believer with eternal values, Rom 8:36, 5:3?5.

The a fortiori principle of Israel's cursing and blessing.

Rom 11:12, "now if their transgression [apostasy] becomes the riches for the world and if their failure [loss of client nation status] be riches for the gentiles [and it did], how much more will their fulfillment be"

If the justice of God provides the greater in blessing the Gentiles through Jewish apostasy and punishment, it follows, A fortiori, that God will not withhold the lesser, greater blessing to the gentiles in the millennial restoration of Israel. If we were blessed by the fact that the Jews were placed under a curse, how much more we will be blessed when they receive their millennial kingdom, the fullness of Israel is their millennial restoration and their continuation and perpetuation as a client nation.

This emphasizes the fact that "greater" is not quality or quantity but rather it is the degree of effort. In other words, it is easier for God to bless the Gentiles when the Jews enjoy their client nation status than during a time when only gentile nations are client nations. We are blessed today in a wonderful way, but we would be blessed even more as Gentiles if Israel were the client nation.

Therefore, the greatest blessings will come to the Gentiles during the millennial reign of Christ when the Jews have been restored to client nation status. We will be blessed as a nation during that period because of association with the Jews, in fact Zech 8:22?23 says that ten Gentiles will grab the robe of one Jew and say, "if you're going to Jerusalem, take us with you."

The millennium is the time of Israel's fullness, which produces much more blessing for the Gentiles under the principle of blessing by association.

The "times of the gentiles" is in contrast to the time of Israel's fullness. The Gentiles have maximum blessing in the Church age through Israel's fall, but they will have greater than maximum blessing in the millennium when Israel is restored as a client nation. It is easier for God to bless the gentiles when the Jews have been restored to client nation status.

This is part of an explanation in context as to what happens to a nation that tries to add punishment to God's punishment to the nation Israel. The nation or individual that is involved in Anti-Semitism will be utterly and completely destroyed.

The perfect environment of the millennium could not exist without Israel as a client nation plus the overthrow of Satan and the restraint of the old Sin Nature through the correct function of justice and law enforcement.

The Jews are the only superrace in history, they are under discipline and cursing today which can only be changed to blessing by believing in Jesus Christ. If the cursing to the nation and the individual Jew today produces blessing for the Gentile, what will happen when Israel is in a state of blessing, as both client nation and individual?

It will be super-blessing for the gentile.

The message to Israel is: "when you see gentiles believing and responding to Christ, it is time to wake up and believe in Jesus Christ as savior and the God of Israel. For it is only by emulating the Gentiles' faith in Christ that they can come to blessing, until the millennium. This is one of the great messages in Romans 11.

This is why it is extremely important for the Gentile client nation to provide a haven of protection for the Jews.

The a fortiori rationale is the supercharger or booster of the plan of God rationale and stimulates the function of reverse concentration as the second stage of the faith? rest drill which leads to the third stage that of reaching a doctrinal conclusion and gaining control of the situation.

The second stage of the faith rest drill is claiming actual doctrines, like the essence of God rationale, the logistical grace rationale, and the plan of God rationale.

This requires some spiritual advance in doctrine.

In stage three, faith makes doctrinal conclusions, so that faith is in control of the situation. A fortiori is a shorter and quicker rationale for emergencies where rapid

decision and rapid action is necessary.

It is therefore both a system of logic, using comparison, and a rationale for the believer under pressure making a correct conclusion.

The a fortiori principle compares a previous conclusion of doctrine with another conclusion of doctrine to understand and apply the inescapable certainty of God's grace policy in his perfect plan. In life, every time we apply doctrine in our soul to a situation, there is a decoration for us in heaven.

The a fortiori rationale gives the believer the opportunity to reign with The Lord Jesus Christ, Rom 5:17 *"for if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, much more those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ."*

The a fortiori rationale reveals that if the Lord treated his people a certain way under the law how much greater will he treat us under grace, 2Co 3:9 *"for if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory."*

2Co 3:11 *"for if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory."*

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