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Doctrine of A Fortiori

The Greek phrase *pollos mallon* is repeatedly used throughout Scripture. The word *pollos* is defined as 'much, many, or largely' and *mallon* is defined as 'more' or 'in a greater degree'. Together they form the principle of *a fortiori*. The phrase *a fortiori* is actually Latin, meaning 'with stronger reason'. We will note some passages to get an example of how this phrase is used in the Word of God.

Matthew 6:30 *"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is [alive] today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, [will He] not much more [pollos mallon] [clothe] you? You of little faith!1*

Romans 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 [pollos mallon], having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.*

Romans 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.*

Romans 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.*

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

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

In each of the above verses, the principle of *a fortiori* is used, again meaning 'with stronger reason'. Webster's dictionary defines it as, "*with greater reason or more convincing force*". The New Twentieth Century Webster's dictionary, Second Edition, gives this definition: "*all the more, said of a conclusion that follows with even greater logical necessity that another is already accepted in the argument*".

For example, one could say that if a friend is capable of giving one million dollars as a gift, it follows under the principle of *a fortiori* that this friend would have the capability

to give one hundred dollars as a gift. Under the principle of a fortiori, we have a system of logic in which a comparison is used as an argument. It is a conclusion compared with some other recognized fact. In other words, we could say that if someone is able to run twenty miles, it follows, a fortiori [with stronger reason, or 'much more'] that this person is able to run five miles.

This system of logic 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, which is therefore a confident conclusion.

The phrase a fortiori 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 present and accepted in other cases. As another illustration, if a weak man is dangerous, it follows, a fortiori [with stronger reason or much more] 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, however, not too many pastors and their congregations understand it.

The A Fortiori Principle in Logistical Grace

If God provides for the birds and the grass, why wouldn't He be able to provide for us, since we as believers are more important to Him than birds and grass? The principle is, we as believers have no reason to ever be worried about the logistics of life. If God clothes the flowers and the grass, it follows, a fortiori, that He will certainly clothe the believer. This is a great principle to remember in times of pressure. Many of God's people live in fear and worry about the future. With the principle of a fortiori in mind, let's look at the following passage:

Matthew 6:25-34 *"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, [as to] what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, [as to] what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and [yet] your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more [pollos mallon] than they? And who of you by being worried can add a [single] hour to his life? And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin; yet, I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is [alive] today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, [will He] not much more [clothe] you? You of little faith! Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?' For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But see first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*

Prayer, although not a problem solving device, is one of the weapons that a believer can use against anxiety and worrying and to aide his own understanding of a fortiori.

Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The A Fortiori Principle in Deliverance from the Last Judgment

Romans 5:8-10 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then [pollos mallon], 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 [pollos mallon], having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.

Here we see the first principle of having God's perfect righteousness - the believer can never be cast into the Lake of Fire or be judged at the last judgment. Logically, if God did the most for us when we were His enemies, it follows, a fortiori, that He will do much more for us now that we are his sons (Romans 5:10). A fortiori logic states that if God can do something that is extremely difficult, such as saving us, it only makes sense that He can do something much easier, like keeping us saved! To say that a believer can lose his salvation is to say that it takes more power to keep an individual saved than it took for God to save him. This is an insult to God. What did it take for God to save mankind? It took the substitutionary spiritual death of His Son Jesus Christ on the cross. If God has already done the greater [in saving the sinner], it follows, a fortiori, that He can do the lesser [preserve the believer for eternity]. Therefore, the believer will not be present at the Last Judgment.

Revelation 20:11-15 Then 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 that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged, every one [of them] according to their deeds. Then 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.

The unbeliever, on the other hand, will be at the Last Judgment. He is indicted to the throne of God not by his personal sins [since they were judged at the cross] but for his works, or relative righteousness. The Greek word for deeds is ergon, which means labor or work, as opposed to hamartia, which is a reference to sins committed by both believer and unbeliever. The unbeliever's good works or deeds, although relative to one another, are no good to God. God cannot accept what is not perfect, and since Isaiah 64:6 states that *the righteousness of mankind is like filthy rags*, God in His wisdom indicts the

unbeliever based on his works to show the unbeliever that his best is not good enough to save him. The unbeliever goes to Hell, Revelation 20:15, for one reason and one reason only, and that is not believing on the salvation work of Jesus Christ. Relative righteousness, or the good works of mankind, is just not good enough to have fellowship with perfect divine righteousness.

Ecclesiastes 7:20 Indeed, *there is not a righteous man on earth who [continually] does good and who never sins.*

Romans 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 blood of Christ justifies the believer, 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 is no way a believer can be at the Last Judgment or be cast into Hell. No one can take away that perfect righteousness from a believer, and that is the only thing required in going to Heaven. If the greater benefit has been given [justification], God will not withhold the lesser [avoidance of the Lake of Fire].

The A Fortiori Principle in Reconciliation

Romans 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], it stands to reason that the lesser [deliverance by His life] will not be withheld. If God can accomplish the greater, it follows, a fortiori, that God can certainly accomplish the lesser. Greater or lesser is not a matter of quality, but rather of the effort required.

The A Fortiori Principle as Related to Temporal Blessing

Romans 5:15 *But the free gift [the First Advent] is not like the transgression [of Adam]. 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 [mature believers].*

If God provides the greater in justification [imputation of perfect righteousness], it follows, a fortiori, that the justice of God is able to provide the lesser [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 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 to learn in a 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

Romans 5:17 *For if by the transgression of the one [Adam], [spiritual] death reigned through the one [and it did], 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.*

The phrase abundance [or surplus] of 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 eternal blessings and rewards at the judgment seat of Christ. Special blessings are parlayed into eternal an blessing, which sets up the motivation that jumps from time all the way into eternity. The various categories of supergrace blessings in time form the absolute confidence that the believer will have great blessings and rewards in eternity as well. That is the meaning of the phrase, much more, [they] will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ. All of this is the rationale with which Paul begins the book of Romans.

Principles behind A Fortiori in Romans Chapter Five

If a believer has God's perfect righteousness, he also has logistical blessings of support so that he can advance in the spiritual life and receive his special blessings. If a believer receives these special blessings in time, it is a guarantee that he will receive something even greater in eternity. This is because it is easier to provide the lesser than it is to provide the greater, plus the fact that a believer receiving eternal blessings and rewards glorifies God forever.

The A Fortiori Rationale in Dealing with Disaster

All of these a fortiori rationales combine into one so that a believer will have the perfect rationale for disaster, Romans 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 over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?*

The 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 in time and in eternity. There is blessing in both time and eternity for the believer, who will never glorify God apart from these two imputations of special blessing. 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 - rather, we are

here to learn and grow in God's grace and knowledge. If we do glorify God, it will not be because of what we personally do, what we give up, how righteous or moral we are, or how great people say we are. It will be because we have maximum doctrine resident in our soul.

The a fortiori principle in Romans 8:31-32 is designed to show us that there are only two ways for the believer to glorify God: (1) to receive, in grace, special blessings in time, given under six separate categories; and (2) to receive, in grace at the judgment seat of Christ, the imputation of eternal blessing and reward. The first way glorifies God in time and is tactical, requiring a certain method and approach. The second way glorifies God in eternity and is strategic and essential. Together they summarize the whole purpose for the believer remaining on earth.

Special blessings in time are those things that the Lord desires to give His people under the principle of a fortiori. The first category of special blessings consists of spiritual blessings, which include:

- a. Sharing the perfect happiness of God and being occupied with the person of Jesus Christ. This means that no matter what goes on in our life, the happiness we have is God's very own happiness, unchangeable and independent of the circumstances of life. And as we remain occupied with the Lord Jesus Christ, we are totally content in our confidence that He has everything under control.
- b. Capacity for life, love, happiness and 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.
- c. Ability to face undeserved suffering in life without self-justification and without having to defend ourselves, without excuses, without complaining. It is simply allowing the justice of God to vindicate us.
- d. Ability to correctly interpret contemporary history and to evaluate current events in light of the Word of God. This means that we know without a doubt that the Lord Jesus Christ controls history; therefore, we are completely relaxed about the future.
- e. Freedom from slavery to circumstances in life, along with adaptability to changing circumstances. The mature believer is the greatest innovator in time of historical disaster. He realizes that God loves him and that He has a fantastic plan for the believer's life. The mature believer will not let any hindrance or obstacle stop his momentum in the predesigned plan of God.
- f. Grace orientation, freedom orientation, authority orientation and common sense. These create complete relaxation in life. It is the ability to treat others graciously, to give them their freedom and to respect the privacy of their priesthood. It is also the ability to operate in common sense.

The second category of special blessings consists of temporal blessings. These include:

- a. Wealth, either received or acquired.
- b. Professional prosperity, 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.
- c. Social prosperity and having great friends.
- d. Sexual prosperity with one's right man or right woman.
- e. Technical or mental prosperity, in that the ability to think and concentrate increases.
- f. Cultural prosperity, which is maximum enjoyment of drama, art, literature, music, or history.
- g. Establishment prosperity, meaning the enjoyment of freedom, privacy, and the protection of life and property from reprisal and criminal activity.

The third category of blessings in time under the principle of a fortiori consists of blessing 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. In other words, the supergrace believer automatically shares his blessings with others. There are peripheral areas of blessing by association, such as loved ones, business associates, social life, and those in a local church. There are also geographical blessings given to the supergrace believer's city, state and nation.

The fourth category of blessings consists of historical blessings(2 Timothy 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. The apostate is caught up in the disasters of history and swept along with them, while the supergrace believer rides on the crest of the wave of blessing, rising 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 to be positive toward Bible doctrine, ultimately receiving dying grace, or to be negative toward doctrine, dying the sin unto death. Under the blessing of dying grace, the curse of death with its pain and fear is removed and it becomes the greatest experience in life. Dying grace is the antithesis to the sin unto death, because possessing God's happiness in death exceeds the perfect happiness of the supergrace believer in time. Therefore, the mature believer has the best

of life, the better in dying, and then better than the best for all of eternity, Psalms 116:15, Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His godly ones.

The sixth category of blessings in time is undeserved suffering. Only in time, as part of the a fortiori principle, does God have the opportunity to give us the privilege of experiencing pressure, disaster, and undeserved suffering to prove to Satan and the fallen angels that Bible doctrine can handle any situation. In grace, God gives us the ability to handle this suffering and to have it turned into blessing, Romans 8:28. No soul searching is involved because a mature believer knows when he is under divine discipline, where there is unbearable suffering, versus undeserved suffering, which is bearable. The supergrace believer who has the ability to handle undeserved suffering glorifies God and is presented as evidence against Satan in his appeal trial. There is fantastic blessing for those believers who go through undeserved suffering, glorifying God in the midst of the Angelic Conflict.

Undeserved suffering is also used by God to assist us in keeping our eyes on God and our focus on eternity, Revelation 2:10, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10. Undeserved suffering also teaches us the value of Bible doctrine, Psalms 119:67-71. Undeserved suffering is designed to manifest the ministry of God the Holy Spirit, 2 Corinthians 4:8-11, and to put muscle on our faith while occupying the believer with eternal values, Romans 5:3-5, 8:36.

The A Fortiori Principle of Israel's Cursing and Blessing

God chose the nation Israel to be a blessing to the entire human race, Genesis 12:2-3, *"And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, and so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."* God made Israel the recipient, custodian and communicator of the written canon of Scripture. Not only would Israel furnish the human authors of the Old Testament canon, but the history and function if Israel herself would be recorded forever in Scripture. Client nation Israel was answerable directly only to God for the custodianship of His Word. Though Israel's history is a panorama of successes and failures as far as her client nation responsibilities, resulting in her loss of client nation status in 70 A.D., God stands by His Word; Israel shall be a blessing. Whether in apostasy, or functioning within the direct will of God, Israel is still a blessing to those who bless her.

Romans 11:12 *Now if their transgression [Israel's apostasy] is riches for the world, and their failure [loss of client nation status] is riches for the Gentiles [and it was], how much more [pollo mallon] will their fulfillment be! [Israel's reinstatement of client nation status in the Millennium.]*

If the justice of God provides the greater in blessing the Gentiles through Jewish apostasy and punishment, it follows, a fortiori, that He will not withhold the lesser, which is greater blessing to the Gentiles during the millennial restoration of Israel. If we were blessed by the fact that the Jews were placed under a curse, how much more will we be

blessed, through association, when they receive their millennial restoration and kingdom, and their continuation and perpetuation as a client nation? This emphasizes the fact that 'greater' is not quality or quantity, but rather 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 it is 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, through association, if Israel were the client nation.

Therefore, the greatest blessings will come to the Gentiles during the millennial reign of Christ when Israel has been restored to client nation status. We will be blessed as a nation during that period because of association with the Jews. In fact, Zechariah 8:22-23 says that ten Gentiles will grab the robe of one Jew and say, "*Let us go with you [to Jerusalem], for we have heard that God is 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 during the Millennium when Israel is restored as a client nation. It will be 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 on what happens to a nation that tries to add punishment to God's punishment toward 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, in addition to 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 super race in history, and they are under discipline and cursing today that can only be changed to blessing by their believing in Jesus Christ. So, if cursing to the nation Israel 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 for you to wake up and also believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and God of Israel. The Jews can only come into blessing prior to the Millennium by emulating the Gentiles' faith in Christ. This is one of the great messages in Romans Chapter 11. And 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 super charger or booster in the plan of God rationale. It stimulates the function of reverse concentration as the second stage of the faith rest drill, which in turn leads to the third stage of reaching a doctrinal conclusion and gaining control of the situation. The second stage of the faith rest drill is claiming actual doctrines, such as 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 it is in control of the situation. A fortiori is a shorter and quicker rationale, to be used in emergencies where rapid decision-making or action is necessary. It is therefore both a system of logic that uses comparison and a rationale for the believer under pressure in making a correct conclusion. The a fortiori principle compares a previous conclusion of doctrine with another conclusion of doctrine, so that the believer can understand and apply the inescapable certainty of God's grace policy in His perfect plan. Every time we apply doctrine in our soul to a situation in life, there is a decoration for us in Heaven.

The a fortiori rationale gives the believer the opportunity to reign with the Lord Jesus Christ, Romans 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.

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?

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

2 Corinthians 3:11 For if that which fades away [was] with glory, much more that which remains [is] in glory.