

## **"Being Therefore Justified By Faith ..."**

*"... we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand..."* (Rom. 5:1-2a).

The writer's contrast of justification by the work of the law and justification through faith in Christ has been repeatedly made. The difference is simple ... one who had never sinned could be justified by a law of works but the sinner would need to be justified by a system which involved forgiveness. Because all need forgiveness, this justification comes through the system of faith.

Contrary to popular belief, Paul did not say, *"being justified by faith ONLY."* Many things are said to justify: God's grace, His Son's blood, the name of His Son, yes, and works (Rom. 3:24; 5:9; 1 Cor. 6:11; Jms. 2:24)! And, while it has been observed many times before, the contrast between the law of works and that of faith is not a contrast between obedience and faith only; it is a contrast between justification through perfect obedience and justification by forgiveness, forgiveness that is possible because along with man's imperfect obedience, God takes that man's faith into account.

It is no secret that the sinner is alienated from God. He is God's enemy! Isaiah wrote, *"Your sins and your iniquities have hid his face from you so that he will not hear"* (Isa. 59:1f). James said, *"Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world, maketh himself an enemy of God"* (Jms. 4:4). And, if we are enemies of God how could we expect to triumph in such a conflict? Peter voiced such futility when he asked, *"Who was I that I could withstand God"* (Acts 11:17)? Gamaliel's advice to his fellow council members who were minded to slay the apostles because they ignored their command to no longer speak in the name of Christ was this: *"Refrain from these men and let them alone: for it this counsel or this work be of men, it will be overthrown: but if it be of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; lest haply ye be found even to be fighting against God"* (Acts 5:38f).

Satan is cunning, full of all guile, deceit and craftiness, joined with gross wickedness. But, he is not self-deceived. He knows he has only a *"short time"* (Rev. 12:12). He knows a lake of fire awaits him (Mat. 25:41). He knows God's Son will *"come with His mighty angels and render vengeance to all them who know not God and who obey not the gospel"* (2 Thess. 1:7f).

How sad that all Satan's disciples do not know what their master knows. Defeat is certain and a fiery end awaits both Satan and his followers. But, Satan hides these things from his disciples (2 Cor. 4:4).

How sweet are these words, then, *"We have peace with God our Father."* Destruction is not inevitable! There is a way to escape and that way is Jesus for the Roman letter assures us, *"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."* Angels sang the song of peace the night of Jesus' birth. They knew He was destined to be that for Isaiah had predicted 700 years before, *"His name shall be called ... Mighty God ... prince of peace"* (Isa. 9:6). He made *"peace through the blood of his cross"* and *"he preached peace to them that far off (Gentiles) and to them that were nigh (Jews) for through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father"* (Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:18). Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth and the life. No one cometh to the father save by me"* (Jon. 14:6).

PEACE. Peace WITH God. Peace with God THROUGH our Lord Jesus Christ. All that is lacking is on our part. His invitation is universal. *"Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give your rest"* (Mat. 11:28). Why won't we come?

Jim McDonald