

The Epistle to the Romans

by Arno Clemens Gaebelein

The Epistle to the Romans is a foundational document of Christian theology that explains the Gospel of God, which is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Romans 3:21, Romans 4:3, Romans 5:1-2, Romans 5:5

Topics: "Justification By Faith", "Righteousness Of God"

Description

Arno Clemens Gaebelein preaches about the profound truths revealed in the Epistle to the Romans, emphasizing the righteousness of God manifested in the Gospel, the justification by faith illustrated through Abraham and David, and the blessed results of justification including peace with God, access to grace, and the hope of the glory of God. He highlights the importance of faith in Christ's atoning work, the significance of Christ's resurrection for our justification, and the assurance of salvation through faith alone.

Transcript

The Epistle to the Romans is not the first Epistle which the Apostle Paul wrote. The First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written six years prior to the Epistle to the Romans, that is in 52 A.D. and the Second Thessalonian Epistle a few months later. The place given to this great document, immediately after the Book of Acts, is the right place, for the Epistle to the Romans has for its leading theme the Gospel of God, and that needs to be unfolded first of all.

This Epistle was written by Paul in the year 58. Paul was staying in the house of Gaius (Romans 16:23). He was a wealthy Corinthian whom Paul had baptized (1 Corinthians 1:14). His amanuensis was Tertius, who makes the statement himself, "I Tertius, who wrote this Epistle, salute you in the Lord" (16:22). It was during the brief visit to Corinth (Acts 20:3) when the Apostle wrote the Epistle. He was on his way to Jerusalem, with the great desire in his heart "I must also see Rome" (Acts 19:21). Of this he speaks in the Epistle. "But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you, for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. But I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the Saints." (15:23-25). And in the beginning of the Epistle he expressed the same wish. "Making request, if by any means now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. For I long to see you that I may impart some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (1:10-11).

When a Greek Christian woman, Phoebe, was about to visit Rome, he was constrained to write this letter and she was undoubtedly the bearer of this Epistle. This we learn from Chapter 16:1-2. "I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea (the port of Corinth); that ye receive her in the Lord, as becomes the Saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succorer of many, and of myself also." The genuineness of this Epistle has never been doubted. The critics have never been able to attack its authenticity. Universally it has been believed, and that from earliest time, to be the production of the Apostle Paul.

To Whom the Epistle was Written

The Epistle is addressed "to all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called Saints." There was then a church, a local assembly of believers in the great world city Rome. We do not know the facts of its origin. The wicked system which goes by the name "the church of Rome" claims that Peter had much to do with the church there and was the first bishop in Rome. This is done to uphold the claims of the papacy. But it is a mere invention, lacking all historical support. Long before Paul ever addressed the Saints in Rome, Peter had made in Jerusalem declaration which confined his ministry to the circumcision (to Jews) while the Gentile field was left to Paul. "And when James, Cephas (Peter), and John who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me (Paul) and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship, that we should go unto the Gentiles and they unto the circumcision" (Galatians 2:9). Peter wrote two Epistles addressed to scattered Jewish believers. He does what the Lord told him "to strengthen his brethren." and nowhere does he claim the exalted position into which the Romish apostate system has put him. That no Apostle had anything to do with the foundation of the local assembly in Rome seems fully established by Paul's statement in chapter 15:20. If Peter had anything to do with the church in Rome, if he had founded the church there, Paul would have certainly made some mention of him. And when later the Apostle Paul wrote his great prison Epistles, not a word did he say about Peter's presence and activity in Rome. These and other evidences are conclusive.

Perhaps Jewish believers were used in carrying the gospel to the capital of the Roman Empire; or Gentile believers may have been the means of proclaiming first the good news there. While the assembly in Rome was composed of Jews and Gentiles, the latter were predominant, for the names mentioned in chapter 16 are nearly all Gentiles. Many of these may have been Jewish proselytes. That this church was also troubled with a Judaizing element, teachers who demanded the keeping of the law and circumcision as a means of salvation, may be learned from the warning exhortation at the close of the Epistle: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them." (16:17). This may explain the different objections raised and answered in the Epistle, objections which would come mostly from a Jewish mind. See 3:1, 5, 7, 31; 4:1; 6:1, 15; 7:7; 9:14, 19, 30; 11:1, 11. However, there are conclusive proofs in the Epistle itself which show that the Gentiles were the more numerous in the Roman assembly.

Paul addresses them as the Apostle of the Gentiles and in chapter 15:16 he writes, "that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the Gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being "sanctified by the Holy Spirit."

The Great Theme of the Epistle

The great theme of Romans is the Gospel of God, that is the good news concerning the way which God, in His infinite love, has provided by which sinners are saved and all which this free and full salvation

includes. While this great theme has been recognized by all intelligent writers on this Epistle, various estimates have been given of the doctrinal unfoldings, which often miss the mark. Some have called Romans a religious treatise written by a man with a wonderful, logical mind, in which he explains his views concerning salvation. Others state that the letter is "the foundation document of the Pauline system of teaching" or they call it "the explanation of the Pauline theology." Still others have suggested that the Epistle to the Romans is "the personal mental history of the Apostle, in which, after his conversion, he worked his way from the old Jewish standpoint to his standpoint under the Gospel." But there is a far better statement which explains it all. In the sister Epistle of Romans, the Epistle to the Galatians, in which he gives the defense of the Gospel, Paul acquaints us with the origin of the Gospel, which he called so peculiarly "My Gospel."--"But I certify you brethren, that the Gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:11-12). The Gospel he preached and which is so wonderfully taught in the Epistle to the Romans was given to him by revelation. It was not the product of a logical mind, a system of theology which he had thought out, or which some one else had taught him. It is revelation. And the proof of it is the Gospel itself. The mind of man could not have invented or discovered such a scheme. God Himself had to reveal it. The more a Christian studies this great Epistle concerning the Gospel of God, the more he will find out the truth that all is of God and not of man. A great thinker called Romans the profoundest document which has ever been written. It is that, because it is of God. And all that comes from Him is as inexhaustible as His Person. The things revealed in this Gospel of God are deep; no saint has ever sounded the depths. Yet it is simple at the same time. This is always the mark of divine revelation, profundity and simplicity.

We shall point out more fully in the analysis the scope and division of this Epistle, how this great theme is unfolded. God reveals man's true condition, destitute of all righteousness, positively and negatively bad, the whole world guilty before God, Jew and Gentile lost. Upon that dark background God writes the story of His great Love. The source and center of all is the sacrificial work of Christ in which the righteousness of God is now manifested. no longer condemning the guilty sinner, but covering every sinner who believes in Jesus.

Justification is by faith, and this faith which trusteth in Jesus is counted for righteousness. "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (4:5). And the resurrection of Jesus from the dead is also our justification; the blessed results of all this are seen in the opening verse of the fifth chapter. Being justified by faith we have peace with God, a secure standing in Grace and the hope of the Glory of God.

The justification of the sinner is the great foundation of the Gospel of God. Then follows an equally blessed revelation, which is another part of the Gospel. The justified sinner is constituted a Saint, and as such he needs deliverance from sin and its power. Up to chapter 5:11 we learn how God has dealt with our sins and after that how He has dealt with sin. The believing sinner is no longer in Adam, the first man, but in Christ, the second man. What we have by nature through Adam and what we receive through Grace in being in Christ (by the new birth), this most wonderful contrast, is the subject in chapter 5:12-21.

God therefore does no longer behold the believer as in Adam, but he sees him in Christ; the old man has been put to death in the death of Christ "that the body of sin might be annulled that henceforth we should not serve sin." God looks upon the believer as being dead with Christ to sin. He is therefore no longer to live in sin. The assurance is given "sin shall not have dominion over you." And faith is to act upon it as being dead to sin and alive unto God (6:11-13). In the seventh chapter the question of the law is raised

and the Gospel of God declares that the justified believer, in Christ, dead with Him and delivered from the sin principle is also dead to the law.

The eighth chapter leads us into the full place of deliverance. What was impossible to the law, to produce the righteous requirements of the law, is made possible by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The Spirit of God and His work in the believer is now revealed as a part of the Gospel. Furthermore the believer saved by Grace is a child of God and an heir of God. Glory is his eternal destiny and nothing can separate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Then follow three chapters which deal with dispensational matters, Israel's fall and coming restoration to the place of blessing as His earthly people. The final chapters contain exhortations to walk in the power of this blessed Gospel.

The Importance of Romans

If we are asked what portion of the New Testament should a Christian study the most, we answer always, unhesitatingly, the Epistle to the Romans. Dr. Martin Luther found his great message and deliverance in this Epistle. No better testimony about this Epistle could be given than his. He said, "It is the true masterpiece of the New Testament, and the very purest Gospel, which is well worth and deserving that a Christian man should not only learn it by heart, word for word, but also that he should daily deal with it as the daily bread of men's souls. For it can never be too much or too well read or studied; and the more it is handled the more precious it becomes, and the better it tastes."

John Wesley, the godly preacher of the eighteenth century, found peace and deliverance while listening to the reading of Luther's introduction to Romans. No Christian can enjoy the Gospel and know true deliverance unless he knows the precious arguments of the first eight chapters of this Epistle. It is the great need at the present time. So many professing Christians are ignorant of what redemption is and what it includes. Many have but a hazy view of justification and have little or no knowledge of a settled peace with God and lack the assurance of salvation. They are constantly striving to be something and to attain something, which God in infinite grace has already supplied in the Gospel of His Son. And the ignorance about deliverance from the power of indwelling sin! Most Christians live constantly in the experience of the wretched man in chapter 7:15-24. The teaching of the Gospel of God according to Romans is therefore of the greatest importance. It brings assurance and peace; its teachings lead the believer into a life of victory. So many sincere, but untaught believers become ensnared in all kinds of strange doctrines, taught by different cults, because they are deplorably ignorant of the salvation of God. Luther was right, "it can never be too much or too well read or studied." Even if we have grasped the great doctrines of salvation as revealed in this Epistle it is needful that we go over them again and again. And it must be done with prayer. There are many Christians who hold the correct doctrines concerning justification and sanctification as made known in Romans, but they lack the power of these truths in their lives.

Nor must we forget that these blessed truths are increasingly denied as well as perverted in our days. We must therefore keep in constant touch with them, lest they slip away from us and we lose the reality and power of the blessed Gospel in our lives.

Division of the Epistle to the Romans

The division of the Epistle is very simple and presents no difficulty. There are three very clearly defined parts.

The first eight chapters contain the doctrine of the Gospel of God, what salvation is and what it includes. Justification, Sanctification and Glorification are revealed and the believer's deliverance from the guilt of sin, the power of sin and the future deliverance from the presence of sin is made known in these eight chapters.

Chapters 9-11 form the second part. God's sovereign dealings with Israel is the theme of these chapters, which have a parenthetical character. Here we learn of Israel's election, rejection and coming restoration. God's righteousness is demonstrated in this second part as it is in the doctrinal section of this Epistle.

Chapters 12-16 constitute the third part. Here we find the exhortations for the justified and sanctified believer, who waits for the coming glory, how he is to live on earth in the power of the Gospel and manifest practically the righteousness of God.

I. DOCTRINAL. THE SALVATION OF GOD. Chapters 1-8

1. Introduction. Chapter 1:1-17

2. The Need of Salvation Demonstrated. The Whole World Guilty and Lost. Chapter 1:18-3:20.

3. The Righteousness of God Revealed. Justification, What it is and What it Includes. Chapter 3:21-5:11.

4. In Christ. The Sanctification of the Believer; his Deliverance from Sin and the Law. Children and Heirs. Chapter 5:12-8:39.

II. DISPENSATIONAL. GOD'S DEALINGS WITH ISRAEL

Chapters 9-11. 1. Israel and God's Sovereignty

Chapter 9. 2. Israel's Failure and Unbelief

Chapter 10. 3. Israel's Future

Chapter 11.

III. EXHORTATIONS AND THE CONCLUSION. Chapter 12-16:27.

1. The Exhortations. Chapter 12-15:13.

2. The Conclusion. Chapter 15:14-16:27.

The Epistle to the Romans demands the closest Study. "Its texture is so fine, its very vein so full, its very fibers and ligatures so fine and yet strong, that it requires not only to be again and again surveyed as a whole, and mastered in its Primary ideas, but to be dissected in detail, and With unwearying patience studied in its minutest features, before we can be said to have done it justice. Not only every sentence teems with thought, but every clause; while in some places every word may be said either to suggest some weighty thought, or to indicate some deep emotion" (D. Brown). In the analysis and annotations we point out the way to the deeper study of the Epistle. But the most successful learners of these great truths are the men and women who walk in the truth and learn daily anew that the Gospel is the power of God

unto salvation, who rejoice in God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Analysis and Annotations

I. DOCTRINAL. THE SALVATION OF GOD. Chapter 1-8.

CHAPTER 1

1. The Apostle and the Gospel of God. 1-6.
2. The Greeting. 7.
3. The Apostle's Prayer and Desire. 8-15.
4. The Great Theme Introduced. 16-17.

Verses 1-6

The introduction to the Epistle is unsurpassed by any other Epistle. Every word should be carefully studied. The writer introduces himself first of all as a servant (literally: slave) of Jesus Christ and called an apostle. Notice that in verses 1-7 two little words are found three times in italics, the words "to be." They are supplied by the translators and should be omitted. Paul was not called to be an Apostle, but he was called an Apostle. The Lord Jesus Christ was not declared to be Son of God, but He was declared Son of God; believers are not called to be Saints, but they are called Saints. Paul loved to call himself bondman of Jesus Christ. He knew the Lord had redeemed him and now he was no longer his own, but belonged to Him who had purchased him and made him one with Himself. His highest ambition was to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. His Apostleship he puts in the second place. The highest and best is to be in reality a willing, devoted servant of the Lord. How did he become an Apostle? "Not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:1). The exalted Christ in glory had called him and sent him forth. And next we find in the opening verse the specific work unto which the Lord had separated him--"separated unto the Gospel of God." The Gospel was his great commission and therefore is the great theme of his Epistle. The Holy Spirit who guided his mind, as well as his pen, now unfolds this Gospel. The highest and the best, after all, in God's whole revelation is the Gospel. And the Gospel is not confined in the Pauline Epistles to Romans. We read Colossians and find there still the Gospel. The highest revelation which ever flowed through this chosen vessel is contained in the Epistle to the Ephesians; it is still the Gospel. Oh! the blessed Gospel! it can never be exhausted; it will be the object of eternal praise. In His presence, conformed into His image we shall know its heights and its depths.

Notice after Paul mentioned the Gospel of God there follows a parenthetical statement about that Gospel. Verse 5 is the continuation of what he saith about his Apostleship. The word Gospel means "good news." It is the good news of God, for it has its source in Himself and in His eternal counsel. The Gospel is also called the Gospel of Christ, because it centers in Him, and is proclaimed through His finished work on the cross. This Gospel was promised by God's Prophets in the Old Testament Scriptures. In many ways, in types, in the sacrifices, in direct predictions this Gospel has been announced and Jewish believers looked forward to its accomplishment. Throughout the Old Testament from Genesis 3 to the Prophet Malachi the promises and predictions of the Gospel are found. The Old Testament is the foundation of the Gospel. The rejection of the Old Testament as the inspired Word of God is therefore a very serious matter. And the Gospel of God we learn next is a person. It is "concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." Jesus is the name of the Son of God in humiliation, living on the earth; Christ is His official name in resurrection and He

is the Lord of all. The Lord Jesus Christ is the proper way to address Him. "Made of the seed of David according to the flesh." This brings before us His incarnation "made of a woman, made under law" (Galatians 4:4). He came of the seed of Abraham and from the house of David, according to divine promise. He was both David's Son and David's Lord, the Root and Offspring of David. To Him belongs a throne for He is the King of the Jews. But "He came to His own and His own received Him not." He came to go to the Cross and finish the mighty work there which enables God to be just and a Justifier, as we shall find later. He will receive the throne when He comes again in great power and glory. And He is declared (marked out) the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. He lived in Perfect holiness on earth and the Spirit of holiness was upon Him. He raised the dead and thereby demonstrated that He is the Son of God. But it is equally true that His own resurrection must be included in this statement, for His resurrection is the effectual justification of Himself as the Son of God. Trace in these opening verses all the great facts of Christ--Son of God--Son of Man--Incarnation--His Death--His Resurrection--His Lordship.

Verse 7

Precious is the word of greeting to all the believers, not only in Rome, but everywhere. "Beloved of God called Saints." Such are all who have accepted Christ as their Saviour. They are justified, sanctified, and accepted in the Beloved. Blessed truth! in Christ, one with Him, we are the objects of the Love of God. The Love wherewith God loves His Son is the Love with which He loves all who belong to Christ (John 17:23). And then we are Saints, not called to be, or to become Saints, by a separated life; but we are constituted Saints in Christ, sanctified, that is separated unto Himself. God loves us and in Christ has set us apart to Himself. Nothing that we do could ever make us the Beloved of God. No effort of ours to live consistently, apart from evil, could make us Saints of God. God has done it for us in Christ. And because we are Saints we can live saintly lives. The greeting is from the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is not mentioned, for He is in and with the Saints of God, both individually and also collectively forming the body, the church.

Verses 8-15

In addressing them the Apostle has no rebuke, no evil to correct, no exhortation. Instead he thanked God that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. They let their light shine brightly in the darkness of paganism. And His heart was filled with love for them. He thanked God for them, He prayed for His blessing upon them and that "by the will of God" he might be enabled to be with them. He longed to see them for mutual blessing. Here we have an illustration of Christian fellowship. Oftentimes he had purposed to come unto them, but was hindered. "The thwarted desires of Paul gave occasion to the Spirit of God to indite and publish, by his hand, this invaluable Epistle; to present to the Church a gift, not of present and passing effect, but which should build up and feed, and instruct, the Saints to the end of the time of the church's patience in the wilderness of this world." He felt, what every sinner, saved by Grace should feel, that he was a debtor to all. The possession of the Gospel makes us debtors to all. He had constantly discharged his debt by preaching the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles and now he is eager "to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome also." And can there be anything more blessed for the Saints than the Gospel? To be reminded of it and to be led deeper into the story of God's love and redemption is one of the great needs of God's people. Only as we do this can we be maintained in the reality and freshness of the Gospel. Therefore Paul longed to visit Rome to preach the Gospel to "the Beloved of God called Saints."

Verses 16-17

These two verses are the key verses of the Epistle. The great words of the doctrinal part of the Epistle are found here. Righteousness and Faith are these words; Paul declared that he is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. It cannot mean, what it is often said to mean, that Paul was not ashamed to confess Christ. It means that he had the utmost confidence in the Gospel of Christ; he knew it would not make him ashamed; he was not ashamed of it because of its intrinsic character.

The world sneered at the Gospel he preached "for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness" (1 Corinthians 1:18). He knew that in the Gospel was embodied the highest wisdom, that God Himself was its author, that it came from God and leads to God; he knew that through the Gospel the Greek, the Jew, the Barbarian could be saved out of the horrible pit and the miry clay and become a child of God and an heir of God. He was not ashamed of it for "the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation."

What weighty words these are! The power of God is needed to save man. And that power God has, to save the vilest sinner through the Gospel of Christ. God is omnipotent, but in one thing God is powerless, He cannot save sinners apart from the Gospel of Christ, for the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. The spurious Gospel of today, which denies the Cross of Christ and the blood, which substitutes character, good works or something else for faith in the Work of Christ as sin-bearer, has no power to save.

God cannot save in any other way than the way made known in the Gospel of Christ, who died for our sins. And what is salvation? It includes the whole of Christ's redemption work. It includes Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification. Saved from the guilt of sins; saved from the power of sin; saved from the presence of sin. Salvation from wrath and eternal damnation; salvation from the power of darkness and sin's awful dominion; salvation unto eternal glory. The word includes all the sinner needs.

The cross of Christ has supplied every need. If man had to do something with it and could help along in his salvation, it would be an imperfect and insecure salvation. But God being the author, it is His salvation and thus (Acts 28:28) it is a perfect salvation, a salvation which is both deliverance and safety forever. (Philippians 2:12 "Work out your own salvation" is often quoted as meaning that we must work to be saved and to stay saved. It means that we are to work out with results the salvation which is ours by faith in Jesus Christ.)

And this salvation is to any one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. Faith is the means of obtaining this salvation. Of this we shall hear more in the third and fourth chapters. Furthermore, in the Gospel "the righteousness of God" is revealed. This great word will receive our closest attention in the annotations of the third chapter. Here we briefly state that the Gospel of Christ makes known that the very righteousness of God, which condemns a sinner, is now on the side of the believing sinner. It is revealed from faith to faith, which means that it is not on the principle of works, but on the principle of faith.

2. The Need of Salvation Demonstrated. The Whole World Guilty and Lost. Chapter 1:18-3:20.

CHAPTER 1:18-32.

1. Wrath Revealed from Heaven. 18.

2. Gentile Knowledge of God. 19-20.

3. Turning from God to Idolatry. 21-23.

4. God Gave Them Up to Corruption. 24-32.

Verse 18

God now demonstrates that the whole world is destitute of righteousness and needs salvation. Verse 18-3:20 is parenthetical, showing the moral condition of the whole race, away from God and lost and therefore under wrath. In this verse we read that wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. It is a solemn declaration. All who are ungodly and unrighteous, who oppose the truth by living in sin are under wrath. And this is now shown to be the actual condition of the entire race, Gentiles and Jews. All are by nature the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3). A holy God must forever exclude from His Presence those who are His enemies by wicked works.

Verses 19-20

The heathen world in its moral history is first described. The heathen darkness which prevails now in idolatry and its attending degradations was preceded by the knowledge of God and produced by turning from God. Man can know God, in and through creation; His eternal power and Godhead are clearly seen in the things that are made. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard" (Psalm 19:1-3). And there was no doubt also a primeval revelation, though unwritten, so that the Gentiles could know God.

Verses 21-23

They knew God and glorified Him not. They turned away from the light. Here is the true law of evolution, not an evolution upward as taught so much at the present time, but an evolution downward. The ascent of man is a delusion; the descent of man is the truth. The only possible way of lifting man, who has fallen so low, yea beneath the beast, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. "They became vain in their imaginations." The word imagination means, perverse, self-willed reasonings revealing the evil heart beneath from which they spring. Then their foolish heart was darkened. The next step down is that they professed themselves wise and became fools. Rejecting the light and turning away from God, they became philosophers and thought to find out things by searching. Idolatry was the next step. "A god, in some shape, is a natural necessity of man. His natural desire, in his first apostasy from truth, is a god after his own heart." A brief history of idolatry is given. First they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into a likeness of an image of corruptible man. But they did not stop with this, but they worshipped birds, four-footed beasts and creeping things. Birds, flying through the air, therefore considered nearer heaven, are put above the quadrupeds, which walk on the earth and the creeping things, which cannot rise out of the dust and mire of the earth are the lowest form. They worshipped the serpent, as it is still done by the Indians in Arizona. And idolatry is not confined to the heathen nations, it is practised in that great apostate system Romanism. A piece of bread, under an elaborate ritual, is lifted up and claimed to be changed by a few words of a sinful man, into the body and soul of the Son of god; then they fall down and worship. The mass is a blasphemous idolatry.

Verses 24-32

Then moral corruption of the worst kind follows. They had given Him up and now He gives them up. Three times we read that God gave them up. But why should there be a threefold repetition of the fact that He gave them up? Man is composed- of body, soul and spirit. The first giving up is as to the body; this is found in verses 24-25. Then He gave them up to vile passions; this concerns the soul and the horrible things stated in verses 26-27 are the results. These were practised openly in the Greek and Roman world in the days of the Apostle Paul. Ancient literature bears abundant witness to that effect. These vile things are still going on in heathen India, China, Africa and elsewhere. They are found likewise in the midst of Christendom. Whenever and wherever the Truth of God is abandoned, degradation in every way follows, for the Truth of God alone can restrain evil. The third giving up is found in verse 29. Given up to a reprobate mind, which involves the spirit of man. "All these things spoken of here are clearly regarded as the recompense" even now, of the error of the creature, in departing from the Creator. "The world is thus regarded as under a judicial bondage of sin and dishonor. Men eat the fruit of their own ways, sometimes pleasant to the taste of corrupted nature, but with prospect of Divine and eternal judgment at the end. The very lusts which govern and torment the slaves of sin are, as it were, the earnest and token of that wrath of God, which, now revealed from heaven, will yet deal with ungodliness and unrighteousness of unrepentant sinners after death" (Hebrews 9:27). (Pridham on Romans)

Then follows a description of the sins, the fruits of a corrupt human nature, sins which were the characteristic features of heathendom when this Epistle was written. If we turn to 2 Timothy 3:1-5 we find a similar list, which corresponds in a striking way with the list at the close of the first chapter of Romans. There is, however, an important difference. As already stated Romans 1:29-31 describes the moral condition of the heathen world in Paul's day, but 2 Timothy 3:1-5 describes the moral condition of the professing Christian masses of the last times, church members who have the form of godliness and who deny the power thereof. They make an empty profession, their hearts are away from God and the last days of this age revert to the moral conditions in which the heathen world was in the days of the Apostle. And these characteristics prevail everywhere in Christendom. The last verse of our chapter tells us, that they know that they are worthy of death, yet they keep on in their evil ways.

CHAPTER 2

1. The Gentile Moralists and Reformer and His Condemnation. 1-6.
2. The Two Classes. 7-16.
3. The State of the Jew. 17-29.

Verses 1-6

But in the heathen world there were such who gave witness against the immoral condition, the different vices. There were Moralists, Reformers and Philosophers like Socrates, Seneca and others. They judged and condemned certain evils. But God declares that they were not a whit better than the rest. The very things they condemned they were guilty of themselves. One of their own writers declared, "I see the good and approve of it and follow the evil." Thus they practiced evil, because the same evil heart was in them; in spite of their ethical writings, they were corrupt. And this is not confined to heathen moralists in the past, the same is true of others during this age, who judged existing evils and condemned them, while later they were found out to do the very things they condemned. Such is the unregenerated heart of man. They cannot escape the judgment of God. They were impenitent, despising the riches of His goodness and were treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the days of wrath.

Verses 7-16

God is righteous and He will render every man according to his deeds. Then two classes are mentioned. The first are those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, and to that class God will give eternal life. (Eternal life is here not, as in John's Gospel a present possession, but is that to be entered in after death.) How is this to be applied? Does this answer the question how man is to be saved? it does not, but it is the question of God's moral government. Man in his unconverted state cannot obtain eternal life by patient continuance in well doing, for we read later that God's Word declares "there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Man cannot seek for glory for it is written, "there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God" (3:11). On these terms no human being can obtain eternal life. Man is a sinner and all the wages he can earn is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (6:23). If eternal life is received by faith in Jesus Christ then man is able to do right and live the life that pleases God. Then there is the other class; those who obey not the truth, who live in unrighteousness, who reject His Word. Indignation and wrath is in store for such and this is the condition in which Jews and Gentiles are by nature "Among whom also we (Jews) all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others (Gentiles)" (Ephesians 2:3). God states in these verses the principles on which He judges according to man's works, and as man is a sinner and cannot do good works, man is therefore under condemnation.

And likewise there is no respect of persons with God. The Jew may boast of a higher place than the Gentile, but God deals with all alike. The Gentiles had not the law and therefore sinned without law and they cannot escape the righteous judgment of God. They had the witness in Creation, as seen from the first chapter, and besides this there is conscience and that witnesses of what is sin; they have the knowledge of good and evil and are therefore morally responsible. They turned from God and they will be judged apart from the law; but it is more than that "they shall perish without the law." That completely answers the teaching that the mercy of God covers in some way the heathen world and that the heathen are not lost. And the Jews had the law and did not keep it. Could the possession of the Law make them just before God? Certainly not, "for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified." "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the law to do them" (Galatians 3:10). And theirs will be the greater judgment, for they knew His will and did not according to His will and shall be beaten with many stripes (Luke 12:47). The entire passage deals with the judgment of a righteous God and that neither the Gentile without the law nor the Jew with the law is righteous before God, but that both classes must fall under the judgment of God. And there is a day appointed when this righteous judgment will be executed by the Son of Man, our Lord. And that none can be just by doing is seen in Paul's defense of the Gospel.

Verses 17-29

Then the case of the Jew is more specially considered. He possessed the Law, the Holy Scriptures. And he rested in the law; the Apostle knew something of that in his own experience for he had declared "that touching the righteousness which is in the law" he thought himself "blameless." (Philippians 3:6). The Jew still does the same thing. He rests in the law and in the obedience to it for righteousness. But the law was never given for man to obtain righteousness. "For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified" (Galatians 2:16). The law was given to convict of sin and not as a means to obtain righteousness. All the outward righteousness of which the Jew boasted, especially in the strictest sect of the Pharisees, was but

an attempt to cover the inward corruption of a heart which cannot bring forth the fruits of righteousness. The Scribes and Pharisees were "like unto white sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead bones, and of all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27). Self-righteous, despising others, condemning others-such was the state of the Jew, as he rested in the law, boasted of God and as being instructed out of the law. But the Spirit of God now uncovers his true condition. They violated that law. All the sins forbidden by the law were secretly and publicly committed by them. They dishonored God so much so that the name of God was blasphemed among Gentiles through them. Their whole history bears witness to all which is written in these verses. In Ezekiel's message we read that they profaned His name among the heathen (Ezekiel 36:20-23). And this condition is the same among ritualistic, law and ordinance keeping, professing Christians, who are religious, but unsaved. They boast in what they do and what they possess and yet they live in sin, and their conduct belies their profession.

Especially did the Jew boast of his circumcision as a means of having favor with God, as nominal Christians trust in the sacraments as the means of salvation. But circumcision or ordinances cannot save man and make him right before God. And besides this, circumcision had become a reproach among the Gentiles, because the Jews had dishonored God and denied the true meaning of circumcision. (Separation.) "Was circumcision of no use because of the dishonor put upon it? No, but that could not be counted such which was united with the transgression of that which it pledged one to keep. And the uncircumcised person keeping the commandments of the law would before Him be counted as circumcised. Israel, in fact, never contained all the sheep of the Lord's flock, as we know; and the apostle will presently remind us that Abraham himself was an example of the faith that might be in one uncircumcised. How indeed would the obedience of the uncircumcised condemn the man who, having both the letter of the law and circumcision also, yet violated the law! Plainly then, one must place what is internal and spiritual before what is external in the flesh. The true circumcision is spiritual and of the heart, and constitutes the true Jew, whose 'praise' (the word Jew means 'Praise') is found with Him who sees the heart." (Numerical Bible.)

Outward observances have no value; it is the heart which needs circumcision. They boasted in circumcision and all the time denied and broke the law. Verse 29 is often misused by certain sects who claim that all the Jewish promises are now fulfilled in those who are Jews inwardly, that is Christians, and that Christians are the spiritual Israel and should keep the seventh day as Sabbath, etc. These arguments reveal ignorance in the scope of this Epistle. It is simply to prove the Jew with his boast in circumcision is lost. There is a circumcision of the heart, in the Spirit. Of this Paul wrote to the Philippians, "We are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

CHAPTER 3:1-20

1. Objections and Their Answers. 1-8.
2. The Whole World Under Sin. 9-20.

Verses 1-8

A number of objections are next raised and answered. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" Such would be the natural question of the Jew after reading the argument that the Jew is on the same level with the Gentile. This objection is stated here for the first time. It is important, for the Jews are God's chosen people and as the Apostle states later, to them belongs "the adoption, and

the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises" (9:4). If God puts Jews and Gentiles upon the same footing, what then becomes of all these peculiar blessings promised to the Jews? And in chapter 11 the question comes up again. "I say then hath God cast away His people?" What superiority then hath the Jew? This question of a supposed objection is at once answered. The advantage of the Jew is "much every way." The chief advantage is stated "unto them were committed the oracles of God." They possessed what the Gentiles did not have, the Holy Scriptures, the Word of God. What we call now the Old Testament is therefore the Word of God, in which God spoke to His covenant people. And in these oracles of God are found the great promises for that race, which await their glorious fulfillment in the day of their national restoration.

Another objection comes next. And this is also met and answered (Verses 3-4). All did not believe, but that does not make the faithfulness of God void for those who do believe. God does not fail those who put their trust in Him, because others did not believe. Part of the answer is from David's penitential Psalm (Psalm 51:4). David justified God, declared that He was true and then condemned himself. In the day of judgment it will be found that God is true and every man a liar. But this second objection leads to still another one, which is also answered by the Apostle (Verses 5-6). But if our unrighteousness commend God's righteousness, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who inflicteth wrath? If that were true, that He needs our sins for the praise of His righteousness "then how shall God judge the world?" But more than that. They had accused the Apostle and others of saying, "Let us do evil, that good may come." If it were true that our unrighteousness commends God's righteousness, then this slanderous statement would be perfectly right. For if our sins help to glorify God, why should we be judged for them? But the Apostle brands it as utterly false. For those who sin on such a principle awaits a damnation (judgment) which is just.

Verses 9-20

We have seen that the previous verses considered possible objections to the arguments of the preceding chapter. Verses 1-8 have therefore a parenthetical character. And now we come to the summary. Gentiles and Jews were proved to be absolutely unrighteous and therefore guilty and lost. The judgment wrath of a righteous God is upon them who had no law and upon them who possessed the law. The verdict of the Oracles of God is given. The following Scripture passages are quoted to confirm all that has been said: Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; 5:9; 140:3; 10:7; Isaiah 59:7-8; Psalm 36:1. The whole human race is proved to be negatively and positively bad; nothing good and everything bad is in man. Read carefully these positive statements. We need to be reminded of them in a day when almost universally the truth of man's lost condition is disbelieved, and when religious teachers constantly speak of "a better self," "a divine spark," "the germ of good"; when thousands follow the unscriptural teaching of a Fatherhood of God apart from true and saving faith in the Lord Jesus. Therefore read what God saith about the condition of his fallen creature. "There is none righteous, no, not one";--"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God";--"there is none that doeth good, no, not one." How positive are these statements. And it is blessed to read in the Scriptures that God knows all the depths of sin into which we have been plunged. God knows all, and here He shows us the true picture of ourselves. "Wherefore by works of law shall no flesh be justified before Him; for through law is knowledge of sin." Men try to do something to meet God's requirements, but they cannot do that. All human efforts in doing good works are futile. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. And they that are in the flesh cannot please God. By deeds of law, all kinds of religious observances and good works, no flesh shall be justified before Him. Thus ends the revelation concerning man guilty and lost. The whole world is proved under sin. Man cannot save himself.

If there is salvation, it must come from God. Upon this dark, dreary background a righteous God now flashes forth the wonderful story of redeeming love.

3. The Righteousness of God Revealed. Justification, what it is and what it Includes. Chapter 3:21-5:11.

CHAPTER 3:21-31

1. The Righteousness of God Manifested. 21-22.

2. Just and Justifier. 23-26.

3. Not of Works but of Faith. 27-31.

Verses 21-22

And now God comes forward and manifests His righteousness. Verse 21 must be connected with chapter 1:17. As previously stated chapter 1:18-3:20 is a parenthesis proving all the world destitute of righteousness and therefore guilty. Righteousness of God as revealed in the Gospel was the statement in chapter 1:17 and it is this which is brought more fully in view. The term "Righteousness of God" is much misunderstood. Not a few think it is the righteousness of Christ (a term nowhere used in Scripture) which is attributed to the believing sinner. They teach that Christ fulfilled the law, lived a perfect life on earth and that this righteousness is given to the sinner. All this is unscriptural. Righteousness cannot be bestowed by the law in any sense of the word. If the holy life of the Son of God, lived on earth in perfect righteousness could have saved man and given him righteousness, there was no need for Him to die. "If righteousness came by the law then Christ is dead in vain" (Galatians 2:21). It is God's righteousness which is now on the side of the believing sinner; the same righteousness which condemns the sinner, covers all who believe. And this righteousness is revealed in the Gospel. God's righteousness has been fully met and maintained in the atoning work of Christ on the Cross. By that wonderful work God is now enabled to save sinners and to save them righteously. The righteousness of God is therefore first of all revealed in the Gospel of Christ. Apart then from the law, righteousness of God is manifested, the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. And this righteousness now revealed was also witnessed to by the law and the prophets. The law of the different sacrifices, insufficient in themselves to take away sins, pointed to the great sacrifice, in which God would be fully glorified as well as His righteousness satisfied. There were many types and shadows. Now since the righteousness of God is fully made known in the Gospel we can trace God's wonderful thoughts and purposes in the types and histories of the Old Testament. To deny that the law testified to the coming redemption by the blood of Jesus Christ is to deny the Gospel itself. And this is done in the camp of higher criticism. But the Prophets also witnessed to it (Isaiah 41:10; 46:13; 51:5, 6, 8; 56:8).

It is blessed to see that the Prophet Isaiah who has the most to say concerning the sufferings of Christ, also witnesses to the righteousness which should follow. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). "Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, I am He that blot out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:24-25). "A just God and a Saviour" (Isaiah 45:21). "His Name... the Lord our righteousness" (Jeremiah 23:6). The old, old question never fully answered "how should man be just with God?" is now solved. Thus the Oracles of God witness to the righteousness of God. And this righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is "unto all and upon all them that believe." It is unto all, which means that the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ is sufficient to save

all. The whole world may be saved. It is "upon all that believe," which means that only those who believe on Christ are covered by the righteousness of God and are justified.

Verses 23-26

"Being justified freely by His Grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Christ has met all, He paid for all our sins. If we believe on Jesus we are justified freely by His Grace, that is, as a free gift. And justification is acquittal; we are acquitted from sin and from any charge of it. "It is divine righteousness that acts in justifying; righteousness is just that attribute of God which is concerned in it. It is like a broad, effectual shield stretched over the believer, and for all like a house that with its open door invites men to take shelter from the coming storm of judgment." The redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ has satisfied every claim forever. Christ has paid the price and all who believe are fully acquitted from every charge and penalty. "Whom God hath set forth a mercy seat through faith by His blood." On the day of atonement on the mercy seat, overshadowed by the Cherubim, the blood was sprinkled. And now the better blood, that which alone can take away sin, is upon the mercy seat, and God is faithful and just on account of that blood, to justify the believer.

"To declare His righteousness in respect of the passing by the sins that had taken place before, through the forbearance of God." The sins that had taken place before, does not mean the sins committed before the conversion of an individual believer. It means the sins of believers before Christ had come and died. When sins were forgiven in Old Testament times God's gracious forbearance was manifested, but when Christ had paid the great redemption price, when His blood had been shed, then God's righteousness was made manifest in having declared righteous believers, who lived before Christ had died. In view of what God's blessed Son would do, a righteous God forgave the sins of all who believed. And now God is just; His righteousness is unchanged and fully maintained and as the just God He is the justifier of Him that believes on Jesus. The justification of the believer is fully consistent with the righteousness of God. Negatively stated "what if God were not to justify, declare free, a sinner who believes in Jesus?" Then God would not be just to the blood of Christ. And in view of these wonderful revelations of the Gospel of Christ, so far above man's wisdom, God-like from start to finish, how awful the rejection of this blessed Gospel, as well as the perversion of it! Surely a righteous God must deal with such in judgment of eternal wrath.

Verses 27-31

Boasting from man's side is excluded. The law could do nothing but condemn man. The principle of simple faith excludes all boasting. "Not of works lest any man should boast." It is all of God and therefore all the praise belongs to Him. And there is another question. God justifies the circumcision (the Jews); He justifies the uncircumcision by faith (Gentiles). "Do not we then make void the law by faith? Far be the thought! No, but we establish the law." The law is not made void but established by the Gospel, not in the sense that it is to help the sinner. The broken law and its curse was borne by Christ; therefore the law has been vindicated as well as the holiness and righteousness of God. The man who tries to be right with God by the works of the law makes the law void, for he will not live up to the letter of the law, as the law demands and excuses his failures at the expense of the law, which is holy and good.

CHAPTER 4

1. The Witness of Abraham to Justification. 1-5.
2. As Confirmed also by David. 6-8.

3. Circumcision the Sign of the Covenant. 9-12.

4. Faith in Him Who Raiseth the Dead. 13-25.

Verses 1-5

Two witnesses are summoned next in whose lives the truth of justification by faith is illustrated. The Jews boasted of Abraham as the father of their nation. "Abraham our father" is still the common phrase used by all orthodox Jews as it was in the days of John the Baptist, as he declared, "Say not within yourselves, We have Abraham to our Father." How then was Abraham counted righteous before God? Was he justified by keeping the law? That was impossible, for the law was 430 years after Abraham. He was not justified by works. He was a sinner like every other human being. He had no works to justify him. But what saith the Scripture? "Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Abraham simply believed God when He gave him a promise (Genesis 15:5-6) and God said, you have no righteousness, but I take your faith instead of righteousness. Faith was reckoned to him for righteousness. There is then a difference between the righteousness of God in the previous chapter and the righteousness imputed in this chapter. And a blessed statement it is "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness." Abraham did not work. To him that worketh not, God reckons a reward. And what a reward. What God puts on the side of him, who believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, will only be fully known when redeemed sinners are in His presence. "The glory which Thou has given me I have given Them" (John 17:22). This wonderful utterance of our Lord tells us of the great reward in store for him that worketh not, who, as ungodly, believes on Christ, who died for the ungodly. Thus faith is reckoned for righteousness and has its reward of glory through grace. The statement in Galatians 3:6-9 must be studied in connection with these verses. "Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with believing Abraham." (In Galatians analyzed and annotated this statement is more fully explained.)

Verses 6-8

And David is the second witness. David and Abraham are mentioned in the first verse of the New Testament. The covenant God made with Abraham and with David make these two men the leading men of the nation. Now Abraham had no law, but David was under the law. David describeth the blessedness of the man (whosoever he may be) to whom God imputes the righteousness without works. The beautiful 32nd Psalm is quoted. The blessedness of the believer is there described. Iniquities forgiven; sins covered; sin no longer imputed. He does not impute sin, but imputes righteousness. Forgiveness takes the place of sin, and everlasting righteousness has covered the believer's iniquity, hiding it alike from the eyes of Divine glory, and from the conscience of the justified vessel of His grace; and significantly it is stated in that Psalm "for this cause shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in the time when Thou mayest be found." This is the way to be godly, confessing ourself a sinner, confessing sin and believing on Him, who justifieth the ungodly.

Verses 9-12

The question of circumcision is raised again. The Jew boasted in circumcision as placing him into a position of favor and blessing before God. Is this blessedness, justification by faith, sins put away,

righteousness imputed, for the circumcision, the Jews, only, or does it come also upon the uncircumcision, the Gentiles? When Abraham was declared righteous he was still in uncircumcision. The historical account in Genesis shows that circumcision followed the declaration "he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness;" circumcision did not precede his faith which was reckoned to him for righteousness. He was in uncircumcision, practically a Gentile, and circumcision was a sign and seal of the righteousness of faith. All this manifests the wisdom of God. It was divinely arranged so that Abraham "might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised (Gentiles) that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had being uncircumcised." Here we have the best possible argument that ordinances, or sacraments so called by man, have no part in bestowing salvation upon man. Baptism is called "a sacrament" and ritualistic Christians hold that it is necessary to receive the blessing of forgiveness. Others who do not hold to corrupt ritualism, also teach that Baptism as an ordinance is necessary for salvation. This portion of the Epistle answers completely these unscriptural claims. "For by Grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Verses 13-25

This section is of deep interest and must be carefully studied. While we had the atoning death of Christ so far before us, resurrection is now brought to the foreground as another important fact of the Gospel. The faith of Abraham is defined. How did he believe? When the promise was given that he should have a son and numerous offspring (Genesis 15:4-5), he believed God, who quickeneth the dead (resurrection) and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Abraham was an old man and Sarah was far beyond the time of childbirth; their case was humanly impossible. But Abraham believed that God could bring life from the dead, that He had the power to touch a grave and bring life out of it. "Against hope he believed in hope--and being not weak in faith he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." From Genesis we know that he was also weak in faith and that he acted in unbelief. But this is graciously passed by. God, so to speak, had forgotten his unbelief and remembered it no more.

The application of all this is found in verses 23-25. The promised seed was more than Isaac, it was Christ; so that Abraham believed the God who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead. And we believe on Him also. Our Lord was delivered for our offences and has been raised for our justification. His resurrection is the blessed and positive proof that our sins are completely put away. For this reason the resurrection of Jesus, our Lord, is the justification of the believer. We have then a threefold justification of the believer. We are justified by His blood; He bore our guilt and penalty. We are justified by His resurrection, because this assures us that the work is done and we are accepted, and we are justified by faith, which is reckoned for righteousness.

CHAPTER 5:1-11

1. What Justification Includes. 1-11.

The blessed results of justification are next revealed. What justified believers possess and what they may enjoy is the theme of the opening verses of this chapter. The first thing mentioned is that all who are

justified by faith have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace was made in the blood of the Cross, He who died for our sins is our peace. His greeting to the assembled disciples on the resurrection day was "Peace be unto you," and then He showed unto them His hands and His side, and again He said, "Peace be unto you." This peace with God we have as believers in Christ. It is settled forever and can never be disturbed. Some times Christians ask others if they made their peace with God. They mean by it, turning away from sin, repentance, conversion, surrender, etc., as if those actions from our side could make peace with God. This is incorrect and the reason why so many professing Christians lack the assurance that they have peace with God is in this very fact, that they are constantly trying what they term "to be right with God." Peace does not need to be made, it was made when Christ died for our sins. And into this peace we enter when we believe on the Lord Jesus and are justified freely of all things. We may live sober, earnest and useful Christian lives for fifty years or longer and at the end of such a devoted life we have not more of the peace with God than we had the moment we trusted in Christ. And our failures and stumbling walk as the "beloved of God, called Saints" our sinning, can never disturb and undo that peace.

The second result is that we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand. We have a perfect standing before God in Christ, and perfect access. We stand in grace, accepted in the beloved One and this grace keeps and sustains. We are the children of God made nigh by blood. Grace makes us nigh. We can draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith. Our faithfulness cannot increase this standing in Grace, nor can our unfaithfulness decrease it, for the simple reason that it is Grace. The third result of justification is "the hope of the glory of God" in which we can now boast. The only title to glory is the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ has secured the glory for us and has made us sharers of His own glory He received from God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. People speak of fitting themselves for heaven by living good lives. No one can be fitted for heaven. The only fitness is the new nature, received in the new birth. And that nature is given to the justified believer when he is justified by faith. That there are, special rewards for sacrificing service is very true, but to be in glory is a matter of grace and is given along with justification. The glory of God is the Hope of righteousness (Galatians 5:5). These three things cover the past, the present and the future. Past; Peace was made. Present; Standing in this Grace. Future; The Hope of the Glory of God. The approach to God in the tabernacle illustrates this beautifully. First the brazen altar, the type of the sacrifice of Christ; then the laver for washing, the candlestick, the table--typifying the cleansing, light, food and fellowship, the grace wherein we stand. Then behind the veil the glory of Jehovah, which ere long God's people shall reach when He calls them home. How happy God's people should be in possession of such precious things with the knowledge of sins forever put away!

But we are still in the wilderness and there are tribulations. And in tribulations, as justified and assured of the glory of God, we can even boast (the word used in the Greek) in them. Tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed. "Here is how that which is against us works for us; and notice that the very first thing effected is the breaking down of our own wills, those wills, that Jacob-like struggle so much with the will of God. Sovereign He must be; and spite of all that we have known of Him, it is what in practical detail we so little want Him to be. Amid the clouds and darkness that encompass Him in His providential dealings, faith that should find its opportunity finds oftentimes bewilderment and perplexity; yet in it we are forced to recognize our nothingness

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