

# Romans

## Bible Study

### Peace with God

#### Romans 5:1—2

Paul has been building the case that all believers have been saved by faith alone in all dispensations. To do this, he presented Abraham and King David as proof. Abraham was not under the law of circumcision or under the Mosaic Law when he was declared righteous by God. King David was guilty of intentionally going against the Mosaic Law by coveting and committing adultery and murder. The Law had no way for him to come back onto fellowship with God because he sinned knowing he was breaking the Law (Numbers 15:29—31). The only way for him to come back to God was by God declaring him righteous, which is exactly what God did when David came to Him with a contrite heart.

Romans 5 begins with a statement that concludes the argument set forth by Paul in Chapter 4.

#### **Peace with God**

When the word *therefore* is used, it sums up the previous argument by drawing a conclusion. Since we as believers have been justified by faith, we have peace with God. This is in contrast to our relationship with God before we were saved. Although most people do not think of themselves as being an enemy of God, that is what we are called before we were justified (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21).

When Paul says we have peace with God, he is not speaking of an internal peace you feel within yourself, he is speaking of a peace between you and God. The unbeliever is an enemy of God, only able to do things that please self. As enemies, we needed to somehow be reconciled with God. This was accomplished by Jesus Christ through His death. When we accept that offer of reconciliation, we can be assured of eternal life. Jesus Christ's propitiatory sacrifice appeased God, turning away his wrath making it possible for us to have peace with God when we accept His offer of reconciliation.

Since God the Father reconciled the world to Himself through His Son (2 Corinthians 5:18—19), all people have equal opportunity to accept that offer of reconciliation. On our own, we were helpless to do anything, however, Jesus Christ was the perfect pathway for us to come to the Father, spanning between sinful men and a holy God. This offer of salvation is freely given to all people, and each person is held individually responsible. Once the offer is accepted, the promise of eternal life is sealed by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13), guaranteeing that God will do what He promised.

Being able to rest in the peace of God is unique to the Body of Christ. Israel was ruled by the Mosaic Law, which was a curse (Galatians 3:10—12) because it could only bring condemnation (2 Corinthians 3:9) and death (2 Corinthians 3:6—7). Those who did not obey the Law only had God's wrath to look forward to. When we break the law of the land today, we will have the wrath of the government upon us. In similar fashion, when Israel broke the Mosaic Law, they had the wrath of God upon them (Leviticus 26:14—20; 2 Chronicles 19:10).

Now, contrast this with the Church, the Body of Christ in this Dispensation of Grace. We are not under the Mosaic Law and therefore we do not need to worry about God's condemnation, as Israel did. We have fulfilled the Law, in Christ (Romans 8:4). Instead of being enemies living under God's wrath, we have a declaration of peace. Praise the Lord that where we were once dead in our sins, that Grace abounded much more (Romans 5:20). On a broader scale, God's wrath was delayed so that He could show us His great love and grace in this dispensation.

## Grace and peace

Every book written by the Apostle Paul includes the salutation of grace and peace. Paul uses this phrase in a very special way that needs to be dispensationally understood.

We are now in a special period of God's grace, a time when God is lavishing His grace upon us. However, it must be understood that His grace is also evident in all other generations, for without grace, mankind would not be forgiven. Grace is God giving us something that we do not deserve while mercy is the other side of the same coin, not giving us what we do deserve. We deserved death because of sin, but instead God gifted us with life. Praise the Lord that although we were once dead in our sins, that grace abounded much more (Romans 5:20).

On a broader dispensational scale, we can see how God's wrath and judgment were delayed so that He could show us His great love and grace in this dispensation of Grace. The world has a future promise of God's wrath according to Psalm 110:1—2. His enemies were scheduled to be subdued and punished. The timing of this was set forth in Daniel's prophecy, often understood to be the 70th week of the Tribulation. This is going to happen when Jesus Christ arises in His anger and wrath (Psalm 7:6). Notice how Stephen describes Jesus Christ standing in Acts 7:55—56, indicating that the last seven years of Daniel's prophecy is about to begin. However, instead of wrath, God poured out His grace and postponed His prophetic wrath, replacing it with a great outpouring of His grace in this Dispensation of Grace (Ephesians 3:2).

Likewise, His outpouring of grace produced a declaration of peace offered by God to all who come to Him by faith. Dispensationally, this peace is in contrast to God's declaration of war against the unrighteous man during the Tribulation, as can be seen in Revelation 19:11.

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

While God is making war against Satan and the unrighteous, Satan is making war against the remnant of Israel, and against Christ (Revelation 12:17; 19:19).

An understanding of Paul's declaration of grace and peace should lead one to see that God had changed His dealings with mankind. This change happened after the stoning of Stephen with the raising up of the Apostle Paul. He is the one who was commissioned to carry the Mystery to the Gentiles, something Peter and the 11 never did, nor could do. We are never told to follow Peter, however Paul tells us often that we are to follow him, and that he is our pattern (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1; Philippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 1 Timothy 1:16).

This declaration of grace and peace is extended to the whole world when we share with unbelievers Paul's Gospel in this Dispensation of Grace (1 Corinthians 4:1—4). More specifically, we are ambassadors who are carrying the message of reconciliation to the world. God had reconciled all things unto Himself by sending Jesus Christ to die for man's sins. Our message is that we are reconciled, and for unbelievers to accept that offer of reconciliation. Although everyone is reconciled to God (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18; Colossians 1:20—21), the transaction is not complete until individuals accept what God has done for the world. This is why Paul says that we have a message of reconciliation, telling people that they need to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:19—20).

After this period of grace and peace comes God's wrath and war against mankind. As Psalm 2:5 says, "Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."

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