



REASONING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Weekly Bible Study

Faith Is the Only Means of Justification

Key Verses: Gal 3:23-29

The Sequence of Man's Relationship with God

- ✓ Man sinned in Adam (Ro 5:12).
- ✓ That sin affected all humanity (Ro 5:12).
- ✓ Man thus lost his relationship with God as child to Father (Ge 3:8).
- ✓ Ever since, man has been an enemy of God (Ro 5:10; Col 1:21).

God is righteously and redemptively angry with man because man's choice to disobey incurred for him a catastrophe he is incapable of comprehending. It caused him to miss a life so blessed he will be able to comprehend it only after he has experienced it. God then introduced the law to regulate the consequences of man's sin. It was that man might know how God wanted the consequences of sin dealt with and punished. The law was never meant to make man righteous, to save him, but to declare even more emphatically the particular commandments man was transgressing through each sinful act and the seriousness of this transgression. "All [are] under sin" (Ro 3:20; 5:20; Gal 3:22).

The Jews lived under the Mosaic Law (Ac 25:8; Ro 3:19,20). But this law could not save or justify any before God and bring God's righteousness to them. This was partly due to

the impossibility of obeying the law in its entirety (Ro 3:19,28; Gal 2:16; 3:11); and as far as the Gentiles were concerned God wrote His law in their hearts (Ro 2:15). Man, whether Jew or Gentile, cannot obey all that the Mosaic Law prescribes or that which God has written in the heart.

Christ was the only one who fulfilled the law, God's requirement of sinful man (Mt 5:17). He, therefore, was the goal to which the law was leading (Ro 10:4) unto righteousness, to make us what He desired us to be when He first created us. Therefore it is by believing on the Lord Jesus that we are justified before God. Our guilt is annulled and we are made new creatures in Christ (Ro 5:1; 2 Co 5:17,21).

The Instrument of Benefiting from Christ and His Work

Not by *our works*. How can we do anything since sin has made us dead, separated us from God? We can do as much to be saved as a corpse can to go to church or show benevolence. What we need first of all is life (Eph 2:1; Jn 6:51,58,63; 10:10,28; 11:25; 14:6,19; 20:31; Ro 1:17; 6:11,13; 2 Co 6:9; 13:4; Gal 2:19,20; 3:11), and then that life will manifest itself outwardly. Works are the evidence of life (Jas 2:14-26), but not the producer of life.

Not by the law.

The law was never meant to save anyone from sin and make him righteous before God. Its purpose was simply to reveal more completely the sinfulness of sin (Ro 3:20; 4:15; 7:7-13; Gal 2:16). We are saved by Christ through faith. In the Old Testament the word "faith" occurs only twice (Dt 32:20; Hab 2:4), but it abounds in the New Testament. In Greek it is *pístis*, faith, and *pisteúœ*, to believe. They occur more than 240 times, and the adjective *pistós*, faithful, occurs 67 times.

Faith is to be viewed against the background of the saving work of God in Christ in sending Him into the world to be our Savior (Mt 1:21; Lk 19:10). As Christ became what we were in our sins, *dead*, in order to identify Himself with us, so also *He raised Himself from the dead*. That

life of His resurrection which He gained He promises to give to everyone who believes on Him. *Belief, therefore, is our acceptance of Him and what He did to reconcile us to God.*

When we receive Christ, or believe on Him, or exercise faith in Him, we are not only restored to God as His children, but we become instantly righteous. We acquire miraculously a knowledge of God's requirements of us. Those are the works of faith which evidence the exercise of living faith in Christ. This faith really does not save anyone. It is Christ whom the Holy Spirit brings to us who saves us. Faith is the attitude implanted in us by the Holy Spirit, whereby man abandons all reliance in his own efforts to obtain salvation. We are saved by Christ through faith energized in the Holy Spirit (Ac 16:30 ff.; Jn 1:12; 3:16; 16:8,13,14; Ro 8:9,14; Gal 2:16; Eph 1:13 ff.).