**Justification by Grace – Always**

When folks are discussing the differences between life under the Law of Moses and the life of a Christian, it is often said, “the Old Law was a system of works; the New Law of Christ is a system of faith and grace.” One may get this sense from statements like Galatians 5:4 where Paul told Judaizing teachers, “You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” While the “system of works” answer is simple, I believe it is a distortion of what was really going on during the Mosaic period of Jewish history. *The simple fact is, divine law without grace would spell disaster for every man in any age.* Here are some scriptural facts we need to keep in mind when contemplating justification throughout human history.

1. God has always communicated to man what He expects (Heb. 1:1-2).
2. Man has always been incapable of complying perfectly with God’s demands (Rom. 3:23).
3. God has accepted men of every age by being merciful and forgiving their sins (2 Sam. 12:13)
4. Not a single sin can be blotted out unless the price for sin is paid.
5. Every example of God’s forgive-ness throughout human history was made possible by Christ’s sacrifice (Rom. 3:24-26)

Here is where the confusion arises. David stood justified before God by his determination to serve Him and by God’s grace through the blood of Jesus. A Christian stands justified before God by his determination to serve Him and by God’s grace through the blood of Jesus. What’s the difference? I maintain that there is no fundamental difference. David’s forgiveness was made possible by Jesus’ blood before it was actually shed and the Christian’s forgiveness is made possible by Jesus’ blood that has already been shed. In the eyes of God, the calendar date of the crucifixion is of no consequence to its saving power. So where did the Judaizing teacher go so horribly wrong in trying to live by the same precepts that worked so well for David?

**God has had a plan all along:** 1)Place the children of Israel under a written law designed to prepare the way for the coming of Messiah; a law that was never intended to be either universal or permanent.2) Send Christ as the sacrificial lamb to take away the first covenant (exclusive) and establish His own covenant (universal), with faith in and submission to Him as the basis for justification.

**Judaizing teachers were rebelling against the plan of God.** To appeal for religious authority to a law that God had rendered obsolete is in contradiction to His eternal plan (Heb. 8:13). For David to strive to live by Moses’ law while relying on the blood of Christ to cover his shortcomings was according to God’s plan. For a Christian to strive to live by Moses’ law would be a violation of God’s eternal plan and would render Christ’s sacrifice of no effect. The only way a person could stand justified before God without the blood of Jesus would be to keep all of God’s commandments perfectly, justification by works of law; Frankly, impossible. And that is precisely Paul’s point. “You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace” (Gal. 5:4).

The only way we can be justified by grace through faith is to respect God’s plan for us, and that plan demands that we submit to the total and exclusive authority of His Son, strive every day to walk in the light as He is in the light, and have faith and trust that His redemptive sacrifice makes our salvation possible. Justification by works of law is not an option.  *In fact, it never has been*.