

## Justification by Faith

“Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law”. By “faith”, Paul means the faith in Jesus Christ. For him, this is the perfect faith. Before that, there was the Law, i.e. Moses’ Law. Under this law, we were enclosed while waiting for the faith in Jesus. Here, Paul used metaphorically the image of a “pedagogue” which refers to the servant that used to accompany a child to school. Before the faith in Christ, only this servant (the Law) used to direct us towards Christ.

Now we have become “children of God through faith in Jesus Christ”. Paul gives faith here the image of a cloth that is attached to us i.e. that we have become united with, and he says: “for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ”. There exists nothing else, and this is why there is no difference anymore between a Jew and a Greek (i.e. a Gentile) and between the free and the slave (in Paul’s time, Roman citizens were divided to slaves and free people, and the slave didn’t have any legitimate personality). It is not important whether a man was a slave or free and whether he was a male or a female.

Each one of us (a slave or a free man, a male or a female) stays the same on the legal level. The social or racial differences are removed however, “for you are all one in Christ Jesus”.

Before embracing Christ, we were like kids that are “subject to guardians and trustees and in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world”; i.e. we were away from faith. “But when the set time had fully come (i.e. the time in which God’s plan is fulfilled, the perfect plan), God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law (the Jewish Law), to redeem those under the law”. “Those under the Law” are the Jews; even if it is not only them who were redeemed, but the Word of Salvation was sent to them at the beginning. The purpose of redemption is to gain “adoption to sonship”.

In Apostle Paul’s mind, we were the sons of rage because of sin, i.e. we didn’t recognize that we are sons of God in his plan. The Lord made us sons through Christ’s sonship to the Father and our communion with Christ. We are brothers with Christ; and as the Son is the Son of God in essence, we have also become His sons in grace. Our sonship to the Father is gained while Christ’s sonship to his Father is essential and came before all ages.

Our sonship to God is a divine favor and not a fruit of our effort. However, through grace we can behave as sons knowing that God has made us sons through His love. We do not make our sonship to God. We recognize it and then behave according to it in our obedience to the Lord. We achieve our sonship through our love and obedience to the Lord. We enter the family of the Father and become aware of our belonging to God. We become deified as the Son became a man. Man, through adoption, becomes a son and “sits – with the son - on the right hand of the Father”.

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