

This chapter begins by naming some of the immense blessings that come with justification. Peace and grace are among the most precious. That is why the apostle Paul starts so many epistles (like this one!) with “Grace and peace to you ...”.

The barest meaning of “peace” is absence of conflict. But peace, whether between neighbors or nations, or between God and us, brings with it greater happiness, more abundant life, and settled contentment. Peace should be the constant desire and goal of a Christian. Here, peace refers to the peace God has toward us when we have faith in His Son. God loves everyone in the world – John 3:16. But a just God can have peace only toward those who believe and are justified. Only when that righteous peace is established can we enjoy true peace in our hearts and toward others. “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid” (John 14:27).

Grace is a step beyond peace. It means not only that God’s wrath is gone but He gives us favor that we do not deserve. It is not doled out like medicine when we need it. It is the grace “wherein we stand” – a blessed spot accessed by faith and from which we will never be removed.

Questions:

1. Verses 1-2 tell us that our peace with God and access to grace come through our Lord Jesus Christ. What is the term for someone who reconciles people who are in conflict? Where is that word used for Jesus?

2. Think about verses 3 and 4, then answer:

What would we be like if we never experienced suffering?

What sort of character would we have if we lacked endurance, or staying power?

How does hope depend on character?

How could a hope put us to shame?

3. Does verse 5 refer to God's love for us, our love for Him, or a godly love for each other?
4. Considering all of scripture, why was the time of Christ's birth and death the "right" time?
5. What was our state or condition when Christ died for us? Is the verse talking about mankind or individuals?
6. List the four "much mores" in this chapter.
7. What is the argument for "eternal security" here; i.e. that God will never let go of us?
8. List the things that this portion tells us that Jesus Christ accomplished for us.