

# The Law and Grace

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There are many who cannot imagine grace existing where law is. The two are not compatible in their view of scripture. However, when one understands the meaning of grace and law in the word of God, the two cease to be incompatible and become essentially related to each other. God's grace and God's law are given to the same person, and both are for his salvation.

## *God Always Requires Obedience*

It would be incredible for any man who claims to honor and respect the Bible at all to say that God will bless and save one who *disobeys* Him. Passages are too numerous and plain to argue that point. God will take vengeance upon all those who do not know Him and who "obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8). This results in everlasting punishment from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess. 1:9). Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21).

Adam and Eve disobeyed God and were driven from the presence of the Lord because they sinned: they did not obey the word of God. 1 Samuel 15 contains a good lesson on what constitutes genuine obedience to God. King Saul was told explicitly what to do with the Amalekites and their cattle. He decided to save the king alive and some of the best cattle. When Samuel heard the bleating of the sheep, and the lowing of the oxen, he knew that Saul had not obeyed the voice of the Lord. Saul claimed to have obeyed the command, but God said he had rejected the voice of the Lord, and for that he was rejected as king of Israel. He did not obey the voice of the Lord because he did what he wanted to do instead. Saul finally confessed, "I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord . . . " Disobedience is sin!

All obedience requires law. Call it what you will, it is law when one who has the authority to command, does so and requires obedience. The dispensing of any favor that rests upon obeying any condition that God gives, amounts to a condition to that grace. That condition **MUST** be obeyed or the grace will not be received. The conditions which are to be obeyed equal to nothing less than **LAW**.

## *The Law of Christ*

The word of Christ is called his law. Isaiah 2:1-3 is a prophecy of the kingdom of Christ, and it says that all people shall flow into this kingdom which will be established in the top of the mountains, "for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." The law of the Lord began in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost when the apostles were endued with power from on high - they were baptized with the Holy Spirit - and began to speak the truth as the Spirit gave them utterance (Acts 2:4). This was the promise of Christ fulfilled to them (John 14:23; 16:13). It is the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16).

The law of Christ is fulfilled when one obeys what Christ tells him to do (Gal. 6:1-2). Paul explains that he desired to gain some who were "without law, as without law, (being not without law

to God, but under the law to Christ) that I might gain them that are without law" (1 Cor. 9:21). The law of the Lord, the law of Christ, and the law to Christ, all refer to the same thing. They refer to the gospel of Christ, which is the word of God.

If we deny that we are under law now, we deny that we sin, and that puts us in a dilemma with 1 John 1:8-10. The scriptures define "sin" as: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15). It is not difficult to see that law is necessary to identify sin. If then we say we have no law, we must conclude that we cannot sin, because where no law is, there is no transgression.

James teaches us that whosoever looks into the perfect law of liberty, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, he is the one who is blessed in his deeds (James 1:22-25). This perfect law of liberty is the law of Christ, the gospel of our salvation.

### *The Word of Grace is The Law We Must Obey*

"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12). The grace of God that saves TEACHES. It teaches how to live so as to receive that blessed hope. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32).

It has already been observed that the word of God is the law of the Lord. The word of his grace is the law of the Lord. It has also been observed that without law there is no sin (1 John 3:4; Romans 4:15). "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us . . . If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us" (1 John 1: 8,10). If we say there is no law to which we must submit, we say we have no sin and do not sin; but as we say that, we deceive ourselves, the truth is not in us, we make Christ a liar, and his word is not in us. Which horn of that dilemma do you want to take?

The gospel is the law of the Lord. If one does not obey the law, he is a transgressor: a sinner. If he obeys the law, he is blessed of God. This law contains in part the conditions for the forgiveness of sins. Without submitting to the conditions, or obeying that law, God's grace of forgiveness of sins will never be granted to man. This is why some people will be lost and some will be saved. God loved the world and gave His Son to die for everyman, but every man will not receive the grace of God whereby he can be saved, because he will not accept the conditions of the word of His grace (Acts 20:32), which is the law of the Lord.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

"Iniquity" means without law. "Workers of iniquity" would be those who work without law. I suppose those who insist that grace and law are totally incompatible in God's plan would contend

that we receive salvation by grace without any kind of work. That would have to include faith because faith is a work (John 6:28). It is the work of God that we believe (John 6:29). The people asked Jesus what they must DO that they might WORK the WORKS OF GOD. Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (John 6:28). Belief is something that man does with his heart (Rom. 10:17). "Jesus said they would die in their sins if they did not believe he was the Son of God (John 8:24). That is a condition of salvation that cannot be denied. In verse 21 Jesus said, ". . . whither I go, ye cannot go."

Repentance is a command. God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30-31). A *command* must be obeyed. A *promise* is received; a *fact* is believed, but a command is obeyed. Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). God is not willing that any should perish, "but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Unless one believes and repents, he is not working the works of God: not obeying the law of the Lord. That means he would be working without law so far as God is concerned. Jesus spoke plainly to this point: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23).

Men must do something to be accepted by God, contrary to some popular concepts. To be blessed of God we must be doers of the word, and not hearers only. He must look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein to be blessed in his deed (James 1:22-25). Man's eternal judgment and destiny will be based upon his deeds and works according to the law of the Lord. Jesus said, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28-29). They that have DONE good versus they that have DONE evil. The good and evil are determined by what the word of God says. Revelation 20:11-12 says the dead were judged out of the things written in the books (Bible) according to their WORKS. The same is taught in 2 Corinthians 5:10.

In view of all of this, how can one conclude that man has no obligation to law of any kind in order to receive the remission of sins? If we do not obey this law, we are WORKERS of INIQUITY. Workers of iniquity cannot be saved by grace, and I pity the man who undertakes to prove that proposition from the Bible.

The charge of Legalism has no merit against the things presented in this article. Legalism is salvation by works ONLY - works of merit! Legalism is a system that earns salvation by a perfect keeping of the law, so that there is no infraction or transgression of the law at all. After the law has been violated, a system of grace and mercy must provide forgiveness or the just penalty of the law will come upon the transgressor. That system of grace and mercy has conditions, which must be obeyed if the grace is to be obtained. As soon as the law is once transgressed, legalism is no longer possible.

Every man who is saved by grace, is saved by grace through faith. And every man who is saved by faith is saved by repentance and response to the will of God to receive His salvation. That is what grace means!

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