

LAW VERSUS GRACE (21)

When one carefully studies the grace teachings, we may see that they break down four ways:

(Grace Way #1) - There are positive commands. **I Thess. 5:16-18**

(Grace Way #2) - There are negative commands. **Rom. 12:2**

(Grace Way #3) - There are governing principles—they cover every sphere of life. **Titus 2:2-11**

(Grace Way #4) - There are governing rules. **I Tim. 2:11-12; Heb. 13:17**

QUESTION #12 – What are the features of life under grace?

There are three main features to life under grace:

(Feature #1) - Life under grace has grace teachings which are independent and uncomplicated.

The principles that govern life under grace are, by their very nature, totally different and totally separate from the legal system of the law. In this present Age, every principle emphasizes the foundational truth that Jesus Christ has died, risen and ascended and the Holy Spirit, in this Age, now resides in the hearts of those who believe.

These important theological matters are often glossed over, but the sound student of theology realizes these were “age transforming” events. Under grace, man can stand in a brand new relationship with God based upon the finished work of Jesus Christ. The principles which govern this Age are all in view of this tremendous amazing grace reality.

(Feature #2) - Life under grace has grace teachings which are exalted above any other dispensation.

What is expected in this Age of Grace is, in many ways, more difficult than the prescribed Law of Moses. Since the predominant feature of the Grace Age is the indwelling Holy Spirit, we may naturally conclude that Grace Age life which pleases God will be uniquely in line with a supernatural Divine enablement of infinite power.

The uniqueness of grace may be seen in such areas as:

- 1) Bringing every thought into captivity. **II Cor. 10:5**
- 2) Giving thanks for everything. **Eph. 5:20**
- 3) Living a life that is worthy of the high grace calling. **Eph. 4:1**
- 4) Living a life of sacrificial love. **Eph. 5:2; Rom. 5:5**
- 5) Living a life that is led by the Holy Spirit and produces fruit for the Holy Spirit. **Gal. 5:16, 22**
- 6) Living a life that witnesses and tries to evangelize the lost. **Acts 1:8**

A challenge and heart to evangelize the unsaved is something very peculiar to this Age. Under the Law of Moses the emphasis is on Israel’s relationship with God, not evangelizing the world.

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Israel is not charged with reaching the Gentile world, but in this grace dispensation, the grace Gospel is a theme we are to communicate with others.

(Feature #3) - Life under grace features Divine enablement for living in the Grace Age.

If there is one teaching that dramatically differentiates life under grace as opposed to other time periods in the Bible, it is this one. A believer in the Grace Age has a supernatural, provisional empowerment and enablement, which gives that believer the exact and perfect power to live life in the Grace Age for the glory of God. As Dr. Chafer said, “Under grace, the all-powerful, abiding, indwelling and sufficient Holy Spirit of God is given to every saved person” (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 4, p. 188).

This sufficient power is not given to an elite group, but to every single believer and there is an abundance of Scripture which verifies this: **John 7:37-39; Rom. 5:5; 8:9; I Cor. 2:12; 6:19; Gal. 3:2; I Thess. 4:8; I John 3:24; 4:13**. These verses are addressed to all believers—men, women and children. Every single believer has enough supernatural power to be able to live life in a supernatural way that pleases God.

The fact that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer is a fact peculiar to only the Age of Grace. In the dispensation of the Law, certain individuals were filled with the Spirit at certain times, but there is no place where it is said that every Israelite was filled with the Spirit to the point that he is the “temple” of God (**I Cor. 6:19**). Also, under the law, when the Spirit did come to a person, the relationship was temporal. There was no abiding character of the Holy Spirit in the relationship (i.e. **Psalm 51:11**). The Spirit of God would come upon one according to the sovereign purpose of God and then depart, according to the same sovereign purpose. **Under grace, the Holy Spirit never withdraws Himself or removes Himself, but His abiding presence is always in the N.T. believer (John 14:16)**. It is this reality that means the believer is forever saved and kept. This is pure grace.

A believer in this Age is to grow and to develop into a mature Christian in his knowledge, conduct and service. When it comes to the issue of Grace Age development, a believer must make a choice: 1) The by-works principle of the law; or 2) The by-faith principle of grace. Every believer must ask himself—“How am I going to become everything God wants me to become in this dispensation?” Is it by works of the Law or is it the faith principles of grace?

When it actually comes to living life in the Grace Age in accordance with Scripture, there are two great doctrines and inseparable revelations which complement and supplement each other. Both of these doctrines are intimately connected to each other and great harm is done if either is made to be separate from the other. The two doctrines are:

- 1) The goal of Grace Age character is to become Christ-like. **I Cor. 9:21; Philip. 1:21; 2:5; I Pet. 2:21**
- 2) The goal is attained by the enablement of the Holy Spirit. **John 7:37-39; Acts 1:8; Rom. 8:4; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 6:10-11; Philip. 2:13; Col. 2:6**.

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The reason these two doctrines are so critically connected is because no one will ever reach the goal of Christ-likeness without a faith that depends on the Holy Spirit, not life by law codes.

QUESTION #13 – What are the key differences between Israel and the Church?

There are many differences between Israel and the Church, which are critical to understanding distinctions between law and grace. Here we may present six:

Difference #1 - The promises to Israel are earthly; promises to the Church are heavenly.

Difference #2 - One becomes an Israelite by physical birth; one becomes a Christian by spiritual birth.

Difference #3 - Israel is waiting for the Revelation (**Jer. 23:5-8**) of Jesus Christ; the Church is waiting for the Rapture by Jesus Christ (**I Thess. 4:13-18**).

Difference #4 - At Christ's earthly reign, Israel is subject to her King (**Ezek. 37:21-28**); the Church is reigning with the King (**Rev. 20:6**).

Difference #5 - O.T. Israel had a priesthood and the N.T. Church is a priesthood (**I Pet. 2:9-10; Rev. 1:4-6**).

Difference #6 - Israel is classified by God as an unfaithful wife (**Jer. 3:14, 20; Ezek. 15:1-59; Is. 54:1-10**); the Church is classified by God as a spotless bride (**II Cor. 11:2; Rev. 19:7-9**).

Since we have already demonstrated that the O.T. law was for Israel (pp. 12-13), it is very clear that Israel and the Church cannot be under the same system of Divine government for they are two separate, distinct and different systems.

As we consider the matter further, we may observe that the plans, purposes and actions of God vary, depending on what it is God is out to accomplish. For example, the purpose of God in the O.T. was to save a nation, whereas the purpose of God in the N.T. is to save individuals. God's present purpose and plan during the Grace Age is not national, but individual (**Acts 15:13-15; Rom. 11:25-26**).

Many believers are totally misguided and very confused about this truth and invest much of their lives, including their work and money, trying to save a nation when they really ought to be focused on praying for individuals and trying to communicate the Gospel to their neighbors next door (**Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2 Tim. 4:5**).

The purpose of God for His church (emphasis on the local church) is to develop within itself in purity so that God might eventually present it as holy and blameless (**Eph. 5:26-27**). The purpose of the church is not to change society or judge sinners outside the family of God (**I Cor. 5:12-13**). Our goal is to mature and develop at church so that we may go out and reach individuals, so we might build up the body of Jesus Christ (**Eph. 4:11-12**).