

LAW VERSUS GRACE INDEX

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THE DOCTRINE OF LAW VERSUS GRACE (1)

(INTRODUCTION)

When we go to see a medical doctor because we are sick, there are two parts to the process of getting better. First, the doctor must tell us what is wrong with us and second, he must tell us the medicine we need to take so we can get better. Telling us what is wrong with us is one thing and telling us how we can get better is another.

When we come to the Bible we discover that there are two parts to the process of us getting better in our relationship with God. There are two different testaments that tell us two different things. Both are necessary if we are going to get healing in our relationship with God. The Old Testament tells us there is something sinful and wrong with us through the Law and the New Testament tells us our only remedy and cure is by God's grace. Unfortunately for many people, they are like O.T. Israel; they just do not see this point and just don't get it.

Let us illustrate the point. In one of the events in the life of Jesus Christ, a Pharisee asked Jesus which was the greatest commandment in the O.T. Law (**Matt. 22:36**). Jesus' answer was straight out of **Deuteronomy 6:5**, "you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind" (**Matt. 22:3**). Jesus said this is the greatest and foremost commandment of the entire O.T. Law. He is telling this to a Pharisee who hates Him, and He is God.

Now to the shallow, delusional religious person who is proud of himself, he immediately thinks, "Yes, that is so right and so true and I am so glad that is what I do and have always done." However, as Psalm 116:11 says, "All men are liars." When you are honest about yourself and begin to think truthfully and realistically, the O.T. Law proves we have not measured up and often do just the opposite of what God demands. We have all done this many times and in many ways.

To love God with all of our heart would mean that never has there been anything or anyone in our entire lifetime that superseded our love for God. Whatever God wanted and desired took precedence over everyone and everything for my entire existence. Not one time in my entire life did anything or anyone have any precedence in my heart. He has been the total and complete love of my life and I have never needed anyone or anything else. When someone in school said anything negative about God or His Word or cursed Him, I so loved Him that I always spoke up and defended Him because He was the love of my heart. To love God with all of the soul would mean I always have clung more to Him at all times in my life and never to anyone else. He has held first place in my soul and never once have I or anyone else had first place. I never made a bad decision because God was always controlling my soul. When I ate, drank, slept, walked, worked, saw, smelled and tasted things, it was always my love for God that moved my soul. I never disobeyed my parents because my soul always loved God and I would never do anything ever except honor them. To love God with all my mind means my mind has always since day one been totally focused on pleasing God. Never once in my life have I done or said anything I have ever regretted because I have loved God with my entire mind and always pleased Him. I have never thought about anything other than God. My whole life has been about using my mind to think about God and His Word.

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I have never one time looked at anything except that which brings glory and honor to God. I never once used my will to go against God's Word or will because I love God with all of my mind.

If we are truthful with this one simple commandment out of the O.T., we must admit we have not measured up to the O.T. law; in fact, just by reading the O.T. law we prove we have never gotten close to the righteousness that God demanded. The Law proves we are very sinful and spiritually sick. **That is exactly why we need the New Testament and we need God's grace.**

Just a few years after Jesus Christ had ascended into heaven, a major theological argument took place among Christians. This critical theological clash is recorded for us in **Acts 15**. The conflict was between Paul and Barnabas and certain religious Jews (**Acts 15:1-2**). **The central issue at stake in this theological debate was whether the O.T. Law had any connection to the N.T. grace of God.**

Some were claiming that after a person had believed on Jesus Christ, they still needed to be circumcised and still needed to keep the O.T. law of Moses (**Acts 15:1, 5**). The Apostle Paul, on the other hand, believed there was no connection between O.T. law and N.T. grace and he vehemently opposed any such theological thinking (**Acts 15:2**). The case of law versus grace went to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (**Acts 15:6**). It was at this famous Jerusalem council meeting where the Apostle Peter made his monumental theological statement, which basically said, **"I vote for grace!"** (**Acts 15:11**).

Nearly 2,000 years have passed since this meeting in A.D. 45 and yet many are still confused and still arguing over the same theological issue to this very day. Dr. M. R. DeHaan, the founder of Radio Bible Class, said, "Although the matter was settled in the first church council and expounded in the epistles, the errors have persisted" (M. R. DeHaan, *Law or Grace*, p. 11).

It is our desire in the next weeks to take a Biblical journey through a very important doctrine so that we may have a proper doctrinal understanding of God's Word and truth. It is our hope that this study will spiritually free those who are living in bondage to some O.T. law system or some man-made code system from which they have been theologically set free. It is also our hope that this study will cause each of us to use our freedom to serve Jesus Christ with the exciting, dynamic intensity of a Spirit-filled life. We are not saved by the law, we are not saved to keep the law; we are saved by God's grace and we are to live by God's grace.

As with any serious Biblical study of any critical doctrine, many areas must be examined in order to "rightly divide" the Word of God. This study will take us to different areas so that we may truly come to sound terms with "Law versus Grace."

One of the last things C. I. Scofield did before he died in 1921 was to request that his famed student, Lewis Sperry Chafer, research and write on the theme of the grace of God. In 1922, Dr. Chafer published his monumental work, *Grace, The Glorious Theme*.

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When Dr. Chafer introduced his book, he wrote these words: “This book is affectionately dedicated to the late Cyrus Ingerson Scofield, D.D., for many years my friend, counselor, teacher, who in his generation excelled as champion and exponent of grace.” If God will grant us just a measure of understanding of His grace that those two men had, this study will not be in vain.

QUESTION #1 – Is there any Biblical evidence that suggests there is a major distinction between God’s law system and God’s grace system?

As we open the pages of Scripture, we may answer dogmatically Yes! There is an overwhelming abundance of Scriptural evidence. There are nine specific passages that clearly suggest this:

(Passage #1) - John 1:16-17

This text very clearly states that a new system of operation was instituted by Jesus Christ Himself.

(Passage #2) - Acts 15:1-11

As we have already suggested, this was a major theological decision that needed to be made in the early days of the church and the decision was, there was a major difference between law and grace.

(Passage #3) - Romans 6:14

This is a point-blank statement about the law given to believers who have been identified with Jesus Christ.

(Passage #4) - Romans 7:6

This text not only demonstrates a major difference between two systems of theology, but also a major difference between two lifestyles.

(Passage #5) - Romans 11:5-6

It is very clear that at the present time we are in a time of pure grace that cannot contain any mixture of works, even law works.

(Passage #6) - Galatians 1:6

It is very clear that any Gospel that is not pure grace is another gospel, not the one Paul taught. There can be absolutely no mixture of law in grace.

(Passage #7) - Galatians 3:19-29

The teaching is that the law did have a purpose, to bring us to Christ who sets us free from the law.

(Passage #8) - Ephesians 2:8-9

This makes it very clear that we are saved by a total grace system, not one of works.

(Passage #9) - Colossians 2:14

This text clearly states that Christ nailed the law to His cross, canceling out the law debt.