

LAW VERSUS GRACE (11)

(Law Reason #8) - The law was not given for justification. **Gal. 2:16; Rom. 3:28**

Justification is a judicial act of God in which He declares a sinner to be righteous and imputes to that sinner the righteousness of His own Son. Keeping the law has nothing to do with being judicially declared righteous by God. One is only declared righteous by God by believing on Jesus Christ.

(Law Reason #9) - The law was not given for sanctification. **Gal. 5:2-4; Rom. 8:2**

There are three types of sanctification: 1) positional sanctification—one is set apart as a child of God forever the moment he believes; 2) progressive sanctification—one progresses in his spiritual life in holiness and is practically set apart as God's progressive work; 3) ultimate sanctification—when we are ultimately at home with the Lord, set apart unto Him forever.

The point here is that you cannot be positionally, progressively or ultimately set apart unto God by putting yourself back under the O.T. law. The O.T. law was not designed to sanctify us, for that is the Holy Spirit's job. If a believer puts himself back under the law, it is not viewed favorably by God and it does great damage both practically and theologically because it pollutes grace.

These are very clear Biblical statements regarding the purpose of the O.T. law. The thing the law is designed to do is to show a need for Jesus Christ and show a need for the pure grace of God. The law will never make a N.T. believer fulfilled and happy, nor will it leave him spiritually healthy.

QUESTION #6 – What are the three major systems of Divine Government, which connect to the study of Law versus Grace?

Divine Government System #1 - The Law of Moses = the system of the past!

Divine Government System #2 - The Grace of God = the system of the present!

Divine Government System #3 - The Kingdom of God = the system of the future!

When studying the Bible, it is critical to keep these systems in view for there are three differences:

(Difference #1) - Each system is independent and complete for its appropriate time.

(Difference #2) - Each system features Divine blessing and human obligation specific to itself.

(Difference #3) - Each system features a different degree of Divine enablement.

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Dr. C. I. Scofield said concerning **II Timothy 2:15**, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed *rightly dividing the Word of Truth*. The Word of truth, then, has **right divisions**, and it must be evident that, as one cannot be ‘a workman that needeth not to be ashamed’ without observing them, so any study of that Word which ignores those divisions must be in large measure profitless and confusing” (C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, p. 3).

It is extremely important when “rightly dividing” the Word that we be able to recognize the divisions and distinctions between each of these systems. Failure to do this will lead one to many faulty interpretations and theological views concerning God and His plan.

One good example of this is a text like **Matthew 25:34-36**. There are many who take these verses and proclaim a salvation by works gospel. Those who do, have no hint or clue as to the dispensational distinctive of the Kingdom as it pertains to Israel during the Tribulation (**Matt. 24:29**) and at the judgment of the nations (**Matt. 25:32**). As a result of this failure to recognize this, many believe that if they give hungry people food or visit people in hospitals or prison, they are going to heaven. Such a belief not only is a faulty interpretation, but can bring eternal condemnation for we are saved “by grace and not by works” (**Eph. 2:8-9**).

This is why it is so important to recognize the major systems of Divine government.

QUESTION #7 – What are some key interpretive facts concerning the law?

There are six key facts we want to observe when considering the law:

Fact #1 - The law was given when Moses and Israel arrived at Mount Sinai. **Ex. 19:16-24**

Fact #2 - The law was given to Israel. **Neh. 8:16-9:1; Ezek. 20:5, 10-11**

This is a very important point you do not want to overlook. Not only did the people of Israel realize that the law was specifically given to her as a nation, but God Himself clearly testified of this reality (**Ezek. 20:5, 11**).

When the Apostle Paul wrote his famous Gospel letter of Romans, he clearly made certain that his theology included the idea that the law was for Israel and not the Gentiles (**Rom. 2:14**). Paul even made specific reference as to how the law still blinds Israel today from faith in Jesus Christ (**II Cor. 3:12-18**). Even Pilate, in Christ’s day, knew the connection between the O.T. law and Israel (**John 18:31**).

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer accurately observed: “The law was given only to the children of Israel” (*Grace*, p. 119). One clear proof of this point is that we who are believers in Jesus Christ are looking to the future for the Rapture, not for land. Israel, on the other hand, is looking for land and even now is fighting for land. To rightly apply Scripture, we must first rightly divide Scripture and in order to do this, we must see the O.T. law is not given to the Church, but to Israel.

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Fact #3 - The law was given to Israel to show Israel her transgressions and to point her to Jesus Christ. **Gal. 3:19-25**

Fact #4 - The law lasted approximately 1500 years, from Mount Sinai to the death of Christ. **John 1:17; Gal. 2:19-21; Col. 2:14**

Jesus Christ has nailed the law to the cross for the believer; however, the unbeliever may still be condemned by it.

Fact #5 - The law teachings are found in the Old Testament and in the Synoptic Gospels (**Matthew, Mark, Luke**), particularly before the death of Jesus Christ.

Fact #6 - Even under the O.T. law, there was grace. **Ex. 20:24; Lev. 5:17-18; 17:11**

The law was a system of God designed for a specific time to accomplish a specific purpose for a specific people. Overlooking this critical information can cause a believer to miss a life of freedom in Jesus Christ and can place a person under a terrible theological bondage.

QUESTION #8 – What is Grace?

Trying to specifically define the grace of God is nearly impossible, since it is a feeble attempt to understand something that is completely inexhaustible.

However, having said that, grace is a subject that every N.T. believer should attempt to know as much as possible. **What we must clearly understand is that it is theologically impossible to mingle law with grace.** These are two totally distinct and different systems of Divine government and this point is clearly stated in Scripture (**Rom. 10:4; 11:6; Gal. 5:2-5, 18; Eph. 2:8-9**).

Just as we have observed key facts pertaining to the O.T. law, so also we want to observe three key facts pertaining to grace:

Fact #1 - The basic meaning of the word “grace” (*χάρις*) is lovely and gracious kindness and favor (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 479).

When we relate these words to God and His connection to man, it is a gracious kindness and favor which God demonstrates to man that is totally and completely undeserved. What we will also see is that God’s grace is something that cannot be earned, nor is it something that can ever be repaid.

Fact #2 - Grace was evidenced in the Old Testament.

Although the unearned and undeserved kindness and favor of God were operative even in Eden, **it was not until after the death of Jesus Christ that “grace,” as a complete Divine governmental system became operative.**