

# LAW/GRACE/FAITH

## INTRO

Read John 1:14-17.

Here we see contrasted with one another: law and grace. These are repeatedly contrasted throughout the New Testament, especially in the book of Galatians (law and grace).

The contrast of law and grace is a contrast of:

- Two different ways of God's dealing with man.
- Two different covenants: Old Covenant/ (O.T.) and New Covenant/ (N.T.).

## I. Contrasts.

- A. The Old Testament law covenant was a Covenant of Works which depended on the energy of the flesh as **its power** or energy of one's self-effort to fulfill its requirements/commands, judgments and ordinances, and it was a conditional covenant, i.e., you would be blessed conditioned upon your obedience.
- B. The New Testament is a Grace Covenant of Faith which depends on the energy of the Spirit as its power to fulfill its obligations, commands, and standards—meaning God did the work through Christ and only calls for a response of faith and obedience on our part.
- C. It is an unconditional covenant—blessing is freely bestowed from God based on Jesus' work.
  1. God dealt with us in grace which implies the total absence of any human obligation, any human guilt, or any human merit.
  2. With regard to getting Him to do His side of the covenant, He gave the covenant based on the work Jesus did—now we respond.
- D. Grace Covenant of Faith and Law Covenant of Works are two principles that cannot coexist, because the Grace Covenant of Faith implies the total absence of human obligation, guilt (or demerit), or merit.
  - "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt (earned it and merited it). But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Romans 4:4, 5.
- E. Being saved (a Christian, a child of God) is being under grace. (New Testament teachings, standards, and instructions; New Covenant; the Grace Covenant of Faith which depends on the Spirit to enable you to respond to its standards.)
- F. That also means we are not under the law—the law's teachings or the actual written instructions and code—or the Mosaic Law (first five books of the Bible). (We can continue to learn from it because it reveals God's holy, righteous, and moral underlying principles and character, which continue because God's character does not change; but we are not obligated to keep the details of it as a rule of life.)
- G. We are not under the law, which also means we are not under the Law Covenant of Works, which depends on the energy of the flesh, which means doing works to get God to bless you or to earn or merit the favor of God.
- H. When Jesus said beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, it was their hypocrisy but also the mixing of or adding anything to God's pure grace Luke 12:1. Paul also said, a little leaven (Law Covenant of Works teaching) leavens the whole lump Galatians 5:9.
- I. Living your life by the principle of Law Covenant of Works is doing a work and offering it up to God to gain God's acceptance, favor, or blessing. It is initiating a work in an effort to get God to do something, rather than doing something as a response to the work God already did through Christ.
- J. It is very possible to be a Christian under grace and yet be living by a "Law Covenant of Works" attitude toward God, which results in a life full of:

1. **Frustration** - Because the flesh as a power is weak to fulfill any obligation. "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin (by a sacrifice for sin), condemned sin in the flesh," Romans 8:3.
2. **Condemnation** or guilt because the law was a ministration of condemnation. "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory," 2 Corinthians 3:9.
3. **Curse** because, " For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them," 2 Corinthians 3:9. To offend in one point was to be guilty of all of it, and an automatic curse would come on you.

## II. Why the Law?

- A. It was added because of transgressions or to give to sin the character of sin and personal guilt.
  1. Romans 5:12-14, 20, 21; Galatians 3:18-25.
  2. Men had been sinning before God gave the law through Moses because sin was in the world; but in the absence of law, their sins were not put to their account or charged to them.
- B. The law exposed the sinfulness of sin and concluded all under sin Romans 3:19, 20, 23 and all needing a Savior.
  1. It was designed to stop the whole world in their self-effort to do a work and gain God's favor, blessing, peace, etc.
  2. It pointed all the time to the Promised Seed and Savior who was to come.
- C. It was to hold them in check, pointing to faith in Christ as the only way to escape the penalty and power of sin. All of the rituals and ceremonies were like visual object lessons that would teach them of **Christ as the answer**.
- D. It was a signpost pointing to Christ who is the only way of salvation or of being spiritual. The Jews took the sign thinking they had arrived (e.g., sign points to Cleveland says Cleveland 35 miles north; they grabbed the sign and felt they had arrived in Cleveland).
- E. It could only bring sin (nature of sin and law of sin in our members) out into the open but not supply the power to overcome its penalty and power.
- F. It could only expose the villain until the major hero, Jesus, could come on the scene for the final act (pay sin's penalty and break sin's power).
- G. The **GRACE** of God can be defined as:
  1. **God's Riches At Christ's Expense**.
  2. Unconditional, unmerited favor; this implies:
    - a. **Total absence of human obligation**. You were not obligated to do anything to get God to provide it.
    - b. **Total absence of human guilt**. There is nothing you could do wrong making you guilty to God from providing it.
    - c. **Total absence of human merit**. There is nothing you could do good enough to earn it, work for it, or deserve it.
  3. God's enabling power—whatever God requires, His grace enables us to do it.
  4. God's abounding toward men—God's initiating a move toward man.
    - a. **Grace** is of no benefit to us aside from our faith—all God's done in grace will not be received apart from our responding to it in faith.
    - b. **Faith** will not work for us unless we understand grace.
      1. Faith is a response to what God initiated in grace first.
      2. Faith moves the hand of God, but God already moved in grace first.