

# GOD

## The Difference between the Law and Grace Administrations

As born-again sons and daughters of God standing in the household as members of His family, we can live the more abundant life as we enjoy the best that God has made available. We have God's great blessings in all categories of life – physically, mentally, and spiritually – because of God's abounding grace, His unmerited divine favor or benevolent kindness. This abundance of God's grace to us was made available by the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, who redeemed mankind as he fulfilled the Law and gave himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin.

The great time in which we live is the Administration of Grace, which began on the Day of Pentecost which marks the birth of the Church of the Body to which we belong. Before Jesus Christ came to accomplish our redemption, people were spiritually dead, separated from God by the sin of mankind. God's chosen people, the Israelites, were subjected to a vast number of laws, or commandments from God that they needed to strive to follow if they were to receive God's blessings. That period of time is what we call the Law Administration.

Biblically, an administration is a period of time in God's historical and spiritual timetable that is governed by certain policies and spiritual truths. A total of seven administrations can be discerned in God's Word: the Original Paradise Administration; the Patriarchal Administration; the Law Administration; the Christ (Gospel) Administration; the Appearing (Revelation) Administration, and the Final Paradise (Glory) Administration. Each new administration began, or will begin, when conditions change, but we must remember that God himself, who is over all, never changes (Malachi 3:6).

We will take a closer look at two of these administrations, the Law Administration and the Grace Administration in which we live today, so we can recognize and appreciate the differences between them. As we do, we can not only be more thankful for what God has made available to us by His grace but we can be inspired to stand on His Word as we claim His promises. You may remember what it says in Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime (*those things that pertain to the time before the Day of Pentecost*) were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Before continuing, let's just clarify the difference between the Law Administration and the Christ (Gospel) Administration. With the coming of the Messiah, people were still subject to the same Old Testament laws, but Jesus Christ was personally present to keep and perfectly fulfill the Law. Romans 10:4 tells us: "For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth".

The Law Administration effectively began when Moses received ten commandments on Mt. Sinai while the Children of Israel were busy wandering in the wilderness. Through time, other revelation was given, with more commandments added, until the people had to endeavor to follow more than 900 laws in an attempt to appear righteous before God.

These laws covered all aspects of life, even including the minute details of how to properly offer sacrifices to God. It's ironic that God never wanted all those sacrifices: He just wanted His people to obey Him so they could live and prosper.

### Jeremiah

7:22 For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices:

7:23 But this thing commanded I them, saying, obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

Because the people insisted on making burnt offerings and sacrifices, God needed to give additional commandments on how this was to be done properly.

Many of the laws were given to protect God's chosen people physically, mentally, and spiritually. As soon as it was revealed that the Promised Seed, the Messiah who would redeem mankind, would come through Israel, the Adversary did everything he could to try to wipe out God's chosen people in his attempt to keep the promised seed from coming.

Because the Children of Israel lived in a world subject to the Adversary, the only way God could protect them from destruction was for them to keep His commandments. Look at Deuteronomy Chapter 6, verses 24 and 25:

### Deuteronomy

6:24 And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as *it is* at this day.

6:25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us.

But due to sin nature, it was impossible for anyone to perfectly keep all these commandments without any transgressions. No matter what man did, he could not earn righteousness in the sight of God. As it says in Galatians 3:21 and 22: "...if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin..." Also, Romans 3:20 tells us: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge (*full, experiential knowledge*) of sin."

Even so, we know that because of God's great mercy, those believers who endeavored to keep God's commandments and walk in His ways, who believed His promises and kept their eyes on the coming of the promised Messiah, will, in the future Revelation Administration, be in the Resurrection of the Just. Many of these people, by their believing, lived with power and victory, doing great exploits, as recorded in Hebrews Chapter 11, verses 33-38. But even though they accomplished many things, they did not live to see the promise of the coming Messiah and their redemption fulfilled. Hebrews 11:39 says: "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith (*believing*), received not the promise."

The Promised Seed, Jesus Christ, did finally come, and he lived his life perfectly as he fulfilled all the Law, condensing it down into two: Love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love thy neighbor as thyself. Through his accomplishments, his death and resurrection, it became available for mankind to be redeemed, brought back to God. The faith of Jesus Christ made it available for us to become saved when we believed what we read in Romans 10:9 and 10: “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Consider Romans, Chapter 3, beginning in verse 20.

### Romans

- 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.
- 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without (*apart from*) the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets:
- 3:22 Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.
- 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
- 3:24 Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
- 3:28 Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith (*believing*) without the deeds of the law.

Notice that through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ we are not only redeemed but we are justified and made righteous. We don't have all this by our works: we have it because of God's great grace. Ephesians 2:8 and 9 tell us: “For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

We have been delivered from the power of darkness:

### Colossians

- 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear son.

A literal translation of this verse according to usage reads: “Who hath rescued us out from among the exercise or operative influence of darkness and separated us, bringing us as citizens into His kingdom by the work of His dear Son.”

Thanks to the accomplishments of Jesus Christ and God's great grace, we are no longer under the Law. Let's look at Galatians Chapter 3, beginning in verse 23:

### Galatians

- 3:23 But before faith came (*faith became available on the Day of Pentecost*), we were kept under the law, shut up (*closed off*) unto the faith which should afterward be revealed.

3:24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ (“*to bring us*” is not in the text, and “*unto*” is “*until*” – the law was our schoolmaster until Christ), that we might be justified by faith (*the faith of Jesus Christ*).

3:25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster (*the law*).

Since we are no longer under the law, we can stand in liberty. Galatians 5:1 tells us: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage (*the law*)”.

3:26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in (*of*) Christ Jesus.

Verse 26 tells us that we are the children of God. Back in Old Testament times, God did refer to His chosen people living during the Law Administration as His “children”, as we see in places like Deuteronomy 14:1 where it says “Ye are the children of the Lord your God”, but they were children by adoption. We see this in Romans 9:4, which refers to the Israelites:

#### Romans

9:4 Who are Israelites; to whom *pertaineth* the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service *of God*, and the promises:

The Israelites were servants of God, and He was able to adopt them as His children. In contrast, when we got born again, we received spiritual seed, which is incorruptible (I Peter 1:23), and so we are God’s children, brothers and sisters of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Galatians 4:7 tells us: “Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son: and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.”

#### I John

3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

3:2a Beloved, now are we the sons of God...

In these verses, the word “sons” is from the Greek word *teknon*, meaning “beloved children”. Unlike the Old Testament believers, we are sons and daughters of God by seed. As God’s children by seed, we have five “sonship rights” that we can claim, that the Adversary cannot take away. We are redeemed (Ephesians 1:7), we are justified (Romans 3:4), we are righteous (Philippians 3:9), we are sanctified (I Corinthians 6:11), and we have the ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18).

God, by His grace, gave us spiritual seed, the gift of holy spirit, which we cannot lose. We have God in Christ in us (Colossians 1:27). This allows us to have fellowship, direct communication with our heavenly Father, and as we manifest that spirit, we can operate great power, doing the works of Jesus Christ and greater (John 14:12). We are complete in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with body, soul, and spirit. In contrast, in Old Testament times, people were all just body and soul, but God at times would temporarily put His spirit upon certain individuals for specific purposes.

In this Grace Administration, we can also pray perfectly and worship God by way of the spirit. We do this by speaking in tongues, one of the nine manifestations of our gift of holy spirit. This was not available to those living in the Law Administration.

Let's just briefly consider a few more contrasts between the Law Administration and the Grace Administration that will help us appreciate what God has, by His grace, made available to us. Consider Deuteronomy 28:15:

#### Deuteronomy

28:15 But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

God then proceeded to list a great variety of sicknesses, diseases, and other misfortunes that the Children of Israel would be subjected to if they didn't keep His commandments. We know that He didn't cause any of these evils: the idiom of permission is used. When they walked out from under God's figurative "umbrella" of protection, they were subject to the attacks of the Adversary.

Thanks to the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, we have been redeemed from sin and the consequences of sin and can claim physical wholeness. Look at I Peter 2:24:

#### I Peter

2:24 Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

During the Law Administration, forgiveness of sins was dependent upon forgiving others, as we see in Matthew 6:14-15, spoken by Jesus at the conclusion of the so-called "Lord's Prayer" that he gave as an example of how to pray. In contrast, in today's Grace Administration, when we sin our forgiveness is not conditional: we can go directly to God and confess our sins, and are forgiven. Let's look at I John 1:9:

#### I John

1:9 If we confess our sins, he (*God*) is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Again, this is available because the accomplishments of Jesus Christ redeemed us from sin and its consequences.

In Old Testament times, people had to pray to God to ask Him to supply their daily needs (Matthew 6:11 reads "Give us this day our daily bread"). In contrast, today, through God's grace, He has promised to supply all our needs (Philippians 4:19): we simply thank Him for providing what He has already made available. God is our sufficiency (II Corinthians 3:5).

Unlike in Old Testament times, when people made burnt offerings and other sacrifices to God, we in this Grace Administration are to present our bodies a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1) as we walk on God's Word and serve others in the household.

Believers living during the Law Administration will be judged according to their works, and those who endeavored to live according to God's Word and kept their eyes on the promised coming of the Messiah will be in the Resurrection of the Just which will take place during the future Revelation Administration. In contrast, all those who lived (and are still living) during the Grace Administration who have been born again of God's spirit will be gathered together at the close of this administration, when Christ returns for his saints (I Corinthians 15:51-57 and I Thessalonians 4:13-18). We have the Hope of Christ's Return, and we are saved from the wrath to come (Romans 5:9; I Thessalonians 1:10). Actually, from God's perspective, we are already seated in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6).

Finally, one big difference between the Law Administration and the Grace Administration is that God kept the Grace Administration a secret. Nobody, not even Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, knew about this administration: it was the Great Mystery. God had to keep it a secret because, if the Adversary, the god of this world, had known, he would not have had Jesus Christ crucified (I Corinthians 2:8), and mankind would never have been redeemed. The Adversary would have preferred to have to deal with just one man rather than all those born-again believers with "Christ in" them. So, God kept it a secret, until He made it known to the Apostle Paul after the Day of Pentecost (Ephesians 1:9 and following).

So, we see that there are many great differences between the Law Administration and the Grace Administration. We live in a wonderful time. We have many great benefits and blessings from God, and great things to look forward to. And we have all these good things because God gave them to us because of His great grace, His unmerited divine favor and benevolent kindness to us!

- Dr. Rick Batt