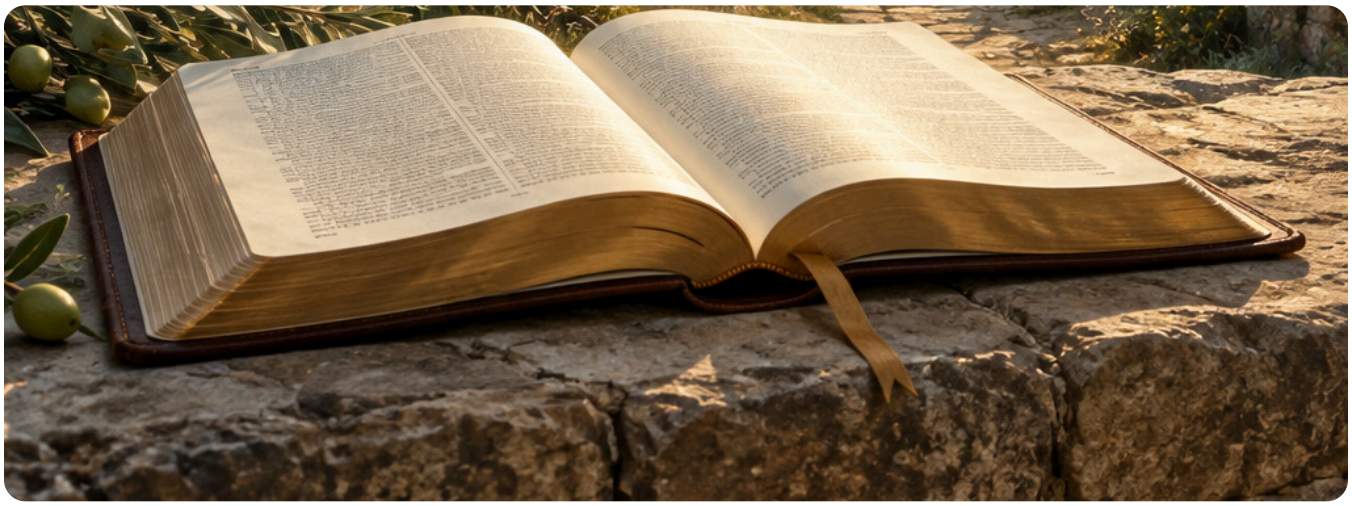
Lesson 11 - Law and Grace



Closely related to our last study on the two Covenants is the issue between Law and Grace. These two are opposites when it comes to salvation. The law says, “Obey and you will live” (Galatians 3:12, Leviticus 18:5). On the other hand, grace says, “Believe in Christ and you will live” (John 5:24, paraphrased). Consequently, many Christians have great difficulty reconciling the two. Yet both have their source in God and therefore do not contradict each other when seen in their respective functions.

There are three main reasons why God gave the law to the fallen human race. The primary reason was to convict us of sin. This in turn makes us realize the need for a Savior. Here is the tutorial function of the law. Second, the law points to Christ as the perfect fulfillment of righteousness for our salvation. In Christ, all the demands of the law were fully met on man's behalf. This is the ceremonial or gospel function of the law. Finally, the law is codified love. This is the spirit of the law and is the standard for Christian living.

Seen in this light, there is no contradiction between God's law and His grace. Our problem as sinners is that God's holy law and our sinful natures are incompatible. This makes salvation through lawkeeping impossible. Grace comes along and saves mankind by meeting all the demands of the law in Christ and then gives the believer power to live a life that is in harmony with the law.

1. What command did God give to Adam in the Garden of Eden? Genesis 2:15-17

Since God created man with the freedom of choice, the tree of knowledge of good and evil became the test of Adam’s loyalty to God. It was placed in the Garden of Eden as an alternate choice to obeying God. By eating the forbidden fruit, our first parents sinned against God and became self-dependent.

2. Through whom did sin and death enter the world (mankind)? Romans 5:12

That “one man” was Adam (see 1 Corinthians 15:22a). The word “Adam,” in the original, means mankind. In creating Adam, God created the whole human race in him; therefore, the entire human race was implicated when Adam sinned. Although we are not guilty of Adam’s sin, the consequence of his wrong act is that sin and death spread to or affected all mankind.

3. What sentence was passed on mankind because of Adam’s sin? Romans 5:18a

4. In contrast, what did Christ’s obedience bring to mankind? Romans 5:18b

The “one” who sinned was Adam and the “one” who obeyed was Christ. By his perfect life and sacrificial death on the cross, Christ - the last Adam (mankind) - reversed the consequences of Adam’s sin on mankind. This is the good news of the gospel and what salvation by grace is all about.

5. Besides condemnation, how did Adam's sin affect humanity? Romans 5:19a

The word “many” is referring to mankind. Because of the fall of Adam, all of mankind is born with a nature that is dominated by sin. His one offense not only condemns us to death but it is also what makes us sinners from birth.

6. Whose obedience will one day make us righteous? Romans 5:19b

As Christians we are justified or declared righteous only by faith. It is not until Christ comes the second time that we will be changed and made righteous. This is the blessed hope of all believers (see Philippians 3:20, 21).

7. What is the wages of sin, and in contrast, the gift of God? Romans 6:23

(Sin):

(God’s gift):

8. What does the law demand of us in order for a person to be justified? Romans 2:13

Unlike the gospel, which justifies us by faith, believing in the law of God cannot save anyone. Being under the law means that we are required to obey all its demands perfectly and continually if we are to qualify for life. One single failure results in death (see Galatians 3:10).

9. How then can anyone experience justification? Romans 3:28

Justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ is the very opposite of salvation by works of the law. The two are diametrically opposed to each other. That is why the two methods of salvation cannot be mixed or reconciled.

10. What is the legal status of the whole human race under the law? Romans 3:19

God placed sinful mankind under the law in order to open our eyes to see that we are sinners in need of a Savior. The law makes us conscious of our sins so that we might be saved by grace.

11. How many can save themselves by keeping the law? Romans 3:20

12. In contrast, who is the end of the law for righteousness to the believer? Romans 10:4

13. Why is sin not able to have dominion to destroy the believer? Romans 6:14

Under grace, sin can no longer condemn us to death. This is because we are no longer under the authority of the law. However, this must not lead us to condone sin, since grace does not give us license to sin (see Romans 6:15-18).

14. What logical conclusion does Paul draw in this verse? Romans 11:6

When it comes to salvation, law and grace are opposites. These two methods of salvation cannot be reconciled. Therefore, we cannot subscribe to both methods of salvation; it has to be one or the other. To be saved by grace is saying, Not I, but Christ (see Philippians 3:9).

15. According to Scripture, what is the only way a person can be saved? Ephesians 2:8, 9

The New Testament makes it absolutely clear that man's only hope of salvation is by faith in Christ. This is what it means to be saved by grace. We cannot earn salvation; we must simply accept it by faith as a gift from God.

16. Does justification by faith make the law null and void? Romans 3:31

In the original text, the word “faith” is preceded by the definite article. By “the faith” Paul is referring to the doctrine of justification by faith and not the believer's faith. By His perfect obedience and His sacrificial death, Christ met the full demands of the law on man's behalf. This is how the law is established in the doctrine of justification by faith (see Romans 10:4).

17. With what must the Galatian Christians not be entangled again? Galatians 5:1

False teachers had convinced the Galatian Christians that they still had to keep the law as a requirement for salvation (Galatians 1:6, 7; 3:1-3). This is the yoke of bondage. Such a religion gives one no peace, nor assurance of salvation.

18. Does freedom in Christ (salvation by grace) give us license to sin? Galatians 5:13

Since obeying the law does not save us, the great danger under grace is condoning sin. This is called “cheap grace.” But being saved by grace gives us no such liberty. Instead, it creates in us a love for others and a hatred for sin.

19. When we love others as we love ourselves what are we fulfilling? Galatians 5:14

20. Therefore, does salvation by grace do away with the law? Matthew 5:17-19

Christ did not come to do away with the law, as some teach, but to fulfill its demands on man’s behalf. He then upholds it as a standard of Christian living.

21. According to the New Covenant where does God write His law? Hebrews 8:10

Besides giving us peace and assurance of salvation, God also gives believers a new heart of unselfish love. This love is what fulfills the law of God. See Galatians 5:14.

22. When was God's grace or strength made perfect in Paul? 2 Corinthians 12:9

God's strength does not depend on human abilities. Our weakness permits God to manifest His strength. That is why Paul could say to the Christians in Philippi, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

23. Besides redeeming us, what were we created in Christ Jesus to do? Ephesians 2:10

Besides saving us from the condemnation of the law, God also saved us in Christ from a life of sin to a life of good works. These good works do not save us but witness the salvation we already have in Christ.

24. What behavior proves to others that we are truly Christ's disciples? John 13:35

When we love one another, as Christ loved us (John 13:34), this is true commandment keeping (See 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Galatians 5:13, 14).

My Response to Lesson 11

• Although we are saved by grace alone and not by works of the law, do you believe that the law is still God's standard for Christian living? Is it your desire to keep the law through the enabling power of the Holy Spirit?

Response: _____

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