

## WHERE THERE IS NO LAW, THERE CAN BE NO GRACE

Many Biblical subjects are misunderstood, and perverted by man, but perhaps none more than that of God's grace. Many in the religious world teach that man is saved by "grace plus nothing." This doctrine is obviously foreign to the Bible, seeing that God says we are saved by faith (Mark 16:16), by hope (Rom. 8:24), by grace (Eph. 2:5), by Jesus' blood (Rom. 5:9), by water baptism (1 Pet. 3:20-21), etc. The Bible very clearly states that man is **NOT** saved by grace only.

There is also a misunderstanding regarding the relationship between law and grace. Many have falsely concluded that law and grace are mutually exclusive (i.e., law and grace cannot coexist). The Bible teaches just the opposite – without law, there can be no grace. The apostle Paul states that Christians are "justified freely by [*God's*] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24). The word, "justified," is a legal term which means to declare as guiltless (Thayer's). In order to leave a courtroom justified, one must be either: a) innocent, or b) pardoned by the judge. Since the verse preceding proclaims that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23), then the only way to be justified in God's sight is to be forgiven of our sins. Thus, we are all in need of God's grace because "all have sinned." If we were innocent, we would be justified in God's sight and have no need for grace. Since sin is defined by God as "the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4) and "where no law is, there is no transgression" (Rom. 4:15), then it is by law that we are deemed in need of grace. If there was no law, then there would be no sin, and man would not be in need of God's grace. Therefore, you cannot Scripturally separate God's grace from God's law.

Consider the example of Noah, who "found grace in the eyes of the LORD" (Gen. 6:8). Noah was in need of God's grace because "GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). Man had sinned, transgressed God's law, and was in need of God's grace. God's grace was offered to all men, but sadly, only Noah and his family took advantage of the offer. The offer of grace required faith (Heb. 11:7), a law (Gen. 6:14-16), and works of obedience – "thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Gen. 6:22). Noah and his family were saved that day (1 Pet. 3:20) because of God's **GRACE** + God's **LAW** + Noah's **FAITH** + Noah's **WORKS** of obedience.

Today, we are amenable to the Law of Christ, the New Testament (Gal. 6:2). Thanks be to God for His grace in supplying the plan by which man can be saved (Eph. 2:8-9). If we will accept this gracious offer by faith in God (Heb. 11:6), and obedience to God's Law (John 14:15; Heb. 5:8-9), we can be saved and live with God in eternity.

- *Brad Green*