

LAW AND GRACE NO. 2

"SAVED BY GRACE, BUT GOVERNED BY LAW"

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Having set out in sermon No. 1 on Law and Grace, to show that God's call to rebellious man originates in His own mind and heart, and looks not at the merits of man, we now turn to yet another part that the Law plays in the overall good of God's Children. In sermon No. 1, it was pointed out that we cannot keep God's Holy Law perfectly, and therefore, GRACE moved up to take it's stand beside the Law as a helpmate. It was shown how that GRACE, working with the Law, always forgives our inability to keep the Law, as we repent for our weakness and failures.

In this sermon, we will try to show how God uses His Law AFTER SALVATION TO GOVERN His people, and that Grace does not rule the Law out of the Christians life. Though it be true that the keeping of the law played no part in our Salvation, it is a false teaching that says the Law is ruled out of our lives AFTER Salvation. Paul said in Rom. 7:25, "**So then with the mind I myself SERVE THE LAW OF GOD.**"

In Hosea 8:12, God said about Ephraim, "**I have written to him the GREAT THINGS of My LAW, but they were counted as a strange thing.**" God's Law is a GREAT THING and nothing to be taken lightly, or slighted. Some Christian teachers contend that in this age of GRACE, the Law is a "YOKE OF BONDAGE", a strange thing, and that the Cross made an end to it, so that we are no longer accountable for it. For the sake of God and His Christ, this teaching must be put down. WE ARE AS MUCH ACCOUNTABLE TO THE LAW AS EVER. You may ask then, "Why the Cross, and what was it's purpose?"

ANSWER----The death of our Lord on the Cross was to keep us from being BOUND by the Law,

but in no way did it change our obligation and responsibility toward it. You may ask again, "But is not a RESPONSIBILITY toward it the same as being BOUND by it? No! Not at all! To be BOUND by the Law would mean death once it was violated, but we can be RESPONSIBLE for keeping it, the best we can and at the same time forgiven for our failures through the blood of the Cross. The Cross saved us from Physical Death and gave us Spiritual Life.

To say that Grace relieved us from the responsibility to keep the Law, would be to say that Grace is OPPOSED to the Law, and this is not true. No where does Scripture teach that Law and Grace are opposed to each other. Any teaching that implies such is off the Word. It is always the Carnal mind that supposes it is not subject to the Law of God. "**Because the Carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject TO THE LAW OF GOD, neither indeed can be.**" (Rom. 8:7) With our Eternal Salvation secure, we wish to show that God still governs on earth by the standard of His Law. Our blessings in this life are to a large degree dependent upon our efforts to keep the Law. God's dealings with Christians are determined by the deeds of said Christians. Speaking generally, we could say that while on earth, we are made to "Reap what we sow in this flesh." This does not refer to our salvation, which as we have pointed out, has as its only foundation the GRACE OF GOD. Election is all of GRACE, yet while our soul may be Eternally Secure, we are made to

"**Reap corruption in this flesh NOW, when we SOW corruption.**" (Gal. 6:7-9) Having been Elected to Salvation does never relieve us from our responsibility to the Law. There must always be a striving to obey it in all its points. We will pay for willful disobedience.

QUOTE: IF GOD BE WITH US, DEC. 31, 1961 JEFF. PAGE 2, "Anybody else in here ever knew Rabbi Lawson?.....I want to say this, then. A strange thing happened to him. He was a real little preacher, a fine brother.....I believe he lived true to what he was put in charge over, that's the main thing. And his wife thought he wasn't making enough money preaching, so she wanted him to get a job. He studied the Bible all the time. So one day she got so angry with him, she just grabbed the Bible right out of his lap, took it over and raised up the stove (lid) stuck it in the stove and burned it. A few months after that she was putting up some Christmas lights and the fire of the Christmas tree caught her and burned her up, right in the same place. See, you reap what you sow!" (End quote)

It seems to this writer that in our preaching the wonderful truth of GRACE we sometimes forget that PRESENT BLESSINGS are earned, or lost, by our attitude and conduct toward GOD'S LAW. As our Prophet often pointed out, we are "Free Moral Agents" and can do as we want, but we will, in this life reap what we sow! Although we know the next life is far more important than this one, the Bible has much more to say about this one

than the next. For every passage that deals with Life Eternal, we have dozens that instruct us concerning our conduct here. GOD'S Word establishes an undeniable CONNECTION between our CONDUCT after Salvation and God's governmental dealings with us.

If there was no reaping what we sow in this flesh, where would be the deterrent against breaking God's laws? Our Righteous Father encourages those who strive to keep His Law by rewarding them, and discourages unrighteousness by making us *smart* for it. It is indeed a great blessing to study God's plan of predestination (Saved without effort or merit on our part.), but we suffer much loss if we neglect those scriptures that reveal how to receive His best in this present life.

To reach a BALANCE in the scriptures should be our ever present concern. It is the duty of the Ministers to constantly BALANCE Word with Word. In this teaching we are attempting to show the very real CONNECTION between obeying God's Holy Laws and receiving His richest blessings in this life. In I Sam. 2:30 God has declared, "**Them that honor Me, I will honor.**" This expresses the general principle that we wish to set forth, namely that our ATTITUDE toward God and our CONDUCT before Him determines His dealings with us in life. The Bible expresses in plain and clear language the way in which we enter into God's best.

"This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt mediate therein. For then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success." (Joshua 1:8) We are not to lean toward our own thinking, nor seek to please men, but seek to please God in all things. The BOOK OF HIS LAW shall not depart out of our mouth, for nothing less than obedience to the fullest of our ability will please Him.

It cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the following of God's Law is the way of blessing, for

THEN we will be prosperous, and THEN we shall have good success. The path of obedience is the path of prosperity. Obeying the Law of God will always be the way of trial for the flesh, but in the long run, it will surely be that in keeping the Divine commandments "**There is great reward.**" (Ps.19:11) "**If they obey and serve Him they shall spend their days (here) in prosperity and their years in pleasure.**" (Job 36:11)

"Thus saith the Lord, why transgress ye the command of the Lord, that ye cannot prosper." (II Chron. 24:30) There is no use insisting that such Word was only for the Israelites, for the New Testament teaches the exact same truth. I Tim. 4:8, "**Godliness is profitable for all things, HAVING PROMISE OF THE LIFE THAT NOW IS, and of that which is to come.**" The fulfillment of this promise is conditional upon our efforts toward keeping the Divine Law, and upon our personal striving toward Holiness.

Joshua and Caleb announced unto Israel, "**If the Lord DELIGHT in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us.**" (Num.14:8) The term DELIGHT here does not refer to the Love that God had for His own before the world was, but rather to His pleasure in our character and conduct AFTER WE ARE SAVED and serving Him. We must see the difference between His Eternal Love for us and His PRESENT DELIGHT in our walk before Him. It is our present walk before Him that determines His SMILE or His FROWN. We must see the difference between His ACCEPTANCE of us "In Christ" and His acceptance of our character and conduct as free moral agents, making daily choices to obey His Laws.

This difference is clearly pointed out in scripture. In John 17:24 Jesus said, "**Thou lovedest Me before the foundation of the world.**" But

in John 10:17 He said, "**Therefore, does My Father love Me BECAUSE I LAY DOWN MY LIFE---**" The Father loved the Son before the world was, but when He was on earth in flesh, He loved Him BECAUSE He was obedient and lay down His life for many. The Father loved the PERSON of His Son, but He also loved Him for His OBEDIENCE in the flesh. We must not confuse, "**I have loved thee with an everlasting love.**" (Jerm. 31:3) with, "**For the Father loveth you BECAUSE YE HAVE LOVED ME---**" (John 16:27)

The scriptures say of Enoch, "**Before his translation he had this testimony, THAT HE PLEASED GOD.**" But of the conduct of Israel in the wilderness He declared, "**I was grieved with that generation.**" (Heb. 3:10)

Even though it is clear in the Word that we are the gainers when we obey our Lord, we must never entertain the spirit that He owes us a debt. After we have done our very best to obey Him, we have still failed. Our attempt was only our, "**Reasonable service**" (Rom.12:1), which is His proper due. Even so, God does not hesitate to tell us in His Word that he rewards us for our service to Him in this life. Jerm. 51:56, declares, "**.....The Lord of recompenses shall surely requite (repay).**" In other words, He pays for obedience and He pays for disobedience. We reap what we sow.

There are many many scriptures that show our Lord recompensing for righteousness in this life. Ps. 119:165, "**Great peace have they which love Thy Law, and nothing shall offend them.**" Isa. 32:17, "**The work of Righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of Righteousness, quiteness and assurance forever.**" Ps. 58:11, "**So that a man shall say, verily there is a reward for the Righteous, verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth**" (Judges our conduct now and rewards us now). Ps. 92:12-15.

“The Righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow (here and now) like a cedar in Lebanon.” On the other hand, **“The Lord will punish Jacob according to his ways, according to his doings will He recompense him.”** (Hosea 12:2)

It is a law of God that as we sow on this earth we shall also reap on this earth what we have sown. Our Lord Jesus taught this Law. **“There is no man that has left house, or parents, or brethren, wife, or children, for the Kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more IN THIS PRESENT TIME, and in the world to come life everlasting.”** (Lk. 18:29-30)

And so did the Apostle Paul teach the sowing and reaping law. **“He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”** (II Cor. 9:6) It is in understanding God’s dealings with us **“ACCORDING TO OUR PRESENT CONDUCT”** that sheds light on the teaching of our Prophet wherein he said, “God does not ever change His mind.” To say that God never changes His mind is to say that He never has to REPENT of anything. Yet, we read places in the scripture that speak of the Lord REPENTING. Did our Prophet speak wrongly or do we just need more light on the Word?

This writer is convinced that we only need more light. The controversy is removed when we understand that God never changes His Mind concerning His Eternal Plan made before the first atom. His secret will and plan marches forward every hour of every day. Concerning this plan, it is absolutely correct to say that He never changes His Mind.

On the other hand, when the scriptures speak of God REPENTING, or changing His Mind, it has reference to His governmental dealings with us, according to our CONDUCT before Him.

When men change their attitude and conduct toward Him, then He changes in His dealings with them. This is not to say that He does not know our end, and that He made His Eternal plan accordingly. He knew **“The end from the beginning”**, but at the same time, He intended to deal with us according to the general principle set out in the following scripture: **“At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to pull down, and to destroy it? IF that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them, and at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, IF it do evil in My sight, that it obey not My Voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.”** (Jerm. 18:7-10)

And so we see that there is no QUESTION, or no IF about God’s Eternal Plan, made from His foreknowledge, but in His daily dealings with nations and individuals, God does change His dealings as we change our conduct. This leaves room for human responsibility, and keeps us from being robots. It leaves room for rewards not only on earth in this flesh, but also for rewards in the next life about which the scripture is also clear. (Matt. 10:41-42)

While many familiar scriptures tell of God as the Controller of human destiny, our above scripture in Jeremiah, tells of Him as a God who rewards in this life according to human accountability, and shows He is ever ready to heal, prosper and bless those who strive for Holiness and right living.

In I Sam. 15:11 we read, “Then came the Word of the Lord unto Samuel, saying, it repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be King. For he is turned back from following Me and hath not performed My commandments.” This in no way means

that God regretted His act of making Saul King, but that because of his backsliding, He would reverse His dealings with him and take away his kingship.

And so we see, that God’s dealings with us are determined in part, or in a general way of speaking, by our own conduct. We say *in part* because God still reserves the right to test and try His most righteous people and does often do so in face of their most obedient ways. The three Hebrew Children were thrown into the furnace BECAUSE of their obedience. Joseph received a prison sentence BECAUSE of his obedience, and Daniel was placed in a den of lions BECAUSE he obeyed. God is God and does as he pleases, but never has He done a wrong thing, nor failed in His righteousness.

In dealing with men in their flesh, God exercises much mercy and patience and gives **“space to repent.”** And, when that mercy is taken advantage of, He acts accordingly. As many of His promises to bless are conditional upon our performance of good, so can many of His promises of judgment be stopped by our humbling ourselves, repenting and conforming to His Law.

A most remarkable example of this is seen in the case of the wicked Ahab who, when he heard the sentence of judgment pronounced, he **“Rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his body, and fasted and went softly.”** Then the scripture reports that, **“Because he humbleth himself before Me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his Son’s days.”** (I Kings 21:20-29)

Our subject is Law and Grace and how the two work together to bless mankind both here and in the world to come. The Law, which was given to show us our sins and to drive home the fact that we are lost if we depend on it for salvation, is at the same time the foundation for our

present blessings, as we strive to please our God by obeying it. "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." (Ps. 84:11) "For God giveth to a man that is good in His sight, wisdom and knowledge and joy." (Ecc.2:26)

Let us now consider some cases in the Bible where man's conduct was the reason for God's promised blessings. Gen. 22:15-17, "And the Angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of Heaven the second time, and said.....for **BECAUSE** thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy Son...that in Blessing I will bless thee..." What could be plainer? BECAUSE Abraham obeyed, God would bless.

God said to Isaac, "I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of Heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries.....**BECAUSE** that Abraham obeyed My Voice and kept My charge...." (Gen. 26:4-5)

Num. 13:24, "My servant Caleb, **BECAUSE** he had another spirit with him and followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land.

Num. 25:12-13, "Wherefore say, behold I give unto him

(Phinehas) My covenant of peace, and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting Priesthood, **BECAUSE** he was zealous for his God...."

Joshua 14:14, "Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb....**BECAUSE** he wholly followed the Lord God."

Perhaps there will be some of our readers who will say, "All that is Old Testament teaching." and dismiss it. But the truth is, God's principles of Divine Governing are the same in any age. What He did in the way of GOVERNING His people under the LAW, He still does today. He cannot change His principle for that would be to admit to a flaw in His Character, and that cannot be. Jesus taught the Principle of Blessings for right conduct.

Matt. 5:7, "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy." And this has nothing to do with Salvation by works for the scripture has also declared, "By the deeds of the Law shall no flesh be justified." (Rom. 3:20)

Both Old Testament and the New Testament alike teach that there are great blessings in this present life that follow the keeping of THE LAW. This being true then, it

is sadly possible to bring down on ourselves trouble from NOT having conscientiously paid attention to His Law. God has not only promised that, "No good thing will be withheld from them that walk uprightly," but He has also informed us, "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you." (Jer. 5:25)

It is our sincere prayer that we do not depend on Grace to the extent that we ignore the Law, and by so doing change Grace into *dis-Grace*. Let us as Christians be the best possible examples of Law Keepers, while at the same time, we leave room for Grace in our own lives, and the lives of others. Amen!

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