

I have come across a beautiful explanation of the biblical distinctions between the Law and Grace that I would like to share. C.I. Scofield does a wonderful job of simplifying this theological conundrum, but by no means should it be considered simple. Most every Bible student grapples with the transition from the Mosaic Law to that which Christ presents at His first advent (which continues on with the Church dispensation), and unfortunately the result in many doctrinal circles is that either the Law is dismissed entirely as irrelevant, or it is misused in the Church as some means or way of salvation. Clearly the Mosaic Law no longer governs God's people (Rom. 6:14), but it is a grave error to think that the God who created, administered and upheld the Law as given to His chosen people is of some vastly different character than the God who made Himself manifest in the flesh, in the person of Jesus the Christ, God the Son. They are One and the Same – forever unchanging.

Too often even the most scholarly of theologians seeks to dismiss the Old Testament presentation of God's justice and demand for holiness relative to His people, but just as often the same would seek to do away with the freedom and liberty that comes when one becomes a new creation in Christ. Simply said, a Christian cannot ignore Scripture's shouts of God always rendering a just recompense, but on the other hand a Christian cannot ignore Scripture's shouts of man's inability to do anything of his own accord that would satisfy God's just demands of holiness. And thus the conundrum of Law vs. Grace.

Though the following snippet does not explain, per se, the intricacies of initial salvation versus the salvation of the soul, or righteous acts versus unrighteous ones and the resulting rewards and punishments recompensed at the Judgment Seat, it does delineate the distinctions too often missed as one approaches understanding the Law, which governed God's people, Israel - and Grace, which governs God's people, the Church. So enjoy.

(This is taken from the book, "The Word of Truth Rightly Divided," by C.I. Scofield, original printing date unknown, pp. 41-46.)

## LAW AND GRACE

By C.I. Scofield

The most obvious and striking division of the word of truth is that between Law and Grace. Indeed, these contrasting principles characterize the two most important dispensations – the Jewish and Christian.

"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

It is not, of course, meant that there was no law before Moses, any more than that there was no grace and truth before Jesus Christ. The forbidding to Adam of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:17) was law, and surely grace was most sweetly manifested in the seeking, by the Lord God, of His sinning creatures, and in His clothing them with coats of skin (Gen. 3:21) – a beautiful type of Christ “made unto us... righteousness” (I Cor. 1:30). Law, in the sense of some revelation of God’s will and grace, in the sense of some revelation of God’s goodness, has always existed, and to this Scripture abundantly testifies. But “the law” everywhere mentioned in Scripture was given by Moses and from Sinai to Calvary dominates – characterizes, the time; just as grace dominates, or gives its peculiar character to, the dispensation which begins at Calvary, and has its predicted termination in the rapture of the Church.

It is, however, of the most vital moment to observe that Scripture never in any dispensation mingles these two principles. Law always has a place and work distinct and wholly diverse from that of grace. Law is God prohibiting and requiring; grace is God beseeching and bestowing. Law is a ministry of condemnation; grace, of forgiveness. Law curses; grace redeems from that curse. Law kills; grace makes alive. Law shuts every mouth before God; grace opens every mouth to praise Him. Law puts a great and guilty distance between man and God; grace makes guilty man nigh to God. Law says, “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”; grace says, “Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Law says, “Hate thine enemy”; grace, “Love your enemies, bless them that despitefully use you.” Law says, “Do and live”; grace, “Believe and live.” Law never had a missionary; grace is to be preached to every creature. Law utterly condemns the best man; grace freely justifies the worst (Luke 23:43, Rom. 5:5, I Tim. 1:15, I Cor. 6:9-11). Law is a system of probation; grace, of favor. Law stones an adulteress; grace says “Neither do I condemn thee.” Under law the sheep dies for the shepherd; under grace the Shepherd dies for the sheep.

Everywhere the Scriptures present law and grace in sharply contrasted spheres.

The mingling of them in much of the current teaching of the day spoils both, for the law is robbed of its terror and grace of its freeness.

The student should observe that “law,” in the New Testament Scriptures, usually means the law given by Moses (Rom. 7:23 is an exception); but sometimes the whole law, moral so-called (or the ten commandments) and ceremonial, is meant; sometimes the commandments only; sometimes the ceremonial law only.

It should be remembered, also, that in the ceremonial law are enshrined those marvelous types – the beautiful foreshadowings of the person and work of the Lord Jesus as Priest and Sacrifice, which must ever be the wonder and delight of the

spiritually minded. Expressions in the Psalms which would be inexplicable if understood only of the “ministration of death written and engraven in stones” (II Cor. 3:7) are made clear when seen to refer also to the types – those lovely pictures of grace: “But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night (Ps. 1:2).

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It is evident, then, that God’s purpose in giving the law, after the race had existed twenty-five hundred years without it (John 1:17; Gal. 3:17), was to bring to guilty man the knowledge of his sin, first, and then of his utter helplessness in view of God’s just requirements. It is purely and only a ministration of condemnation and death.

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