

SIN, GRACE, THE LAW, FAITH, RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SALVATION.

INTRODUCTION: “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.**”(Ephesians 2:8,9)

In this study we shall endeavor to explain more on the relationship that exists between Grace and the Law, not excluding Faith and righteousness. It is the misunderstanding of these themes that has given birth to many denominations that we see today. These subjects have confused many and are still confusing to many. May the Lord guide us as we try to understand what he has revealed in His word. Let's begin our study by looking at

The Eternal God.

People have been asking all kinds of questions for as far as we can go back in history, but the question “**Where did God come from**” is definitely invalid in itself , because the very name “God” defines an uncreated being. Says the Word, “ **Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.** ” (Psalms 90:2). Thus, time cannot define who He is. He created time itself “**in the beginning**” (Gen 1:1) as already seen in the previous lesson.

His throne, too, is forever. “**Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre...Thy throne is established of old: thou art from everlasting**” (Psalms 45:6, 93:2).

Since the existence of the throne **necessitates the existence of a government and kingdom**, then we can safely conclude that God ' s rulership (governance) and kingdom are eternal. “... **his kingdom is an everlasting kingdom**, and his **dominion** is from generation to generation.”(Daniel 4:3)

God ' s Law, the foundation of His throne.

Is it not just logical to think that the existence of God ' s government **necessitates the existence of God ' s law**? There ' s no government without a constitution [a set of laws], you see. If all earthly governments have sets of laws, so it is with the heavenly government. Writes the servant of the Lord,

“Justice and judgment are the habitation of

thy throne ... righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne” (Psalms 89:14,97:2)

And since righteousness and justice **are rooted in the Law**, then **the law is the foundation of God ’ s government** just like it is the foundation of earthly governments. And the eternity of God himself, and of his own throne **makes the Law itself (justice, righteousness and judgment) eternal.**

Writes the Psalmist, “ **... all his commandments are sure. They stand fast for ever and ever**, and are done in truth and uprightness.”(Psalms 111:8)

Thus we have all these things eternal: **God himself, his throne, his kingdom, his government and his law.** Having thus discovered the eternity of God’s law, the next question is,

What is Sin and Where did it come from?

The scriptures define sin in this manner: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: **for sin is the transgression of the law.**” (1 John 3:4). The law gives guidance in relation to how to walk in the right manner, and if sin is breaking God’s law according to the scriptures, **then sin cannot exist where there’s no law to break.**

The Apostle made this point clear when he said “ **for where no law is, there is no transgression**”(Rom 4:15).

In addition to that, the law guides people to live upright. To live otherwise is sin. Thus “ **All unrighteousness is sin** ” (1 John 5:17). Notice, the law can exist without sin, **but sin**

can only exist when there's the law. The law is eternal, but sin is not, and if this is the case then when did sin begin, and where? The scriptures give us a glimpse...

“ Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth...Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness...How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!...For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High ” (Ezekiel 28:14,15,17, see also Isa 14:12-14)

Here's the highest angel in heaven, **“Lucifer,**

son of the morning” who began to imagine evil in his heart while in heaven and therefore became the originator of sin. Satan, you see, had an “I” problem. “I will...I will...I will”, his ego was beyond imagination. **“I will be like the most high”**: If his purpose was to be like the most high in character rather than in authority, the situation would have been different. How many today are having the same satanic ambition? **Pride, selfishness and covetousness** are sins associated with his downfall, but as far as we can know, trying to **fully** understand how sin began is attempting an impossibility. Thus, it remains as one of the mysteries(Deuteronomy 29:29)

Since sin was found in his heart, **then Lucifer had definitely broken one of God’s law**. Thus we see the existence of the law in heaven before sin.

The Tree of the knowledge of good

and evil.

“ ... the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: **But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die**”(Genesis 2:16,17)

The fall of man is something that all Christians know about. The statement “**in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die**” did not mean they would die immediately, **but that on that very day they would be stripped off of immortality and doomed to death.** (Compare with Patriachs and Prophets 60.2)

Sin, you see, came into the world after our first parents **broke the law of God**. And since “**the wages of sin is death**”(Romans 6:23), then the

law (the constitution of God ' s government) which was broken condemned them to death.

Could God have solved the problem of sin any other way?

Atheism argues that If God is all loving, all knowing and all powerful, he could have dealt with the problem of sin **by simply forgiving man without having his Son killed**. But in this our atheist friends miss the point , **“not knowing the scriptures nor the power of God”**.

Declares the all knowing God, **“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”**(Isaiah 55:8,9)

Remember, God is the **“judge”** and **“king”**

(Isa 33:22) He's also just, **“For the Lord is a God of justice”** (Isa 30:18), and if this is the case then He cannot possibly change the demands of the law. When the law condemns one to death, God cannot just reverse that and still be just. Thus, man definitely had to die for breaking the Law.

But the Bible also teaches that He's a loving God (Jeremiah 31:3, 1 John 4:8,16), and seeing man going to death whom he claimed to love without doing anything, would have put his love to Question. So how was God going to meet the demands of the law **without compromising his love at the same time?**

Since the law is a transcript of God's character, then only one equal with God could redeem man from its penalty.

“But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ

died for us.”(Rom 5:8)

That is, while we were still under the death penalty for breaking God’s law, Christ died in our behalf, **“the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God”**(1 Peter 3:18)

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.”(2 Cor 5:16)

Manifestly, then, It was only by giving up his beloved son that the Eternal God was going to solve the sin problem **without compromising either justice or love.** The demands of the Law(justice) were met **in that Christ died for us [the death sentence was executed],** and the Love of God was demonstrated **in that we were saved from eternal death.**

At the Cross, Justice and Mercy kissed each other.

The was no any other way, you see. Moreover **“without shedding of blood is no remission.”**(Heb 9:22) Thus God **“became flesh and dwelt among us”**(John 1:14, 1 Timothy 3:16), Yes God entered into creation as Jesus of Nazareth. He **“made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”**(Philippians 2:7,8)

“...yet it was a struggle, even with the King of the universe, to yield up His Son to die for the guilty race. But ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ John 3:16. Oh, the mystery of redemption! the love of God for a world that did not love Him! Who can know the depths of that love which ‘passeth

knowledge'? **Through endless ages immortal minds, seeking to comprehend the mystery of that incomprehensible love, will wonder and adore.**"(PP 63.3)

Saved by Grace.

What is Grace? **It is the unearned, undeserved favor.** Man was supposed to die, but Christ died in his behalf, thereby allowing him to have life which he didn't deserve. That is the Grace of God.

"For **all have sinned**, and come short of the glory of God; **Being justified freely by his grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"(Romans 3:23,24)

Because "all have sinned"(broken God's law) and therefore deserve death, salvation and justification can only be by grace. Grace, you

see, is free. It is not bought or earned. **It is freely given by God, and this was clearly shown in Christ's death.** Yes, Salvation is a free gift.

“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.”(Eph 2:8,9, Rom 5:15)

“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. **And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.**”(Rom 11:5,6)

Here we can clearly see that no one gets Salvation by his own good works. And who can keep God's law perfectly? Who has never broken God's law? The scriptures declare that we **“are all under sin”**(Rom 3:9) and therefore

can only be justified freely by His grace.

“Grace is unmerited favor, and **the believer is justified without any merit of his own, without any claim to offer to God..**”(1SM 398.1)

“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, **not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace,** which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began..”(2 Timothy 1:9)

“The world's Redeemer **was treated as we deserve to be treated, in order that we might be treated as he deserved to be treated.** He came to our world and took our sins upon his own divine soul, **that we might receive his imputed righteousness.** He was condemned for our sins, **in which he had no share,** that we might be justified by his righteousness, **in which we had no share..**”(RH March 21,

1893, par. 6)

Thus we have **Salvation which is by grace and imputed righteousness which is by grace.**

What then?

Does Grace justify sin and do away with the Law?

“What shall we say then? **Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? ... Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof...For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.** What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. “ (Rom 6:1,2,12,

14,15)

Here is one of the most misunderstood references in the Bible regarding Grace and the Law. Shall we continue to live in sin simply because Salvation is by Grace? Nay! The Grace of God that comes to an individual makes him to be “**dead to sin**”, that is, to let not sin “**reign**” or “**have dominion**” in the body. Thus, Grace enables individuals **to flee from sin, not to live in sin**. And since sin is “**breaking**” God’s law, then to be “dead to sin” means to be dead to breaking God’s and to be alive to keeping it.

Notice that dying to sin(breaking the law) comes after Grace (that is, after Salvation by Grace), not before.

The context of the text itself clearly shows that **To be under the law means to be under its condemnation, to be under the power of sin.**

To be under grace means to be under Christ's guidance of departure from sinful habits.

Paul explains it further in this way,

“But when the fulness of the time was come, **God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,** To redeem them that **were under the law**, that we might receive the adoption of sons.”(Galatians 4:4,5)

Notice that Christ was made “**under the law**”(under the penalty for breaking the law, and therefore he died on our behalf), in order to redeem us from that condemnation and give us Grace through adoption as his sons. Thus, one scripture explains the other.

Think about it this way. Let's assume I put someone's house on fire for no reason, and taken to court. Then the court charges me \$200,000 for that crime, **otherwise I'll go to prison**. I don't have that money, and I don't

know what to do. Then comes a person from no where who decides to pay that amount for me **because he has compassion on me**. Have I saved my life because of anything about me? No, because I still have this arson on me. So then, it's because of the grace of the one who has payed that money for me that I'm **not** going to prison. And when the court releases me, I don't have to burn someone's property again, but to appreciate the one who has saved me. Similarly, Christ in saving us from the condemnation of the law does not expect us to continue breaking it, otherwise we will still be under condemnation. **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."**(Rom 8:1, compare with John 3:18). To walk after the flesh is to do the works of the flesh(Galatians 5:19-21), and to walk after the spirit is to bear the fruit of the spirit(Galatians 5:22).

So Does God's grace nullify the Law? No way.
But let's first look at what it means to be

Saved through faith.

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen ... But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”(Hebrews 11:1,6)

To believe, **not blindly but with evidence**, the things not seen is what faith is.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”(John

3:16,17)

“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.**”(Rom 10:9)

To truly believe in the Lordship of Jesus Christ and in his death and resurrection is what gives eternal life. This is the faith that leads to life everlasting. When one gives you a free gift, you need to accept it, don't you? so **When Salvation freely comes by Grace, we accept it through Faith.** And since

“..faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”(Romans 10:17) then True Faith really is simply **hearing and doing the Word of God.** It's having confidence in the one who has brought Salvation for free. **But How's it related to works?** Let's first look at

Abraham, Justified by faith without works.

“For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.** Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, **his faith is counted for righteousness.**” (Rom 4:2-5)

Since we all are “...justified freely by his **grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” then **even Abraham** when he found salvation in God was not “justified by works” for he was a sinner like us. “**His faith was counted for righteousness**” not because of his

good deeds but **because of God's righteousness**. If he was going to be justified [made right with God] by his works, **his own works would have condemned him, because he was a sinner**. “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...we conclude that **a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law**. ”(Romans 3:20, 28). And yet “**Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.**”(Romans 3:31) Thus, Justification without the works of the law doesn't nullify the law but establishes it.

The righteousness that justifies is not earned by works but by believing God. But it becomes interesting when we further look at

Abraham, Justified by faith that works.

“...faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the

spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”(James 2:17-26)

These two references seem to be contradicting each other. **Paul says Abraham was justified by faith without works, But James here says He was justified by faith with works.** This can be sorted out when we realize that the apostles are using the word Justification differently, though speaking of the same person.

Indeed Abraham himself **was not justified by works [by what he had done]** but by faith. However, **after he had been thus justified [through God’s grace] his faith was revealed in good works, and when God asked him to offer his only son he was willing to do it.** He then became the Father of the faithful. What is faith then? Is it just saying “I believe in God?” Even demons do so, will they be saved by that faith? No. Why? **Because their faith is dead.**

Their faith does not act on God's eternal word. True faith, you see is revealed in good works. This is perfect faith. Thus, when Christ saves us by his own grace (not because of our works), he doesn't expect us to continue in sin (by doing bad) but to live for him (by doing good) - this is true faith.

Let's go back to our text, Ephesians 2:8,9: **“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.”**

Is it not logical enough to believe that because **“there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”**(Psalms 53:3) then none can earn salvation by their works? Salvation has come to use by Grace and we accept it through faith, undergoing

Justification. (Rom 3:24)

Justification is an instant act where a sinner is made right with God. As soon as he repents and **accepts Jesus by faith**, his sins are forgiven and counted righteous before God. He's given an entitlement to heaven, and given imputed righteousness [the righteousness which Christ does for us] The best example is that of a publican in Luke 18:10-14.

“Two men went up into the temple to pray; **the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.** The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. **And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man**

went down to his house justified rather than the other.”

The publican, you see, did not wait for years to be justified[made right with God], the Saviour says that he “**went down to his house justified**”. That was an instant act. Was he justified because of his works? No, it was because of God’s grace.

After this instant process, the repentant sinner enters the process of

Sanctification.

This is the process by which God makes a person holy. Unlike Justification, Sanctification is a life time process. While Justification makes a repentant sinner entitled to heaven, **Sanctification makes him fit for heaven.** It’s the process of continual departure from sin. Here is where true faith is

revealed in obedience (works).

“Righteousness within is testified to by righteousness without. He who is righteous within is not hard-hearted and unsympathetic, but day by day he grows into the image of Christ, going on from strength to strength. He who is being sanctified by the truth will be self-controlled, and will follow in the footsteps of Christ until grace is lost in glory. The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven.”(MYP 35.2)

Imparted righteousness is the righteousness which Christ does in us by transforming us into his image. This happens throughout our lives.

Glorification.

This refers to the future event when the Lord of the rewards shall come in glory to glorify his own people before taking them to the mansions above. **“Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”**(Philippians 3:20, Col 3:4)

How do we then put all these things together?

Salvation, as already pointed out, **is clearly by Grace through faith, not by works (by keeping the law), but true faith will produce fruits (works).** Thus **we do not keep the law because we want to be saved, but because Christ has saved us and we love Him.**

Said he, **“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”**(John 14:15), **“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.”**(1 John 5:2,3)

“Good works can never purchase salvation, but they are an evidence of the faith that acts by love and purifies the soul. And though the eternal reward is not bestowed because of our merit, **yet it will be in proportion to the work that has been done through the grace of Christ.”**(DA 314.2)

“..behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be”(Revelation 22:12)

We shall all be judged by how we've used our

faith (by our works).

The Summary of Salvation.

The Word of God summarizes Salvation by Grace in the following reference: Titus 2:11-14.

“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,..”

This first section deals with Justification which is done freely by God’s grace. Salvation, you see, is for “all men”. Says the spirit, “Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And **whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.**”(Revelation 22:17). All can come the way they are, they will be justified if they believe. But does it end here? No. It continues,

“Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and

worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world..”

This section deals with sanctification. The grace, after it has come to us, teaches us to depart from all ungodliness - obeying the word of God, **“in this present world.”** This is the battle that we have.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Christ's coming is our blessed hope. We shall be glorified, we shall put on immortality.

Unbelief.

“Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:”(Luke 24:25)

“While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, **did provoke:** howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? **was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?** And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So **we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief** .Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.” (Hebrews 3:15-19,4:1)

“See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For

if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:”(Hebrews 12:25)

Because of unbelief, the majority that came out of Egypt perished in the wilderness. They failed to enter the promised land, the place of rest.

“But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now **these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, **The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.** Neither let us commit **fornication**, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of**

serpents. **Neither murmur ye**, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. **Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.** Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.”(1 Corinthians 10:5-12)

The history of the children of Israel **was written for the benefit of us who live in the last days, that we may follow not their example of unbelief.** As many failed to enter the earthly Canaan because of unbelief, so many today will fail to enter the heavenly kingdom due to the same problem. God is speaking to you, will you hear? Will you believe all that has been revealed? And don't say it matters not, for such an attitude of unbelief will keep you out of God's kingdom as verily as it kept the antediluvian people out of the ark.

The one who's coming soon “ **is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.**”(Rev 17:14). Notice that those that will be with Christ are called, chosen, **but they are faithful** (see also Rev 14:12). After years of having faith in the Lord whom they don't see, they will finally see him face to face (Rev 22:4). These are the ones who shall enter the kingdom of their father with joy that shall never end, none other.

May the Lord help His people.

WhatsApp: +260764198019