

## The Relationship of Law and Grace

### Introduction

- A. The concepts of law and grace are among some of the most important in the Bible. A misunderstanding in this area of truth will cause confusion in many other areas of life.
- B. While the term "law" is quite synonymous with divine revelation here we are using the more strict sense of – the divine demand for man. And, while "grace" is associated with all that God does here the usage has to do with the divine provision of redemption.
- C. Strictly speaking the law is defined in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were given a precept (Do not eat of the tree), with a stated penalty (If you do you will die). To summarize the content of the law, it would be, the demand of perfect obedience.
- D. While the Mosaic law is a revelational unit, it is helpful to recognize that it may be divided into Civil Law (regulation of persons), Ceremonial Law (Levitical Order), and the Moral Law (Decalogue).

### I. The Nature of God's Law.

For I am the LORD your God, ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy, for I am holy . . . For I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God, ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. Leviticus 11:44,45 (See also I Peter 1:15,16)

Comment: These verses summarize the personal application of the law of God. They clearly teach the great truth that the law is rooted in the divine nature. God has manifested Himself to us in the revelation of His Word.

"Christians generally understand that the Ten Commandments and the law of love (Exodus 20:1-17 and Luke 10:27), constitute a brief summary of God's holy moral law for man. This is all based on God's holy character. Sin may then be defined ultimately as anything in the creature which does not express or which is contrary to the holy character of the Creator." (J. O. Buswell, A Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion, Vol. I, p. 264)

### II. The Demands of God's Law.

Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them. Lev. 18:5 (Ez. 20:11,13,21; Neh. 9:29; Luke 10:28; Romans 10:5; Galatians. 3:12)

Comment: Because God is infinite in truth, love, and holiness – the law could only demand that man live in perfect obedience. Any disobedience was not a sin against the law, basically, but against God's person and character. This is why sin is so serious – it has infinite consequences in at least two areas. Death is its penalty.  
Romans 5:12; 6:23

1. We failed to obey God's law and are thus unrighteous, Romans 3:10.  
As it is written. There is none righteous, no, not one.
2. We disobeyed God's law and are thus sinful, Romans 3:23.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.

Summary: For man to be saved –his condition reversed – at least four demands would have to be met.

1. There would have to be a perfect obedience and sacrifice.
2. The work would have to be of infinite worth.
3. The work would have to be done by a human representative.
4. The work would have to be made as a priestly offering.

### III. The Fulfillment of the Law by the Lord Jesus Christ.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Romans 8:3,4

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

Comment: The Lord Jesus met every demand of God's law and did so as the believer's human representative. His work has infinite worth. He is our Redeemer-Priest. (Rev. 1:5,6,18)

The grace of God is based upon the truth that Jesus Christ fulfilled the demands of God's law in our place. He did not come to abolish – but to fulfill the law. (Matt. 5:17)

### IV. Prevailing Errors Regarding Law and Grace.

- A. The error of legalism (I must keep the law to earn grace). Mark 7:1-13
- B. The error of asceticism (I must be separate from defilement to earn grace.)  
Colossians 2:18; I Timothy 4:1-3
- C. The error of antinomianism (I can live anyway I want and receive grace).  
II Timothy 3:1-7; I John 3:8,9

Conclusion: The true relationship with Jesus Christ is found in faith.

Victor M. Matthews