

Examining Grace

What it is not, and What it IS!

The NEW COVENANT and the LAW: And Our Personal Obligation

*“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law:
for sin is the transgression of the law.” [1st John 3:4 KJV]*

*“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]*

*“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?” [Romans 6:1-2]*

*“Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto
sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from
the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.
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.**” [Romans 6:13-15]*

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◆ F O R E W O R D ◆

While Jesus Christ pointedly cautioned His followers against thinking that His mission was to destroy, or in any way “do away with” the Law, yet christianity has come full circle, and through a convoluted reasoning process, effectively has done that very thing. The common chants are that “the Law is all done away – it was ‘nailed to the cross’ – it came in with the Old Covenant and is abolished with the Old Covenant”.

While we know that sin is the transgression of the law, it hasn’t dawned on very many people to consider how can we sin, if there is no law to define what sin is? How can we transgress something that no longer has any applicability to us?

On the “Old Covenant” issue, we need to ask ourselves, was it possible to sin before there was an Old Covenant? Did humanity gain the ability to sin only by entering into the Old Covenant? Does a person not have the ability to transgress (sin) IF he never made any covenant? The point of these questions is to show that humanity’s ability to sin has nothing to do with whether a person has covenanted or not. So, the replacement of the Old Covenant with the New Covenant has no effect whatsoever on our ability to commit sin. A Covenant is an agreement between two parties. The Law of sin and death exists and applies to all irrespective of whether or not the person has chosen to enter into a Covenant with God. As all peoples should realize, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. All means all!

The greater part of evangelical Christianity has put forth and embraces what is generally referred to as “grace theology”, which supposedly abrogates the Law in favor of a sort of license to disregard the Law, rendering it irrelevant. Grace, as commonly defined, renders all obedience to the Law’s directives as not only unnecessary, but possibly even an affront to God’s grace, should we attempt to “earn salvation” by exhibiting any obedience to God’s Laws. Those operating under that mindset can’t see any other reason for a person wanting to keep the Law than for them to be attempting to EARN salvation. Somehow, the idea that keeping the Law is the very expression of love toward God, that it is the natural response from a person who actually does love God, escapes their awareness! What is so hard to understand about Christ’s statement where He said, “If you love me, keep my commandments”?

But the idea that grace is only “unmerited pardon” involves even those who have it right in other areas. No, there is a much more comprehensive aspect to grace. We are not only its recipients, but we are to exhibit it ourselves. It is incoming but also must be outgoing. We are to grow in grace, and that involves not sin and its forgiveness, but an outpouring of it also. We receive grace as God’s gift, but not only for personal benefit. We are to extend it to others as well. The world in general has not fully realized the full auspices of grace.

These few chapters will acquaint you with Grace in its fullest dimension! Rich Traver