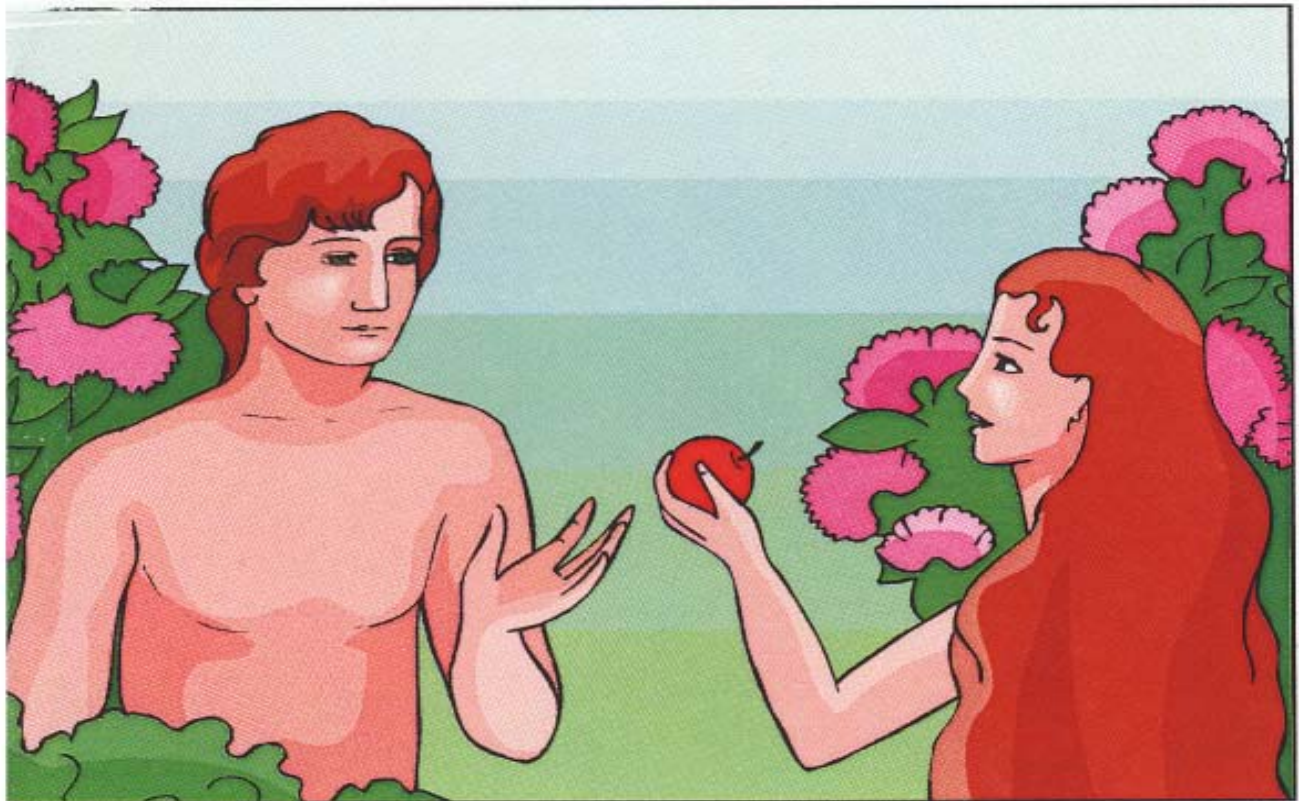


**The Grace of God
or
The license of Man?**



The Grace of God

or

The license of man?

“And if by grace, then it is not longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. Tut if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work” (Roman 11:6).

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Preface

There is much confusion today over the word grace and its application to the believer. This booklet will put forth truths that are pertinent for believers “to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints” (Jude 3). The truths pointed out may seem to be of no importance to many. However, Jesus said, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).

In looking at the truths in this booklet, the reader should determine whether he is following Jesus as revealed in the Scriptures (John 5:39, 46), or following Jesus through a church founder, a religious movement of the day, a denomination, a sectarian group, the by-laws of his church or other doctrines which are works of men. Following men or man-made teachings and doctrines leads to false assumptions and does not bring the believer into growth or freedom in Christ. In fact, much of what is called grace today is only freedom of the flesh to follow man, quenching the leading and work of the Spirit. The life of the Spirit is found only in Jesus, who is the Truth, as He is revealed in Scripture (John 1:4).

1. What is the meaning of grace?

“You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever” (Psalms 45:2).

To understand the intent of the word ‘grace’ and its meaning, Webster’s Dictionary will be the starting place. In it, grace is given as: favor, kindness, love and favor of God; state of reconciliation to God, pardon, and unmerited favor. Further expressions of grace are to receive mercy in the place of deserved judgment or to receive forgiveness of a debt you cannot pay. Grace is to love one’s enemies, bless those who do evil to you, and to pray for those who in evil purposes persecute you (Matthew 5:44).

The first time the word grace is used in the Bible is in Ezra 9:8; chronologically it is used in Psalms 45:2 the first time. In the Psalms it is prophetically speaking of Christ, who took on human form and lived among us in perfect grace and truth (John 1:14). Christ, walking on the earth, was a perfect expression of God’s grace to a fallen race (John 14:9).

Divine grace was manifested in Jesus, when God laid on Him the iniquity of us all, and He willingly suffered it (Isaiah 53:6). He took the divine judgment upon Himself that was ours by birth, while we were yet sinners apart from God (Romans 5:8). In grace, God sent the heavenly Man; who

died, went into the grave and arose from among the dead, so we could live with our Creator forever (1 Thessalonians 4:17). He became a curse for us to deliver us from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13).

Man, in his Adamic nature, left to himself, without the knowledge and revelation of God in Christ, would not know or be able to experience God's Grace. For only in receiving the love of God can the Grace of God be seen, known, and experienced.

2. Grace found through man's efforts or God's Spirit?

“...for by strength no man shall prevail (1 Samuel 2:9).

a. Man's failed efforts

Religion in the world, when examined at its core, is nothing more or less than man in his Adamic nature attempting to find God's favor. This self effort on man's part started with Cain, the son of Adam (Genesis 4:1-7). Cain's religion is man's religion; in all ages it is the expression of man's self effort to reach God (Genesis 4:3, 5).

Man's religion attempts to do spiritual works rather than follow God's revelation of truth in Christ. Man, attempting to do spiritual works rather than bowing his knee to the truth in Christ, creates a god after his own

image and likeness (Exodus 32:1-6). Sadly, in the great house of Christendom (2 Timothy 2:20), this same direction of the natural man's religion is being attempted.

For the Christian, the Holy Spirit's revelation and application of truth is found in the "Doctrine of Christ" (2 John 9). Christ taught the Doctrine of Christ to His disciples, while the Holy Spirit revealed the "Apostles Doctrine" to his apostles (Matthew 28:19-20; Romans 2:16; Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 2:19-22).

When church people do not bend the knee to the lordship of Christ, other doctrines and church programs take His place; such as building programs, mission programs in far off places, and men in hierarchical positions elevated to an almost god like adoration by the laity. This desire and tendency by church people to pursue seemingly good works, will take the place of believing Scripture and following the Holy Spirit.

The result of this path is a works oriented democracy (Laodicea = the people rule, Revelation 3:14-19), rather than the walk of faith led by the Holy Spirit while following the Apostles' Doctrine (Matthew 16:19). This leads to man looking at man for a standard of what is acceptable in the church (2 Corinthians 10:12). The consummation of this direction is that church people make God's word subject to themselves, instead of them being subject to God's Word. This produces a state of non-receptiveness and non-

obedience to Christ and Scripture. Righteousness with God then becomes what we do, as the way to have relationship with God (Galatians 3:3).

These works of man have success in one thing, they frustrate the grace of God (Galatians 2:21). The grace of God does not come to man through anything he does (man's will, efforts, deeds or works) (Romans 4:4-5). Attempts to fulfill God's will through man's own works will always fall short of the grace of God, causing bitterness and defilement (Hebrews 12:15). Man's efforts (works, apart from truth) and God's grace together are like oil and water; they do not mix (Romans 11:6). Scripture shows us what man's natural nature is in Galatians 5:19-21, whether he is religious or not.

b. God's grace given

Grace was upon Jesus from His childhood (Luke 2:40); as He grew up into manhood, He manifested in His Person and ministry the pureness of the grace of God (John 1:17). Anyone can enter into this same fellowship with God by receiving the gift of the grace of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:24). We are told in Ephesians 2:8-9 that the grace of God given to a believer is entirely a gift. This gift received, brings one into true favor with God. Scripture makes it equally clear that the grace of God is available only through Jesus Christ, His Son (Acts 4:10, 12).

Philippians 2:5 instructs the Christian in this way, “let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” God’s desire is, that the fruit “of the exceeding grace of God may be seen in you” (2 Corinthians 9:13-14). One may ask how is this possible? It is shown to us in this truth; the present age is the Church Age and is the age of the “Dispensation of the Grace of God” (Ephesians 3:2). A Christian entering into and living in the grace of God, in spiritual growth, must NEVER forget that what he has received is a **pure gift** (Ephesians 3:7). One must continue to receive this grace to walk in the Spirit. This is accomplished by receiving the truths which the Holy Spirit instructs through the Apostles’ Doctrine (Ephesians 1:6; 2:20-22).

Jesus came to minister the true grace of God to all who would receive it. This ministering of God’s grace brought Him to the cross, and to taste death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). Believers, who have received the true grace of God, are able to minister God’s grace to one another (1 Peter 4:10; 5:10, 12). The Christian is exhorted to abound in this grace, that he may live in the riches of Christ (2 Corinthians 8:7, 9).

To live in the grace of God, the Christian must always be aware that he has contributed nothing toward this gift (Ephesians 2:8-9). A believer’s good works and attempts at righteousness, do not make him more acceptable to God than when he first believed (2 Corinthians 5:21). Being

seen as a righteous person by a righteous God, has nothing to do with a believer's behavior, his good works, or his achievements (Romans 5:8; 8:1; 14:4). If the behavior is sinful, God, who is his Father, will chastise him (Hebrews 12:4-6). The believer is fully accepted of God because Christ died in his place for his sin (Isaiah 53:5-6, 10-11; Romans 5:7-8).

To sum up God's grace, we need to fully and completely understand that God's blessing to us has nothing to do with our righteousness (Isaiah 64:6), our goodness (Matthew 19:17), or our faithfulness (2 Timothy 2:13); it is completely a gift from God.

3. Receiving true grace

“So we urged Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also complete this grace in you as well. But as you abound in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all diligence, and in your love for us—see that you abound in this grace also”
(2 Corinthians 8:6-7).

In revealing Himself to Israel, God tells them that He is gracious (Exodus 22:27). In Exodus 34:6, 9, the contrast between man's nature and God's nature is shown.

It has been the purpose of God from the beginning of creation that man be made in His own image and likeness

(Genesis 1:26-27). How is this to be accomplished with a sinful and fallen race? Only God has the answer and the only possible answer is, His Son. The knowledge of His Son in the heart of man brings the knowledge of the truth and revelation of God (1 Timothy 2:4-5).

Jesus Christ, God's physical manifestation of His grace is seen in this verse; "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:9). This Spirit of Grace is the Spirit of Truth, which a person receives when (in faith from his heart) he believes in Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:6).

A person receiving and following this grace becomes born of God (John 1:12-13; 3:3-7). Such a person is being remade into the image and likeness of God through the Spirit of Christ (Romans 8:29). Jesus Christ is the only man who ever totally pleased God (Matthew 3:17; Colossians 1:19). For the believer, the true grace of God is his eternal portion (Ephesians 1:13; 4:30). A person experiences this grace as he walks in the truths revealed in Christ.

In this newness of life, working through God's grace in the believer, he becomes a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). In 2 Corinthians 9:15, it is called an unspeakable gift. The Christian possesses all things through Christ (Romans 8:32). Positionally, he sits with Christ in the heavenlies (Ephesians 2:6 JND), in full favor of God (Ephesians 1:6).

The Christian has been given “everlasting consolation and good hope by grace” (2 Thessalonians 2:16). Finally, the grace of God has given the Christian everlasting life, an existence forever with his Creator (1 Corinthians 2:9; Revelation 21:1-7).

a. The fruit of God’s grace

Man, without God’s grace in his heart, is the history of this world; a history of violence and ungodliness. The fruit of God’s grace, working in the heart of a man, can only be seen fully by God. For He alone knows the man, where his heart will take him with God’s grace, and what his end will be without it. Humanly, the fruit of an individual following and living in the grace of God can be seen in many ways. Some of this fruit will be seen in the following bullet points:

- The fruit of God’s Spirit working in the heart includes; “...love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control” (Galatians 5:22-23).
- A heart being established by grace (Hebrews 13:9).
- Those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24).
- A Christian walking in the truth in Christ will exhibit the grace of God and a growing knowledge of Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

- A believer, who pursues the grace of God, is pursuing Christ (2 Timothy 2:1).
- The fruit of the grace of God in the Christian gives him the ability to pray for those who have persecuted and used him or her (Matthew 5:44).
- What is not possible for a person by will or desire, is possible by the grace of God; that is to love your enemies (Matthew 5:44).
- In the believer, grace produces a hearing ear for God's Word alone (John 8:47).
- Grace in the heart produces the desire to obey God's Word above all other (1 John 5:2-3).
- All men may observe the living water in a believer, who follows after the grace of God (John 7:38).
- The humility of Christ is a living reality to the person who is living in the grace of God (1 Peter 5:5).
- Separation unto Christ and walking apart from the world, are produced by the grace of God in the believer (Colossians 3:1-2; 1 John 2:15).
- God's grace, working in the believer, enlarges his heart beyond his scope or capabilities (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).
- Grace in the believer's life produces a simplicity to follow Christ (2 Corinthians 1:12).
- God's grace, released in the heart of a believer, produces singleness of heart toward Christ. God's grace is apart from man's religion or religious

organizations, denominations, or other sectarian groups (1 Corinthians 1:10-13; 3:1-4; Colossians 3:22).

- A Christian receiving the grace of God, perceives the fruit that God wants from the gift He has given, and is humbled and receptive to His voice (John 10:27).

4. License of religious flesh mistakenly followed as grace.

“For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another” (Galatians 5:13).

There are many erroneous teachings and practices in churches today, some of which have gone on for centuries. Some of the new ones are even more depleting of spiritual life than the older ones. These new heresies (new to our generation) threaten to drain the churches of all sound doctrine and spiritual heritage for this generation and those to come. The seriousness of these doctrines and practices cannot be over stated, as their source is the religion of man, and doctrines of demons (1 Timothy 4:1-2).

Anyone who has read and believed Scripture for its clear intent and message, can readily discern the twisted doctrinal logic which is taught in a great many churches. The following bullet points will show this more clearly.

- To start with, any person would think that all church people would see the “Apostles’ Doctrine,” as bedrock Christian truth and doctrine. Instead, many church people think (maybe the majority) that the “New Testament books of the Bible” are the apostles’ personal ideas. Also, they believe that some or much of what the Holy Spirit revealed to the apostles was legalism. So they reason that a church person is under grace, and he or she has the liberty not to be under the legalism of the Holy Spirit’s revelation, as taught by the apostles (1 Corinthians 4:6, 17-18; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).
- It is taken a step further by a great many who define the word ‘grace’ to mean, liberty to follow the Apostles’ Doctrine, or not to follow it. Legalism, in their thoughts, is anyone insisting on or adhering to the Apostles’ Doctrine (Romans 6:1; Jude 4).
- These ideas, taught or inferred, project a doctrine that grace means freedom for the flesh and legalism means believing the revelation of God as taught by the apostles. These ideas and teachings come from some of the highest circles of Evangelicalism. In many cases, the hierarchy are the ones promoting these skewed doctrines and selling their own brand of religious commercialism (Mark 11:15-18). The clergy as well, are incorporating these teachings of worldly origin, into

all aspects of “their church.” The laity also fully accept and trust without question, their clergyman as the final authority. However, the Christian who walks after the Spirit, receives his authority for truth from the same authority Jesus had, His Father (Matthew 4:4; John 17:17).

- Church hierarchies bring the world’s culture, perversions, idolatries and erroneous teachings into the church, under the false assumption that these are under grace. These include: church leadership in diversity, unisex dressing in women and sometimes men, men giving their leadership over to children (as Israel did in their day, Isaiah 3:4), women praying or prophesying unveiled and uncovered (1 Corinthians 11:1-16), and the God given headship to men, refused by churchmen. The spirit of the world prevailing over Scriptural truth, and clergymen appealing to human reasoning and man’s idea of grace, are in complete opposition to God’s word (2 Timothy 4:3-4).
- Collection of money is a driving force in many churches today, to meet payrolls, mortgages, utilities bills, insurances, and many other such commitments and business expenses. In reality, churches have become businesses who file incorporation documents with the state, incorporating church by-laws for the members to abide by and buying insurance for liability of members in

case of lawsuits. In all of this religious secularization, a continual and ever increasing demand for money is necessary to fulfill secular commitments. In some churches, the hiring of money raisers is done to get the money out of the laity for building projects or other religious jamborees.

Some of these clergymen and hierarchical leaders differ little from CEO's of any business, commanding large salaries, sometimes exceeding 6 figures. The Spirit of God and the word of God have little in common with these entities (Micah 3:11; 1 Timothy 6:10).

- Businesses need money, and where it comes from is generally of little concern to the church hierarchy. Therefore, churches accept money from unbelieving people. By receiving money from non – Christians, churches give them the impression that they have a part in the kingdom of Christ. The implication is that they receive grace or favor from God. God's word rebukes such practices (Acts 8:18-23; 2 John 7).
- Jesus condemned those who turned the house of God into a place of money making. When He did so the people were astonished at this teaching and the chief priests and scribes wanted to destroy Him (Mark 11:15-18). A Christian who rebuked these same money making practices in churches today, would no

doubt be met with the same spirit as Jesus received. Many church people, hearing such a rebuke, may think ‘that person does not understand our financial needs or our religion.’

- Christ has given gifts to His church (Ephesians 4:11). These gifts are in the form of men, who themselves have been given spiritual gifts which are to be used in and for His Church. These men are not clergy, hierarchical or ordained of man. These gifts are given of God to build His Church, which is the ground and pillar of truth (1 Timothy 3:15), through the power of the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:12). The liberty of the Spirit is their unction (the act of anointing by the Holy Spirit — Webster’s); the Spirit leads them where they are to go. In contrast to this work of God’s Spirit down through the years, is the whole clergy/laity system currently functioning in the churches. Jesus made clear to His disciples that He was not building His Church on a hierarchical system (Matthew 23:7-12; Luke 22:24-27). Christ has made those who believe and follow Him a brotherhood of priests (1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:5-6), with full and complete liberty to exercise their priesthood in the assembly (1 Corinthians 14:31).
- The word grace is used in many churches to put away the clear teaching of Scripture (1 Timothy 4:3-4). In

place of Scripture, the by-laws of the denomination or church doctrines are taught and practiced.

- The marriage or family is the most foundational form of government that God has created in the world. The family structure is a representative type of Christ and His Church, which is His bride (Ephesians 5:23-33). God has given an order to the family structure that will be in effect till the earth is no more. The order of authority which God gave to Adam and his wife is; man will be in headship over his wife, “and he will rule over you” (wife) (Genesis 3:16). In the Church of God, God’s governmental order is the same; it is taught to us by the Holy Spirit: God, Christ, man, woman (1 Corinthians 11:3). There is no spiritual occurrence or revelation of God in Scripture or elsewhere to make His order in marriage null and void. Yet, in many churches the clergy practice, infer and teach, that what the Holy Spirit has revealed in Scripture is nullified in this day of a new age (2 Timothy 4:3-4).
- Doctrines of men and churches (that which they practice is their doctrine) that see God’s word as inferior to their practices and erroneous teachings are many today. Nowhere is this more evident than with the ordaining of women to hierarchical positions or into the clergy. Their positions of public teaching, baptizing and preaching are in total opposition to the Holy Spirit’s

revelation made known through the apostles (1 Timothy 2:12).

The following Scriptures are what the Holy Spirit has instructed for His Church during our current dispensation of grace..

“Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be in submission as the law also says” (1 Corinthians 14:34). If anyone thinks this verse is misinterpreted or misunderstood, the Holy Spirit repeats it in the strongest possible words.

“And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church” (verse 35). If there are still those who think they are too spiritual for these truths, the Holy Spirit again takes all doubt away.

“If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord” (verse 37).

If anyone will not accept the Lord’s commandment, “Let him be ignorant” (verse 38). It goes without saying that anyone who rejects the Lord’s commandment should not be in a position of leadership or in a place of spiritual authority.

- There are many families and marriages which are disrupted and thrown into confusion by this modernist teaching. Generally, when women are in a place of spiritual authority or leadership, women and men withdraw from believing the revelation which the Holy Spirit has given through the apostles to the saints of God. Some women and men, who's hearts are not hardened against the word of the Lord, will leave churches and sects which practice these feminist teachings. Yet other women and men who respond to the church and its leaders, rather than the Holy Spirit, will see nothing wrong with following false doctrine. In these churches, some men strive to put women in authority over men; women with fleshly religious ambition will thus pursue and may attain these positions (1 Timothy 2:11-14). Much confusion is sown in new believers and those untaught in Scripture by these church doctrines and actions of false grace.
- The Holy Spirit has revealed that a woman is to be veiled or covered when praying or prophesying (teaching or explaining the Scriptures to children or other women). First Corinthians 11:5 shows God's order of headship for Christian men and women. The religious dogmas of churchmen, combined with man's idea of what is fair or not fair, have abandoned the Holy Spirit's instruction, and have followed the culture of the

world in diversity and equality between sexes. The enemy is still at work; his enticing words have not changed since the Garden of Eden. Satan's questioning to man today is the same, "Has God indeed said" (Genesis 3:1).

- The Holy Spirit's instruction, that men are to pray uncovered (1 Corinthians 11:7), is thought by church people, who are following feminist teaching in their church, to be legalism. These leaders may not directly teach that living by grace allows them freedom from the authority of the Spirit of God, but their doctrines and practices are a clear statement to their lack of the knowledge of God's Spirit, His Grace, and His Word (Romans 6:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:34; 2 Corinthians 6:1). They take upon themselves authority to make void God's Word and authority (Mark 7:9, 13). The undermining of the Holy Spirit's work is done by leaders, with many authoritative sounding words. Many teach that Scripture is culture, archaic, and does not fit into our church or society today (3 John 9-10; Jude 4).
- The doctrinal foundation in some churches, disquiet and put away the word of God. This undermining of Scripture is to be found in their church by-laws, traditions, leaders, teachers, acceptance of the culture of the world, and accepted practices by the founders of their sectarian group. Leaders in these churches

assume they are teaching a grace doctrine. The reality is, their doctrine is of man, not the God breathed truths in Scripture (Matthew 15:1-9, 14; 2 Timothy 3:16).

- The highest form of worship is to practice what Jesus gave to His disciples (and all believers). Worship that centers on the Lord Jesus in the breaking of the bread (the Lord's Supper) is what He gave. This remembrance of Him in His death is seen in the loaf and the cup (Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The Holy Spirit's purpose, and the practice of the apostles, is for the Church to come together on the Lord's Day for worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7). Jesus told us this worship was a remembrance of Him in His death. He gave it as an intimate time for His own to worship Him. They (and we), passing the bread and cup one to another in remembrance, worship and fellowship in His death.

This time of intimate worship and fellowship in the Lord's death, has been turned into a legal sacrament or ordinance. The sacrament is administered by the clergy or hierarchy to the laity. This sacrament, in some churches may be given once a year, quarterly, monthly, and in some cases weekly.

- The sacrament of communion in many churches is given to unbeliever and believer alike. By this action of partaking in communion, unbelievers are given the false

impression they may receive favor from God. Again, the fairness doctrine is used to show that God loves everyone, believer and unbeliever alike. The truth is that “God so loved (past tense, not present tense) the world that He sent His only Son into the world (John 3:16); this He did for His enemies. Scripture shows us that the true position of an unbeliever before God, is that they are under the wrath of God (Ephesians 2:1-3). Unbelievers, because of sin, are the enemies of God and are not His saints, His beloved ones (Romans 5:8-10; Colossians 1:21; 3:12). It is certainly true that Christ died for everyone; sadly however, not everyone will receive the gift of God (2 Corinthians 9:15).

a. The remembrance of the Lord Jesus in His death

With many non-Christians in the church, the question arises; **are non-Christians to break the bread and drink the cup?**

When examining this subject of the breaking of the bread, it is important to know what the Church is and what it is not. The Church that the Holy Spirit is building is not a place for believer and unbeliever alike; to be one in spiritual fellowship (2 Corinthians 6:14-16). It is not to be a social club to include the people and affairs of the world (1 John 2:15-17) and it is not a democracy, as Christ is the Head

(Ephesians 1:22). The Holy Spirit is not building church denominations, sectarianism, independent religious bodies, or a place for the gospel to be preached while the truths of Christ and His headship are put aside (Colossians 2:8). The Church is not a place where the spirit of the world and its practices find total comfort (2 Corinthians 6:16-18); it is not a religious gathering of people who use the name of Jesus but put away Scripture to follow after the world (Revelation 3:1). It is not a watering trough for people who have itching ears (2 Timothy 4:3), yet are unmoved by the Spirit and continue to live in unbelief (James 2:26). The Church is holy unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:25-27).

Saints of God assembled are “...the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15). The Church is the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; Ephesians 2:21-22); it is the body of Christ and His expression in and to the world (1 Corinthians 10:17); it is a chaste virgin betrothed to Christ (2 Corinthians 11:2-4), and it is made up of saints who have been baptized by the Holy Spirit into the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). It is a place where the world and those of the world may see Christ working in His people (1 Corinthians 14:23-25). The Church is the divine expression of God’s eternal redemptive work in His Son (Ephesians 3:10-11; 5:30)

When Scripture is examined, there is no place which instructs Christians to bring unbelievers to the Lord's Table to worship the Lord in the breaking of the bread. True worship is in spirit and truth, and unbelievers have neither the Holy Spirit nor the truth. First Corinthians 11:26-33 gives understanding on who should partake of the bread and the cup.

Verse 26: Believers are told that in eating the bread and drinking the cup, they are proclaiming the Lord's death till He comes.

Unbelievers are under the judgment of God, and have only judgment to look forward to at His coming, there is no joy or worship for unbelievers in His death or at His coming.

Verse 27: Because of sin, all men are unworthy to partake of the bread and the cup. However, the Christian has been cleansed and made worthy by the shed blood of Christ and the imputed righteousness of Christ given to him (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Unbelievers are unworthy, they are still in their sins and have not been given Christ's righteousness, which is the qualification to break the bread and drink the cup.

Verse 28: Believers are to examine and judge their own sins before partaking of the bread and the cup.

Unbelievers are still in their sin; they have not judged their state of being in sin before God or man. They have

not entered into faith in Christ's body and blood sacrificed for them.

Verse 29: In partaking, believers are told to discern the Lord's body; this means that sin in themselves is to be judged. Otherwise, believers are drinking judgment to themselves.

Unbelievers do not have the Spirit; they are still in their sins and have not judged them. They cannot discern things which are spiritual or the Lord's body (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Verse 30: Believers not judging sin in themselves or in an assembly (1 Corinthians 5:12) bring on the disciplinary action of the Lord (1 Corinthians 11:32). This chastisement of God can include the physical or spiritual. In the physical, believers may become weak, sick or die. In the spiritual, it is seen as the leaven of sin in the assembly (1 Corinthians 5:6), loss of truth (resisting or rejecting the Apostles' Doctrine (2 Corinthians 10:8-10; 13:2,10), the power of God weakened (1 Corinthians 5:6-7, 9-13), or the testimony in the assembly being compromised by carnality (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). The final end of the lack of spiritual truth and confession of sin in an assembly is what is seen in the assembly at Laodicea. "So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth" (Revelation 3:16).

Bringing unbelievers into intimate worship of the Lord, in the breaking of the bread, is to include the enemies of God into the Lord's most intimate circle of fellowship. Including unbelievers in the breaking of the bread is man's religious doctrine of attempting to gain God's favor by man's works. Bringing those into the inheritance of the saints of God who have none, gives them the impression they are in the family of God and gives them a false eternal hope (Acts 8:21).

5. Following the Law of Moses as grace.

“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law...”
(Galatians 4:21).

a. Israel

God chose Israel to be His peculiar (separated) people, apart from all people on the earth, to be unto Himself (Deuteronomy 14:21; Amos 3:2). God's desire for Israel was to bless them and to interact with them in His grace (Jeremiah 29:11). Instead, Israel chose the law (Exodus 19:8; 24:3, 7), bringing condemnation and judgment upon themselves (2 Corinthians 3:7, 9). Because God's grace was refused by Israel, God put them on a performance ground with Himself (Deuteronomy chapter 28). All the blessings God planned for Israel as a nation was on the earth, not in heaven (Deuteronomy 14:2). Israelites who

believed God, the Messiah to come and His sacrifice, were justified by God (saved for eternity) (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3-5).

b. The Christian

Scripture teaches the Christian that he is not under the Law of Moses. The Christian can not attain righteousness or sanctification through the law (Romans 10:4). The Christian is not to use the Law of Moses as a rule to live by, to follow (Galatians 5:2-4), or to mix with the grace of God (Romans 11:6).

The following bullet points are examples of Christians choosing to live under law in the Church Age.

- Jesus pointed out to the Jews that they have put away God's word and followed the commandments (laws) of men (Matthew 15:9). The same is true in many churches; man's laws are found in church by-laws, church membership regulations, rules forbidding alcohol, rules imposing the church founder's doctrine on its members through creeds or statements of faith, and the rules regarding sectarian denominational teaching (Colossians 2:20-23).
- People who comprise the church hierarchy provide the rules (not Scripture) for their people to live by. Their

leadership, teachings and rules are considered to be equal to Scripture.

- Leaders in these legalistic churches set the standards for members to live by, through church by-laws and written or unwritten rules
- The leaders in these legalistic churches set the standard for members to live by. The laity follows them, because they are taught and believe the leaders know best and to challenge them is to challenge God. It makes no difference how these leaders violate Scripture, church members willingly follow them.
- Legalists believe they are highly spiritual and special. They see the Apostles' Doctrine as culture, and their own teaching and authority as from God. In other words, these leaders will not go back to Scripture for truth. These leaders will use the Bible to conform the laity to their church, but the cross of Jesus is an affront to them.
- Church members who would insist on the Holy Spirit's instruction in Scripture as the ground of faith for a Christian or an assembly of believers, are perceived as out of touch with society and our church, and are considered 'rebellious' by leaders.
- Most church members feel comfort and safety when their leaders tell them what is 'true and correct.' Most

of the time the laity will go along without causing waves. They willingly accept their leader's beliefs, by-laws, dogma, practices, doctrines and answers. The result of this misguided loyalty is that the laity can only see, hear, and perceive through the leaders teaching. Darkness of understanding, deadness to truth, and man's doctrines wind up leading the laity instead of the Holy Spirit.

- As a person chooses to follow and become part of a legalistic system, their freedom to choose the truth in Christ is quickly lost to the beliefs of their leaders, a church's statement of faith (this is what we believe), or the dictates of a sectarian group.
- There is a negative mind set with those caught in legalism. For example, if the Holy Spirit, through Scripture, teaches a truth or truths that run counter or contrary to what is taught in that church or religious group, its members will generally follow their leader's teachings. They will see the Holy Spirit's instructions as negative or as a negative undercurrent against their religious direction and their church.
- Men in legalistic churches abdicate their headship, since church leaders make the rules. As a result, many women and wives become resistant to the Scripture; then seek to be church leaders in the system and seek out feminized men and women leaders for their truth. Women working for God, is presented or implied to be

the highest spiritual place in church ladder climbing. Church leaders ordain or place women in authority over men and families in these church systems, breaking down the order which God has established for the Church and family. Miriam, the sister of Moses, had these same thoughts and carried them out, which led to God's judgment upon her (Numbers 12:1-6).

Women who desire and seek the truth in Christ, as taught by the apostles, are silenced and repressed.

- Legalistic leaders are threatened by anyone who insists on Scripture as the ground of truth for a Christian to live by or the church to follow. Legalism is found in churches that are teaching grace, but living under the Law of Moses and laws of men. The Law of Moses is seen in the church through the following doctrines and practices: the clergy/laity system, church incorporation by-laws, doctrinal creeds built on the founder, leaders' doctrine being the final authority instead of Scripture, and all the laity following their church in these rules and laws.
- Legalism is a system of control. Charismatic leaders and New Age teachers practice and teach by subtle techniques, ensnaring people away from the Apostles' Doctrine. Their purpose is to conform church people to written or unwritten church doctrine. Church people, in most cases, succumb to the supposed superiority of

their leaders. Guilt, shame, fear, intimidation, faulty reasoning and misused doctrine, are used to bring church members to submission to the system.

Dishonesty, secrecy, shunning, threats, and excommunication are used for those who are highly resistant.

- In churches that function in legalism, the clergy are always above the laity. The laity are to submit to the system and the leaders, no matter what Scripture teaches.
- In legalistic church systems, immoral or dishonest behavior by the clergy is often covered up. The laity are not generally informed.
- Legalism attracts people and families who are or have been dysfunctional. Those who think they are too spiritual to be fooled are drawn as well.
- Legalism is a magnet to those who seek authority over others. They assume that a religious position over other people and families will bring them to their religious fulfillment and rightful spiritual position. This can be through a person seeking to be a teacher, leader of a group, or some other church authoritative position.
- Legalistic systems may look Biblical; use Bible verses, quotes from leaders, cliches, human view points or other means. These means are used to put men in subjection to other men. People following this system,

resist the truths as taught in Scripture and stay bound in the sin of unbelief and religious bondage. Because this is done many times in a spirit of man's grace (license of the flesh), the laity sees nothing wrong with the system or the bondage it brings to its followers.

- Children of families raised in churches practicing legalism play the religion game while at home. When they leave home, they have little truth or understanding to be able to follow Christ. They are untaught and have been driven away from any truth which might lead to the Grace of God.
- Legalism always winds up with members following church leaders and rejecting Scripture whenever the two conflict. Those who have a lust for religious positions are served well by these systems.
- Legalism destroys the believer's freedom in Christ and suppresses the Holy Spirit's work within him, as well as his desire to press on in Christ. He will support the church system, for he does not know freedom in Christ individually or in an assembly led by the liberty of the Spirit. Children who believe God, who are raised up in these systems, become clones of the system, thinking it is God's system.
- The legal system of clergy/laity (Nicolaitanism, Revelation 2:6, 15) is built on the Law of Moses. This system relieves the laity of their God given spiritual

priesthood and their freedom to exercise it in an assembly (1 Corinthians 14:26).

Those who press on in Christ will sooner or later realize that they are under the lordship of men in these systems. Only then will the Holy Spirit have liberty to lead them into the freedom God has made fully available to them through the cross of Jesus, and the power of a resurrected life.

6. The bondage of false grace, and misapplied Scripture

“As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him. Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ” (Colossians 2:6, 8).

The following bullet points give examples of the bondage a Christian is placed under by following teachings of false grace and Scriptures which are misapplied:

- With every false doctrine comes a false religious spirit, either of man or Satan. This pulls all who follow it into deception and spiritual bondage. This bondage is accelerated by the laity, following their clergyman rather than Scripture (Jeremiah 17:5). This bondage reveals

itself in a person who resists or refuses to follow the Apostles' Doctrine as God's only revelation to His Church.

- A believer's spiritual growth is thwarted when he receives man's false grace in the place of God's grace. The thwarting of his spiritual growth follows because he does not discern the difference between the grace of God, and the zeal of religious flesh in man.
- A believer, following the false grace of man or Satan, keeps the bondage of the world alive and working in that person's heart. Therefore, the power of the Holy Spirit is quenched in that person (1 Thessalonians 5:19), but not his loyalty or zeal for his pastor, teacher, church or sectarian group.
- A leader or clergyman, who calls some Scripture cultural, deceives his followers into resisting the Holy Spirit's work of sanctification. That leader will then teach his sectarian doctrines, in place of Scripture. This leads the believer away from following Jesus, to follow the clergyman, his denomination and sectarianism. For the deception of this doctrine to have power over its learner, the word grace is used generously.
- Leaders promote freedom of the flesh, believing it to be a matter of grace. Two of these indulgences are; speaking in tongues for amusement and leaders using personal charisma to get church people to follow them.

Church people substitute these leaders in place of following Christ as revealed in Scripture. All of this is accomplished in a spirit of man's grace without God's truth. These leaders follow the world and its culture, and reject Scriptures, wherever they conflict.

- Church leaders teach the world's idea of God's revelation to man in the same way they teach freedom from the Apostles' Doctrine, in the name of grace and love.
- False grace has no Scriptural truth to stand on, but it has much liberty for the flesh. Many church leaders may fear to offend the hierarchy or the laity, but have little fear in offending the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they teach what is acceptable to the Adamic nature in man.
- Clergymen fear that teaching the whole counsel of God, (if they know what it is, Acts 20:27), would uncover their false grace, revealing the "true grace wherein a Christian stands" (1 Peter 5:12). Why should this be a fear? The true grace of God is always connected with the cross and Christ crucified. There is no place for false grace or the flesh to live in the true grace of God. Leaders not following the Apostles' Doctrine are threatened by the cross, as church members may leave.
- Misleading grace can be found when people who are in a sectarian group, follow after a past or present person who has (or had) much zeal and charisma. Some of the

misleading teachings, practices, and false grace which these churches are built upon today are: Sabbath keeping, regeneration through water baptism, speaking in tongues as a sign one has been baptized by the Holy Spirit, and rejecting Scripture by calling it culture or tradition.

Many church leaders teach or imply that grace or favor with God is acquired by a person's actions. The result of this doctrine is that instead of pursuing the high calling in Christ Jesus (Philippians 3:14) in obedience to the lordship of Christ, evangelism is made God's supreme or primary goal. The lordship of Jesus, as taught in the Apostles' Doctrine, is put aside and replaced by what a believer does for God, nullifying (Romans 4:1-8). This is the standard in Evangelicalism and is its general pursuit. A Christian, who determines to walk after the Spirit, will find the true 'grace' of Christ by reading and following God's word.

- Clergy or other leaders either use or infer the word 'grace' in their teachings, but what they teach and practice is contrary to Christ and the apostles. Church members, following these leaders, are led away from the true grace which is found only in Christ, through the Apostles' Doctrine (Matthew 28:18-20; John 13:20; Ephesians 2:20-22; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:15-16). This leading away from Christ, leads church

people into the world and apart from the renewing and regenerative work of the Holy Spirit (Titus 3:5).

7. Faith gone awry

“O Foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified” (Galatians 3:1).

Everyone, professing to be a Christian, started the life of faith by believing in Jesus Christ. It is the norm today that church people wind up following something besides or ‘added to’ Jesus Christ. These false paths are not from the Spirit of Christ, yet they are accepted in churches and by church people, as normal. These doctrines that are misdirected or ‘added to’ Christ include: laws of men, following men, living after the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, human reasoning, religious flesh passed off as the Holy Spirit, and doctrine which is based on church peer pressure. In the practice of these things, people follow and worship what they perceive is God’s will.

“...there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Israel turned from the path of truth as revealed to them by God, and followed their own hearts; in fact it became

their pattern of relationship with God. For example, in Moses' day, Israel built a golden calf (Exodus 32:1-6). The purpose of this golden calf was to use it to worship God (verses 5-6). The anger of God was hot against Israel for their actions (verses 7-10). In 1 Corinthians 10:11, we are told that what happened to Israel was, "written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the ages have come." In verse 6, we are instructed that what happened to Israel is an example to the Christian to not follow the same path. Every Christian is capable of sinning and suffering the consequences of his sin (Hebrews 12:3-15). An assembly of believers is capable of having sin in their gathering and having the candlestick (testimony) taken from them (Revelation 1:12-13, 20; 3:16).

In another example, when Israel refused the word of God, God sent serpents into their camp to bite the people. When the people sought the help of Moses, God told Moses to make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole in the camp. When people who were bitten looked on the serpent, they would not die (Numbers 21:5-9).

Six hundred years later, Israel was worshipping God at the same brazen serpent. Hezekiah, a godly King, removed all the places of idolatry from Judah, including the brazen serpent which he broke in pieces (2 Kings 18:4).

The vitality of this truth for the Christian is evident. Idolizing or deifying religious leaders of the past or present,

events, religious leaders of sectarianism, Holy physical locations, religious objects, spiritual experiences, or any other religious practice, is idolatry.

A Christian has been called to walk after Christ to the glory of God in this present day, not through someone or something of the past (Ephesians 1:12).

In walking after Christ, a believer is called upon to judge and rebuke those within the professing house of Christendom who sin (1 Corinthians 5:5, 12; 1 Timothy 5:20). This rebuking starts at the house of God (1 Peter 4:7), to those of influence who refuse to be subject to the word of God (Galatians 2:11). As Christ alone is the Word of God (John 1:1), those who refuse His word, whether through the Apostles' Doctrine or Himself, are refusing Him (John 13:20; 16:13-15; 17:14).

The Roman Catholic Church, like the Pharisees of Jesus' day, added to and took away from the word of God. Because of this corruption, the Reformation was born and Protestantism took root. Today it is happening again among a great many Protestant churches, Evangelical churches, and other sectarian groups as well. Protestantism was founded on two truths of God, justification *by faith alone plus nothing, and Sola Scriptura* (only Scripture). These two truths brought freedom of spirit in Christ and freedom from the bondage of Romanism to all people who received them. They brought forth freedom in Christ from a doctrine

of man's works earning salvation, and revealed the knowledge of the "true grace wherein a Christian stands" (1 Peter 5:12). The Apostles' Doctrine of salvation by grace alone through faith alone, is God's eternal truth (Habakkuk 2:4; Ephesians 2:8-9). In the 1500s, these truths changed all of Christendom so the light of Christ could be seen and followed.

This country (U S A) is not predominantly Roman Catholic because those who came here in the beginning embraced these simple truths. Today, for example, many main line Evangelical churches either are ignorant of these Scriptural truths or see them as of no consequence. In some cases they see these truths as a teaching against the denominational doctrine of their church. For example, the doctrine of justification by faith alone is addressed in the "Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements" (Zondervan Publishing House), which has been put together by Pentecostals and Charismatics. In this dictionary, the doctrine of faith in Christ alone is proclaimed to be inadequate to follow Christ. The Pentecostal and Charismatic movements claim millions of followers. In these sectarian movements, the truths of the simplicity in Christ and justification by grace through faith (plus nothing) are denied and taught against as seen on page 668 in the Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements;

“The traditional view, fostered by the Reformers and perpetuated by generations of Protestants, is that justification by faith is the key to Paul’s theology. This view puts the emphasis on Christ’s historical act of redemption and its appropriation by the believer through faith. The inadequacy of such a view should be apparent from a thorough reading of Paul’s letters.”

What they call Paul’s letters, Scripture calls revelation of God in Christ (Doctrine of Christ, 2 John 9) and the very words of God (Romans 2:16; Galatians 1:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 4:8).

“Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible” has been a favorite among this sect. In it the Pentecostal and Charismatic doctrines are given full expression. For example, in John 6:27, in Dake’s footnotes, he gives 23 conditions of eternal life and how to keep it. These 23 conditions do not show salvation as a gift from God, but are centered on man’s efforts, works and abilities. The yoke of bondage (God’s gift to man through His Son is not enough) put upon Christians from such doctrines brought about the Dark Ages, which lasted for many centuries and inflicted Biblical and spiritual ignorance on millions of people. Yet the “Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements” reports Dake’s notes are the “bread and butter” of many prominent preachers and the “staple” of Pentecostal congregations. Today, the knowledge of God

is skewed and Bible illiteracy is common and increasing. Such teaching from this sect and its leaders has added greatly to this condition of religious confusion.

8. Faith to the truth, God's narrow path for man to enter into the true grace of God.

“For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth” (Ephesians 5:6).

“Stand therefore having girded your waist with truth...”(Ephesians 6:14).

Jesus tells us there are 2 roads for man in this life. One of these roads is a broad road that does not lead to spiritual life; He said there are many on this road. The other is a narrow road which leads to life, spiritual life (Matthew 7:13-14).

Jesus said those who follow Him are His sheep (John 10:14). Sheep in general are not smart animals. They wander into dangerous places and see no danger. Isaiah tells us we all like sheep have gone astray (Isaiah 53:6). The prophet Amos shows that sheep who wander into the broad road, where the lion lives, suffer destruction by the lion's intentions and actions to the sheep (Amos 3:12). The shepherd has little to recover when the lion is finished (1 Peter 5:8).

The broad road is a road full of freedom for all people. At various times the freedom to enter this road is given to the laity by pastor, teacher, church doctrine, fellow church members, husbands, wives, church founder, church hierarchy and many other human sources. The Chief Shepherd's word is misused to show that He has not spoken against the broad road at all (2 Peter 3:15-17). Leaders and church people of this viewpoint, see the difference in others who attempt to follow the Apostles' Doctrine as 'narrow minded sheep, who do not understand our church's doctrine of grace' (Romans 6:14).

However, Jesus has told us what true freedom is and how it is received (John 8:29-32, 36). The same One who has told us what true freedom is, also told us that His Church is built on His apostles and what they teach (Matthew 28:18-20; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). There is little doubt that those who oppose the Apostles' Doctrine, are on the broad road.

However, many in the church have been led to think that some words of Jesus or His apostles are not that important and have no relevance for today. This doctrine is called modernism, 'it may apply to some but not to me.' Churches that teach modernism are legion. Some of these excesses and open door policies which allow Satan to work his deceit are: teaching of diversity, God's order of male headship in the church or in the marriage and family not

being taught or practiced by men, and the veiling of women being practically unknown by this generation. Modernism is followed in churches in pursuing soul music (music from man's soul and to man's soul) as the center of attraction for worship, rather than the Spirit bringing forth spiritual songs, hymns, and making melody in the heart to the Lord. Modernism is further seen in the ordaining of women to public ministry as equality of sexes, and ordaining homosexuals and lesbians to the clergy as an expression of God's love.

Modernism does not lead believers into faith in Christ, but encourages faith in the church, its teachings, its sectarianism, its leaders and what is acceptable to the world and society. The world crucified Jesus and society found it acceptable (1 Corinthians 2:8). Jesus said, any believer following Him would be hated by the world as He was hated (John 15:18-19). Modernism in churches is accepted, promoted and loved by the world. James tells us the cost of following and being one with the world; to be a friend of the world is to be an enemy of God (James 4:4).

These doctrines of modernism are founded on Scripture being taught as culture (Scriptural teaching may have been right in the day it was written, but it does not apply today). In modernism the world's standard of religion is the churches standard, and through it, the power of God is diminished by these doctrines of man and Satan (Mark 7:13).

God rebuked and promised judgment to Ephraim (Israel) for following this same philosophy of life in their response to His word for them. God says to them; “I have written for him the great things of My law, but they were considered a strange thing” (Hosea 8:12). The result of Israel resisting God’s word is shown to us in this verse, “Israel shall cry to Me, my God, we know you! Israel has rejected the good; thus the enemy will pursue him” (Hosea 8:2-3). The reason for their rejection is seen in this verse, “Their heart is divided” (Hosea 10:2).

a. Help for a Christian to discern truth

We have looked at the broad road; but how is a Christian, who desires to hear the Chief Shepherd’s voice, to rightly divide and discern Scriptural truth? There are two sure leadings of God for the life of faith on the narrow road. They are the **Holy Spirit** and the **Scriptures**.

Here are some foundational truths that will bring a Christian help in following the narrow road:

- A Christian needs to understand that Scripture alone is God’s unbreakable source of truth for His people (John 10:35).
- Scripture is not a cultural book, or merely a history or historical book, but the mind of God revealed to His people, unchangeable (John 17:17; Hebrews 13:8).

The Scripture does not once tell us it is culture, but always in every place that it is the Word of God.

- Scriptural truths are timeless (Psalms 119:89). In them God has revealed Himself to man, revealing the new life available for those that believe in His Son, and truths for the Christian walk.

In order to rightly divide the word of God, discernment by the Holy Spirit is mandatory. A Christian needs to know which Scripture is to be authoritative over him and which Scripture is used as an example or type to learn from.

A Christian must understand that the Holy Spirit will lead him into all truth; this Jesus promised to every Christian (John 16:13). For the Holy Spirit to have the freedom in the believer to accomplish this, one thing is necessary. The believer must make Christ the highest priority; above his church, pastor, religious organizations, leaders, his ministry, wife, children, family, his own will, and his own life (Luke 14:26-27). A believer needs to ask himself; do I want and am I willing to follow Jesus as revealed in Scripture? Can I turn away from those who present or teach a different Jesus or a different spirit or a different gospel (2 Corinthians 11:4)? The cost to be a disciple of Jesus is to follow any truth the Holy Spirit reveals to that disciple. Lest there be certain persons who misuse this liberty, we can be assured

that any truth the Holy Spirit reveals to a believer will not disagree with Scripture (John 1:1; 1 Corinthians 4:6).

A Christian, who attempts to discern whether something spoken, written, heard or experienced is of God, will find these questions helpful.

- Is what you are hearing, from the Holy Spirit or the flesh?
- What Scripture confirms what you believe is true?
- Is its foundation Scripture, or human reasoning?
- Is it the work of Christ or the religion of man?
- Does it bear the image of Christ or the image of Adam?
- Is it true or is it false?
- Does it come from the heart of man or from revelation of God?
- Is Scripture used to give liberty to the flesh or death to the flesh?
- Is what you are being taught or told going to bring you under the truths in Scripture and the Holy Spirit or under the influence of a leader (past or present) or church?
- Is what you hear revealing the grace of man (flesh) or the grace of God?
- Is the word legalism used or implied to what the apostles taught?
- Is it revealing the grace of God or the Law of Moses?

- Does the assembly where you meet allow the Holy Spirit to lead through the priesthood of all the brothers, or is it a law based meeting according to the Nicolaitan, clergy/laity system (Revelation 2:6, 15)?

b. The law ~~=====~~ the Psalms ~~=====~~ the prophets ~~=====~~ the four gospels

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16). However, all Scripture does not apply to the Christian; such as the Pentateuch, where the 613 commandments of the Law of Moses are found. For the Christian they are types, shadows, examples and a place of learning, understanding and wisdom. The following bullet points give some highlights.

- The Law of Moses: Some may apply something out of the Law of Moses to themselves (usually some blessing and leave the curses with Israel) as a fulfillment of their good intentions. This may be something as simple as Deuteronomy 6:5, or Leviticus 19:8, not realizing that, they are also obligated to keep the rest of the 612 commandments as well or they are asking for a curse to be put upon themselves (Deuteronomy 27:26; Galatians 3:10).
- The Psalms: In many of the Psalms there is an elevation of spirit for the Christian, as he sees faith, praise, and

worship being expressed by Israelites, even though living under the Law of Moses. Yet the Psalms lacked what every Christian possesses; the ever abiding and indwelling Holy Spirit. This indwelling of the Holy Spirit brings the intimacy of the Father and the Son within the Christian (John 14:23). The Psalmist prayed, “Take not thy Holy Spirit from me” (Psalms 51:11). The Christian in contrast has been, “sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption” (Ephesians 4:30).

The worship in the Psalms is under the Law of Moses and is an outward worship seen in the physical acts of men, who used objects such as the flute, harp, symbols, etc. These were not inappropriate for those under the law and without the indwelling Holy Spirit.

In contrast to Israel’s worship, the Christian’s worship is by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This place of oneness with the Father and the Son is not in physical acts of men, nor in a leader, but in the liberty of the Spirit among the brethren.

- The Prophets: Prophecies are to be understood with the Messiah as God’s primary revelation to man. Second is God making known Israel’s future. Third is the future of Gentiles in connection with Israel. The Church was not written about in the prophets. The Church is seen in types and shadows of Christ, and was a mystery till Christ had come (Ephesians 3:1-6).

- The Four Gospels: The Christian needs to see that the 4 gospels are in large part Jesus dealing with the Jews, who were living under the Law of Moses. Much of what was spoken by Jesus, the disciples, and the Jews, is in that context. However, the Messianic time had come and Jesus was introducing the truths of Himself and the kingdom of God. His divinity as God and the Son of God is clearly revealed in the gospel of John (John 1:1).

If these 4, Law, Psalms, Prophets, and the Gospels, are studied from the point of their intended message and use, people will be delivered from many errors and false spiritual pathways, which are in abundance today.

c. Acts ——— the epistles ——— Revelation

- Acts: The book of Acts is a record of ‘the Acts of the Apostles.’ In this book, we are shown the inception of the Church, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Law of Moses fulfilled, and the beginning of the dispensation of the Grace of God. The Gentiles are brought into the kingdom of Christ; the knowledge of Christ is spread throughout the Roman Empire, the growth of the Church is shown, and the work of the Holy Spirit is seen through the apostles.

The book of Acts is not a book of doctrine, nor is it intended to be a doctrinal book. It shows: the giving of

the Spirit at Pentecost, new believers receiving the Spirit, the work of the Spirit, and the increase of the Church by the power of the Spirit.

- **The Epistles:** The epistles or letters of the apostles to churches and persons, are doctrinal truth from the Spirit of God (Galatians 1:8-9; 1 Thessalonians 2:13). This doctrinal truth revealed through the apostles is what God is using to build His Church (Ephesians 2:20-22). The revelation of Christ, given to His Church, is not tradition, culture, history, nor man's wisdom or ideas. It is God's truth for the entire time His Church exists on the earth. Scripture, revealed to the apostles, gives the Christian all that he needs to be able to follow Christ in truth and to be led by the Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

The grace of God is the foundational truth imparted in the epistles.

- **The Revelation:** The book of Revelation is a book of prophecy (Revelation 1:3). It is the last book written by the apostles (96 AD). It addresses the Church Age (the present time), through the 7 churches (Revelation, chapters 2-3). The character of each one of these 7 churches reveals prophetically, time periods in church history before it happened (chapters 2-3). In other words, the history of the church was written and can be seen in these chapters, before it took place.

It shows John being brought up into heaven and what he sees (chapters 4-5). The tribulation (Daniel's 70th week) is written from 2 views. Both views are future history, which relate primarily to Israel (Revelation 6 – 11:18; 11:19 – 20:15). It shows the time on earth for man is now consummated, with the final judgment for everyone not redeemed by the blood of Christ.

The new heavens and earth are shown and the final reward for all who believe God (saints) while on the earth. Those who are saints of God will be with Him forever (Revelation chapters 21-22). The former things of earth will be remembered no more (Isaiah 65:17).

These truths, shown to the Christian in Scripture, are the hope of the Church. Their hope is that Jesus will “come quickly” and take His people unto Himself (Titus 2:13).

d. God's warning against adding to or taking away from His Word

- The Law of Moses: A curse is put upon anyone who would distort or take away from any part of God's revelation in the Law of Moses (Deuteronomy 27:26).
- The Psalms: Psalms 106:19-23 shows us those in Israel who changed the Word of God and the judgment

they were under. “Forever, O Lord Your word is settled in heaven” (Psalms 119:89).

- The Prophets: Abundant proof is seen in the prophets of the hand of God bringing a curse on men who distorted, changed or added to God’s word (Numbers 22:1-35; 31:14-17; 1 Kings 13:1-26; Jeremiah 17:5; Hosea 9:17; Jonah 1:1-17).
- The Gospels: Jesus pronounced a curse on the fig tree that produced no fruit. That fig tree in type was Israel. In Mark 7:6-13 it is shown why Israel became cursed. Israel added to and took away what God had spoken, therefore inviting God’s curse upon themselves.
- Acts: The Holy Spirit building the Church at its beginning, found Ananias and Sapphira adding their own idea to the work of the Holy Spirit in its building, and the consequences (Acts 4:32-5:11). Simon, a spiritual leader in Samaria, heard the gospel and believed. He then wanted to introduce his own doctrine and ideas into the Church. Peter told him “thy money perish with thee.” He then told Simon to repent because he was poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity (Acts 8:5-24).
- The Epistles: The same is true here as in the other divisions of Scripture. We have clear testimony that the apostles spoke from revelation of God (Galatians 1:12). Believers are warned not to go beyond what is written

- (1 Corinthians 4:6). In fact those who add to or take away from the Holy Spirit's words in the epistles enter into the area of being under a curse (Galatians 1:6-9). The Holy Spirit tells us that all men will be judged according to the Apostles' Doctrine (Romans 2:16). A person or church, taking away from the truths of Christ or adding to them, will find they will be contrary to Christ and under His judgment. This condition can be seen in 5 of the 7 churches in Revelation chapters 2-3.
- The Revelation: A warning is given in Revelation 22:18-19, not to add or take away from the words of this book. The warning is that the plagues written in this book will be added to whoever does this and God will take away his life. However, those who listen to the **tempter** are always there with their persuasion, they say: "...And to everyone who walks according to the dictates of his own heart, they say, no evil shall come upon you. For who has stood in the counsel of the Lord, and has perceived and heard His word? Who has marked His word and heard it?" (Jeremiah 23:17-18).

Faith in the Chief Shepherd's voice speaks, "Let my soul not enter into their council; let not my glory be united with their assembly" (Genesis 49:6).

If a Christian seeks the Lord to comprehend these Scriptures and the truths taught in them, he will gain discernment to follow Christ according to His Spirit and Word. He will avoid many erroneous doctrines and roads that lead away from the truth that God has made known to and for the person “in Christ.”

It is also necessary that he act on these truths of God. Truth held in the intellect and not followed in the heart or practiced in his or her walk, is not God’s purpose in revealing truth to us. In fact, light not acted upon may become spiritual darkness to that person at some point (Luke 11:35).

It is the purpose of God to bless His saints. This blessing of God comes by God’s grace through faith in the Lord Jesus. Scripture alone gives us the true pathway of His light. For the Christian, the Apostles’ Doctrine is the true Grace of God.

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God” (2 Corinthians 1:20-21).

D. Neely
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