



When Did Grace Become Not So 'Sweet The Sound'

Darrell E Alexander

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When did the word *grace* become a battle cry for Christians to choose which side to be on? When did grace become a dividing mark, in the place of a point, to bring the hurting comfort and cause the blind to see? When did the mere mention of the word *grace* cause believers to begin to size up one another as an opponent. Why is it wrong for me or any other brother or sister to say I am a preacher of grace or faith or to be a preacher of righteousness standing firmly on the foundation of Christ, the Solid Rock, and placing all other ground that is not built on Christ and His righteousness as sinking sand? Where would we be

without the grace of God and His great love? It seems to me that we have allowed the enemy to take something so amazing and awesome and make it into a battlefield of contention and a detraction from what it really is.

Without the grace of God there is no hope and the world would be lost. It has become 'I am of Paul and I am of Apollos (1 Cor. 3:4). It has gotten to the point that we are even apprehensive of writing anything with the word grace in it or to say the "G" word from most pulpits without an elaborated explanation of what we really mean. As long as things like this prevail, it shows that the body of Christ is still carnal, and all the while the devil laughs and the lost remain so.

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A Word About Covenants (Agreements)



Today we live under a New Covenant, a better covenant or, we might say, a new dispensation. The Jewish people had a covenant with God before the Law of Moses and He was totally faithful to His *agreement* with them as He is with us. That agreement was a foreshadowing of the New Covenant (or dispensation of

grace) that we live under today. Before the Law was given by God the children of God depended on God and His faithfulness. His grace was sufficient for them. (Psalm 105:37) (2 Cor. 12:9)

Let's look at two key words and their definitions to see just what they mean to us as believers today. (Words are very important and if you have been a follower of this ministry very long, you know that I have written and spoken about the words that come out of your mouth framing your world.)

Covenant: The term "covenant" is of Latin origin (*con venire*), meaning 'a coming together'. It presupposes two or more parties who come together to make a contract agreeing on promises, stipulations, privileges, and responsibilities. (Smith's Bible Dictionary)

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Dispensation: A Dispensation is a period of time. Dispensationalism is an approach to biblical interpretation which states that God uses different means of working with people (Israel and the Church) during different periods of history, usually seven chronologically successive periods. Views vary from three periods to four, seven, and eight dispensations. But seven is the most common perspective. The Scriptures divide time (by which is meant the entire period from the creation of Adam to the “new heaven and a new earth” of Rev. 21: 1) into seven unequal periods, usually called dispensations (Eph. 3:2), although these periods are also called ages (Eph. 2:7) and days, as in “day of the Lord.” Five of these dispensations, or periods of time, have been fulfilled; we are living in the sixth, and the seventh and last is before us.

The dispensations are as follows. (I will give only some scripture reference about these as it is not the point of this message and we will be focusing on where we are now and what this dispensation means to us and how we are to be living in it.)

1. Innocence (Gen. 1:26; Gen. 2:16, 17; Gen. 3:6; Gen. 3:22-24.)
2. Conscience (Gen. 3:7, 22; Gen. 6:5, 11-12; Gen. 7:11-12, 23.)
3. Human government (Gen. 9: 1, 2; Gen. 11: 1-4; Gen. 11:5-8.)
4. Promise (Gen. 12:1-3; Gen. 13:14-17; Gen. 15:5; Gen. 26:3; Gen. 28:12-13; Exod. 1: 13-14.)
5. Law (Exod. 19:1-8; 2 Kings 17:1-18; 2 Kings 25: 1 -11; Acts 2:22-23; Acts 7:51-52; Rom. 3:19-20; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3: 10.)
6. Grace – The age in which we live now (Hebrews 8:6 -13, John 6:29, 47, John 10:27-28, Eph. 2:8-9) The entire New Testament letters
7. Millennium (Isa. 2:1-4; Isa. 11; Acts 15:14-17; Rev. 19:11-21; Rev. 20:1-6)

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The thing we must be careful of is not to apply the truth of one agreement (dispensation) and the truth of another agreement (or dispensation) and try to mix them. (That would be like trying to apply the rules of football and the rules of soccer together. If you mix them it does not work and

just causes confusion.) There was over 2500 years of mercy but we must be careful not to do what others did and still do and mistake God's mercy and lack of judgment as approval. Also note that there are different housekeeping rules during the different dispensations (we will look at these in the next lesson).

Under the Old Testament the people were working for God but under the New Testament God is working for us. We could say it this way, 'the sacrificial death of the Lord Jesus Christ brought in the dispensation of grace (undeserved favor) and now God is **giving** righteousness, instead of God **requiring** righteousness, as under law'. Salvation, perfect and eternal, is now freely offered to Jew and Gentile alike by faith through grace in Christ." We can see in Hebrews 8:9 that God is saying, "I am not going to make another agreement where I have to do what I don't want to do."

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Hebrews 8:6-13 (KJV)

6 But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a **better covenant**, which was established upon **better promises**.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

9 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; ***I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts***: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

11 And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

12 **For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.**

13 In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

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You see, Jesus did not come to give more law (Gal 4:2-7) (Gal.3:22-24) Why? Because you do not need the law when you are being led by the Spirit of God (Titus 2). As long as you are under a law you are looking for a rule to tell you what you should do. Many Christians today still want the 10 commandments to be used as their moral guide and that is because they do not

understand that the Holy Spirit is much more capable of guiding than a written code of do's and don'ts.

Our New Covenant is better than the Old Covenant in every way. If not, then we should go back under the Old Covenant and adhere to the killing of animals to atone for sin because at least under that agreement the sins of the people were cleared for an entire year before the blood had to be reapplied. But under this NEW AGREEMENT Jesus' blood was applied once and for all. The greatest difference in the New Covenant is that it is based on *Jesus' holiness*, while the Old Covenant was based on the individual's holiness. The Old Covenant would be broken, because no man was (or is) capable of keeping it completely. But the New Covenant cannot be broken! Why? Because this covenant is between God the Father and God the Son (Jesus) and we get all the benefits of Jesus' covenant with His Father.

Remember...look to your future and not to the past, learn to live in the grace of God and love much, forgive always and hold no bitterness toward anyone

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About the Author



Rev Darrell Alexander is a 1988 graduate of Rhema Bible Training College in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma and is ordained with RMAI thru Rhema Bible Church. He is an alumnus of Lee College in Cleveland, Tennessee. He also studied “Kingdom Principles from the Life and Teachings of Jesus” under Dr. Brad Young, Ph. D., of ORU, through Life Discovery Bible Institute. Pastor Darrell is respected for his detailed expository teaching while bringing laughter with stories and insightful examples.

Through his years of ministry, Pastor Darrell has planted and pastored multiple new church works and has also preached and taught the word of God traveling extensively throughout the United States and South America, living and serving as a missionary in Lima, Peru and Cochabamba, Bolivia for many years with his wife, Donnia. Together they worked with local pastors, organized mission teams, ministered in many venues ranging from seminars to minister’s breakfasts and teaching multiple courses in Bible colleges.

Bringing over 30 years of practical ministry insight and teaching to help local pastors in establishing their people in the unchanging Word of God with a heart to preach the Gospel ‘for it is the power of God unto salvation’ and sharing just what Jesus has provided through His finished work on the cross, Pastor Darrell often says’ “Many have heard a lot of religion but few have heard the true Gospel of God’s Grace and unconditional love”.

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