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Dear Friend:

The meaning of "not under the law, but under grace" has plagued thousands!

Most people are confused by the ministers who claim to expound the words of God. You hear one group quote one set of scriptures telling of the law, and another group quoting verses mentioning grace. The common assumption is that one set of scriptures contradicts another. What folly! All Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

Does grace do away with the law? If you keep the law, have you "fallen" from grace?

Let's understand what "grace" means. Webster defines it as "mercy, favor, unmerited kindness, an exemption or pardon as from a penalty."

It is by grace, the undeserved pardon of God, that you are delivered from the penalty of sin (Rom. 6:23). Christ paid the penalty in your stead. If you accept the grace of God, who permitted His Son to die in your stead to free you from sin, then you are under grace. You are under unmerited pardon, not "under the law."

"What then? shall we sin (that is, transgress the law -- I John 3:4), because we are not under the law, but under grace?" (Rom. 6:15). That's what Paul asked! Shall we sin -- shall we break the law? Remember, sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4).

What is Paul's answer? "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin (transgressing God's law), live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1,2.)

If we are under grace, the pardon of God, we are not to live in sin, we are not to break God's law. If we break God's law by sinning, then we come under the law. It is over us. It has a claim on our lives. It is only those who keep the law that are NOT under the law; it has no claim over their lives.

"Under the law" does NOT mean under its jurisdiction. This has been the common false teaching because of a MISTRANSLATION in I Corinthians 9:21. Notice verse 21. To the Gentiles who did not know God's law -- "to them that are without law" -- Paul said he approached them without mentioning God's law until they recognized God as Creator and Ruler and Lawgiver, then he showed them from the Scripture that they had been breaking God's law in ignorance and now should repent of that sin.

He did not want to offend them. But was Paul doing contrary to the law? No! Paul says he was "NOT without law to God, but WITHIN the law to Christ."

This verse is nearly always mistranslated. The original Greek cannot be properly translated "under the law to Christ." It must be translated "WITHIN the law to Christ." Through Christ, Paul was within the law -- he was able to keep it. To be within the law means to obey it!

Grace does not do away with the law. Grace is God's unmerited pardon for our sins, making it possible for us to keep the law through the Holy Spirit that is given to those that obey God (Acts 5:32).

Wouldn't it be ridiculous for a judge to grant a pardon to a criminal and then tell him to commit the same crime again? Yet, that is exactly how ridiculous most people make God's grace. They turn the grace, the pardon of God, into lasciviousness -- license to do evil.

If grace could abolish the law, then there would be no more sin, because there is no sin where there is no law (Rom. 4:15). And if there were no sin, there would need be no grace -- no pardon of God -- to deliver us from the penalty of breaking the law.

Christ died in your stead and mine so that we could obey God according to the spiritual intent of the law instead of serving sin. As long as we were under the claim of the law because of transgression, sin had dominion over us; we were its slaves. But now, if we repent and believe what God says, we are free to obey the law unto righteousness (Rom. 6:16).

LETTER ANSWERING DEPARTMENT