

# “The Essentials Of Our Faith”

## Session X

November 14, 2010

### The Sixth Dispensation: “GRACE”!

Our previous studies have given an overview of the first five Dispensations:

“Innocence” →

(“Creation” to “Fall”)

“Conscience” →

(“Fall” to “Flood”)

“Human Government” →

(“Flood” to call of “Abraham”)

“Promise” →

(“Abraham” to “Sinai”)

“Law”

(“Sinai” to “Pentecost”)

**A Dispensation** is a distinguishable “economy” or “stage” in God’s progressive revelation of Himself and His sovereign “plan” for human history.

--**Key**: As we identify and understand the Dispensations, we can identify and understand God’s “Plan of the Ages” and have “The Divine Interpretation of Human History”! (See: Dispensational Chart by Kenneth M. Sheppard, former Pastor)

#### **Critical Issues**:

1) As N.T. Christians, we live in the “sixth” Dispensation, that of “Grace”!

--We must know the “rule of life” under which we live!

2) As N.T. Christians, we are individually part of the “Church”, the Body of Christ!

--We are not part of “Israel” or under Israel’s national covenants!

3) As N.T. Christians, we are under a “New Rule of Life” – the “Grace” of God!

--We are not under the Mosaic Law as a rule of life!

4) All true Dispensationalists make a clear distinction between the “Fifth”, the “Sixth”, and the “Seventh” Dispensations! (“Law” → “Grace” → “Kingdom”)

--From our place in human history, we “look back” to the Law; we “live under” Grace; and we “look forward” to fulfillment of the Kingdom promises!

## The Dispensation of “GRACE”

### **A. Revelation: Acts 2:1 – Revelation 19:21.**

→ Time period = From the beginning of the “Church” on the day of Pentecost to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ to establish His “Kingdom”.

→ The agent of the revelation: The Apostle “Paul”.

*“The Apostle Paul was principally, though not exclusively, the agent of the revelation of the **grace** of God for this dispensation. Christ Himself brought the grace of God to mankind in His incarnation (Titus 2:11), but **Paul** was the one who expounded it.”*

–Charles C. Ryrie

→ The content of the revelation: The birth of the “Church”, the “Bride” of Christ, where both Jew and Gentile would become . . .

*“fellow heirs and fellow members of **the body**, and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel . . . To me, the very least of all the saints, this **grace** was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable **riches of Christ**, and to bring to light what is the **administration** (dispensation) of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the **Church** to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. This was in accordance with the **eternal purpose** which He carried out in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Ephesians 3:6, 8-11

### **B. Responsibility:**

*“During most of its course, the sixth dispensation has **five** ruling factors which God uses to govern His people:*

*--Human conscience;*

*--The restraint by the Holy Spirit;*

*--Human government;*

*--Promise;*

*--**Plus ‘GRACE’.** (The new **‘Rule of Life’**)*

*It should be noted that the Mosaic Law is **NOT** a ruling factor in the present dispensation. God intended it to be in effect only until the ministry of Christ (Gal. 3:19, 23-25; Rom. 6:14; I Cor. 9:20). It also should be noted that the **restraint by the Holy Spirit** will be removed as a ruling factor when it is time for the Antichrist to be revealed near the end of this dispensation.”*

–Renald Showers

*“Under Grace the responsibility on man is to **accept** the gift of righteousness that God freely offers to **all** (Rom. 5:15-18). There are two aspects of the grace of God in this economy (dispensation): 1) the blessing is **entirely** of grace, and, 2) that grace is for **all**.”*

–Charles C. Ryrie

*“The **organized Church** is to fulfill the Great Commission, to maintain a pure membership, to discipline the unruly members, to prevent false teaching from existing within it, and to contend earnestly for the true faith. **Individual believers** are to live sensible, good lives, to be associated with a local Church, to evangelize and make disciples, and to use spiritual gifts properly.”* --Renald Showers

*“ . . . dispensations are **stewardships**, and each stewardship has its **stewards**. One man usually stands out, particularly at the beginning of each dispensation, and with the exception of the first and last dispensations, that **chief personage** does not live throughout the period covered. The **stewardship responsibility**, therefore, is not restricted to one man but in some way is **placed on all** who live under the economy. Let us relate this idea to the dispensation of Grace. Though Paul was a **chief agent** of revelation of the grace of God, **many others** are **stewards** under the economy (dispensation). The other Apostles and Prophets (Eph. 3:5) and **all** believers (I Peter 4:10) are also **stewards** of that grace. This means for **every** Christian a **personal involvement** in the grace of God. It is not as though we are spectators sitting in the audience watching the grace of God on the stage. We are **participants** in the drama, and, more than that, we have a lead role in witnessing to and displaying the grace of God under this stewardship. A dispensational responsibility means **involvement** for those who **respond** to the principles of the administration. The same responsibility means **judgment** for those who **reject** its principles.”* --Charles C. Ryrie

### C. **Failure:**

*“By the end of this dispensation, the unsaved will stage a major revolt against God’s rule (Ps. 2:1-3; Rev. 16:12-16; 19:17-21), and organized Christendom will be very apostate (Rev. 17).”* --Renald Showers

*“God is no longer dealing with just **one** nation . . . but with **all** mankind. The vast majority have **rejected** Him and as a result will be judged. This dispensation will end at the Second Coming of Christ since . . . the **Tribulation Period** itself is not a separate dispensation but is **the judgment** on those living persons who are Christ rejecters at the end of this present dispensation.”* --Charles C. Ryrie

### D. **Judgment:**

*“The failure during this present dispensation brings **God’s judgment** and **chastisement**. God chastens and even brings **premature physical death** to some Believers for disobedience (Acts 5:1-6; I Cor. 5:1-5; 11:27-32; Heb. 12:5-13; I John 5:16).*

*He puts some local churches out of existence* (Rev. 2:5). Toward the end of the dispensation God will *remove the Holy Spirit's restraint of evil* (II Thess. 2:7-8), *apostate organized Christendom* will be destroyed (Rev. 17:16), God will pour out *divine judgment upon the world* (Rev. 6-19), and God will *crush the revolt* of the unsaved (Rev. 19:17-21).  
--Renald Showers

**D. Grace:** (Shown after mankind's "failure" to respond to God's Grace!)

1. The Church, the Bride of Christ, will be "Raptured" before the Tribulation!

--See: I Thess. 4:13-18.

--Note: The "Rapture" will be the subject of our next study.

2. During the "Tribulation" period of suffering and judgment on the earth, many Jews and Gentiles will be saved by recognition of Jesus Christ as Messiah.

--See: Rev. 7:4-14.

--Note: The "Tribulation" will be the subject of our next study.

**A Definition of "Grace":**

*"Grace has been defined as God's unmerited favor. By grace He gives us things we do not deserve. This is different from simply giving a free gift to someone who is worthy of it; grace is granted to the unworthy.*

*Thus, everything we receive from God comes by grace. All of us must in honesty admit we deserved nothing but hell. Yet if we have put our trust in Christ, God's mercy (not giving us what we deserve) cancelled our sentence of eternal punishment. His grace (giving us what we do not deserve) bestowed on us eternal life and 'all things that pertain unto life and godliness' (II Pet. 1:3) through Jesus Christ."*  
--Richard C. Barth

## **What Does This Mean For Us?**

1. "Law" and "Grace" are separate \_\_\_\_\_ in the plan of God. They cannot, they must not, be \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_!

--"There can be no comingling, or compromising, of these two great covenants . . .

The by-works principle of the Law, and the by-faith principle of Grace cannot cooperate, or coexist, either in the salvation of the sinner, or in the rule of life for the Believer."

--Lewis Sperry Chafer

2. When “Law” and “Grace” are comingled, it produces \_\_\_\_\_!

a. In \_\_\_\_\_:

*“The varying orders under Law and Grace may be stated in the words*

*‘Do and live’ or ‘Live and do’.*

*In the case of the Law, it is ‘do’ something with a view to being something;*

*In the case of Grace, it is be ‘made’ something with a view to doing something.*

*Under the Law, man lives well to ‘become’ accepted of God;*

*Under Grace, man lives well since it ‘becomes’ one to live well who is already accepted.”*

*--Lewis Sperry Chafer*

**Key:** *“The Law presents first a human work to be ‘done’;*

*Grace presents first a divine work to be ‘believed’.*

*Law begins with the question of what man ought to ‘do’;*

*Grace begins with the question of what God has already ‘done’.”*

*--Lewis Sperry Chafer*

*“Every word of the Law revelation is thus made to be a conditional covenant of works, while every word of the Grace revelation is made to be an unconditional covenant of divine works.”*

*--Lewis Sperry Chafer*

b. In \_\_\_\_\_:

*“The Law said, ‘If you will do good, I will bless you’;*

*Grace says, ‘I have blessed you, now do good.’ ”*

*--Lewis Sperry Chafer*

*“ . . . the doing of any good works because one believes himself to be accepted through Christ, is purely gracious in character.”*

*--Lewis Sperry Chafer*

*“It is to be concluded, therefore, that the sinner is ‘saved’ by grace apart from every human demand other than that he receive that grace as it is for him in Christ, and that the saint is ‘kept’ by grace unto good works, but not by good works. The righteous Father must insist on the good works in the life of His child; but He does not make these works the condition of His faithfulness.”*

*--Lewis Sperry Chafer*

3. The N.T. Believer must make a \_\_\_\_\_ between “Israel” and the “Church”! (This is the sine qua non of Dispensationalism!)

--Failure to make this distinction will \_\_\_\_\_ the Christian of God’s \_\_\_\_\_!