

The Age of Grace



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August 3, 2003

SLIDE: Title

This topic was inspired, so to speak, by a relatively minor interreaction that took place at the Andy Scott “People’s Forum” on Gay Marriage. One of the speakers had just quoted one of the old testament passages, we’ve all heard or read it, the King James version is:

SLIDE: Leviticus 20:13

“If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination”. At this point, the speaker was challenged and the challenger pointed out that the verse, completely quoted, is:

SLIDE: Leviticus 20:13, complete verse

finishing with, “they shall surely be put to death: their blood shall be upon them.” Then the challenger asked whether the original speaker was proposing capital punishment for homosexuality. The original speaker’s response included the phrase “Age of Grace” without really explaining anything as though that explained and rationalized everything.

No one else challenged and the discussion moved on. It left me curious. I don’t like loose ends and a couple of casual queries to people in the fellowship who might have been expected to know about this sort of thing did not answer very much. Others seemed to be as ignorant as I.

Some additional leg work was similarly unsatisfying, so I turned to the modern panacea for information “google” then had to begin sorting among the mass of information and try to find a pattern. This talk is a work in progress and I must issue several caveats before proceeding.

This is what I have gleaned from reading mostly InterNet sourced information. This stuff is not peer reviewed and it is difficult to determine who is publishing it and what their ultimate agenda. Top quality satire can be indistinguishable from serious discourse, but I think my sources have been either people who seriously believe what they are writing or are sympathetic to them. I tried to avoid critical reviews since I wanted to draw my own inferences.

As we will see, as we proceed, the “age of grace” is a construct of what might be considered conservative thinkers. I would not call myself a conservative in social or theological matters so we’ll illustrate this caveat with a little humour:

SLIDE: Doonesbury 1

Mark is lamenting the state of journalism when his partner suggests that the problem is that liberals are hung up on fairness.

SLIDE: Doonesbury 2

I’m going to try to be fair, however, much of what I’ve read leaves me little moved and not at all impressed.

So, in trying to find out about the age of grace, I’ve stumbled into a branch of Christianity known as:

SLIDE: Dispensational Evangelical Christianity

This branch may be generally categorized as conservative and typical denominations are Pentecostal, Southern Baptist and several others. Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson are among the better known dispensationalist writers and speakers.

The teachings of dispensationalism that concern us most while trying to understand the age of grace are:

SLIDE: –Literal truth of scripture

Every last word, both old and new testament.

Of course, a reading of the bible will raise many inconsistencies and lots of things that are on the face of it nonsensical. There is also the question as to whether god constrained herself from writing metaphorically or in allegories or even, on occasion, whimsically.

To cover this, the dispensationalists seem to generally ascribe to the rule:

SLIDE: —Rule of allegory

When I first heard this, I was listening to Garner Ted Armstrong on his “World Tomorrow” broadcast which used to be on the old CFNB radio station. Don’t ask

me why.

“If the plain sense makes good sense, seek no other sense”. This is quite a loop hole. Of course, it skirts the question of who decides what makes good sense.

SLIDE: –Salvation through accepting Christ

It is not sufficient to live a good life to enter into Heaven. The **only** path to salvation is accepting Christ as the Saviour. A typical verse to justify this would be Galatians 2:16:

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

In fact, I have seen it argued that one can live a life of sin and evil in the eyes of the church but, so long as you accept Christ as your saviour before death, you are saved while another who has lived an exemplary life but not accepted Christ is damned. In fact, from Galatians 5:4:

Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

The use of grace here and in other passages is used in arguing for the concept of an age of grace, but I will try to get to that. The argument is made that the above verse warns us that we can not accept the law and grace, but must decide between the law or grace. But, again, I’m getting ahead of myself.

SLIDE: –Dispensation through progressive revelation

Of course, a quick read of the book of Leviticus will reveal lots of prohibitions, many of which make sense still today, but many of which would appear to be what we would call taboos today. Rules made from observation that certain actions typically resulted in illness so were proscribed. I’m told, though, that this was not the case for the pork prohibition. Pork was commonly used in pagan temple rites in the countries

where the Hebrew tribes lived during several of their diaspora and practices that were associated with pagan temples became proscribed.

At any rate, the dispensationalists were becoming established in the early 1800's and in competition with established churches which had long since come to an accommodation with the laws of Leviticus and their members would not welcome giving up pork, shellfish, clothing of blended fibre and other "modern" conveniences. Also, while a community in seventeenth or eighteenth century America might get away with hanging a few witches, by the early nineteenth century, the state was beginning to take a dim view of such things.

The dispensationalists came up with the idea that history is divided into different ages and that as we move from age to age, the sections of the bible are to be applied differently. Some denominations refer to "progressive revelation", but, in general, each age introduces a dispensation from various aspects of the law.

SLIDE: Four Parts of the Total Law

Biblical law is divided roughly into four classifications. It is not clear to me exactly who decided which verses got assigned to which parts and in some cases (as we saw with the Leviticus quote that I began with) part of a verse will be assigned to one part and held to with religious fury while the introductory or qualifying phrase is consigned to a part of the law from which we are dispensed.

There appears to be some dissention on this. Some arguing that the law is only in two parts, the law of God and the law of Moses and that the law of Moses has been fulfilled while the law of God remains in effect. I'm hoping that this slide truly represents the dispensationalists' belief but it becomes difficult to figure out who is really speaking for whom at times.

SLIDE: –Moral law

The ten commandments is the base for the moral law, however, it seems that anything else which makes good sense to be treated as a moral law may be included as well.

SLIDE: –Civil law

The civil law that governed the social conduct of the nation of Israel.

SLIDE: –Dietary law

The dietary law that governed the health of the nation of Israel.

SLIDE: –Ceremonial law

The ceremonial law that governed the religious conduct of the nation of Israel.

At any rate, the four parts are one Law, given by one God, to one man, Moses, to be delivered to one people, the nation of Israel. This one law in four parts, contains all of the instructions necessary to protect and preserve a nation and to bring us a Saviour.

The law had a definite beginning as from John 1:17: “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” and the law has a definite ending (Luke 16:16) “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.”

Let us now examine the ages into which history is divided:

SLIDE: Five Ages of Time

SLIDE: –Innocence

The Age of Innocence began with the creation of Adam (Gen. 2:7) and ended when he ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:7). Its duration was probably 40 days.

SLIDE: –Beginnings

The Age of Beginnings began immediately after Adam ate the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:7) and ended when the Israelites agreed to keep the Mosaic Covenant [the Law] (Ex. 19:5-8; 20:1-26; 21:1-31:18; Dt. 5:27-28). Its duration was about 2,500 years.

SLIDE: –Law

The Age of Law began when the Israelites agreed to keep the Mosaic Covenant [the Law] (Ex.19:5-8; 20:1- 26; 21:1-31:18; Dt. 5:27-28) and ended when the Lord Jesus

Christ fulfilled it and then gave up His spirit while on the cross at Calvary (Mt. 5:17; Jn. 19:30; Heb. 9:11-28). Its duration was about 1,500 years.

SLIDE: –Grace

The Age of Grace began when the Lord Jesus Christ fulfilled the Mosaic Covenant [the Law] and then gave up His spirit, while on the cross at Calvary (Mt. 5:17; Jn. 19:30; Heb. 9:11-28) and will end with His 2nd Advent (Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21). Its duration appears to be either 1,976 or 1,977 years.

SLIDE: –Messiah’s Kingdom

The Age of Messiah’s Kingdom will begin 75 days after the 2nd Advent of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is during the 75 days that separates the end of the “Age of Grace” and the beginning of the “Age of Messiah’s Kingdom” that those people who lived through the seven years of tribulation will be judged as to whether they will enter it or not (Ezk. 20:33-38; Dan. 7:22; 12:11-12; Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 19:11-21; 20:4). The “Age of Messiah’s Kingdom” will end with the release of Satan from the abyss (Rev. 20:1-3, 7-9). Its duration will be 1,000 years!

SLIDE: Seven dispensations

Nearly all christian theologians recognize that God’s relationship to Her people, and to mankind in general, changed from the Old Testament to the New. Whereas formerly She worked through a people who were geographically and biologically related, She now has a people gathered from every tribe, tongue, and nation. It is also a matter of consensus that God’s revelation is progressive: the Old Testament contains many “shadowy” things whose explanation and fulfillment came with the events of the New Testament. While the quality of revelation never changed, the quantity increased over time. Simply put, Abraham did not have access to all the revelation about God which we have in the Bible.

From these concepts, dispensationalists conclude that in each age God gives a different dispensation of responsibilities to people, in accordance with the revelation they have received. This does not mean that there are different ways to be saved. In all ages, dispensationalists stress, salvation comes by faith in the true God, and sins are forgiven only by Christ’s payment of their penalty through His death on the

cross. Yet the content of the faith changes. Each dispensation involves a governing relationship (covenant) which God enters into, and the resulting responsibility of mankind. Most dispensations end with the outpouring of God's judgment on those who failed to meet that test.

There are differing views of where some dispensations start and end, but they are nearly always seven in number.

SLIDE: –Freedom of Innocence

The dispensation of freedom or innocence is the Garden of Eden.

SLIDE: –Conscience

From there until Noah's Flood there is no covenant, but it is often regarded as a dispensation of "conscience."

SLIDE: –Government

Following the Flood is the dispensation of government.

SLIDE: –Age of Patriarch is age of Promise

The age of the patriarchs is known as the age of promise, with the sojourn in Egypt sometimes being a separate dispensation.

The three remaining dispensations receive the most attention.

SLIDE: –Law

The dispensation of law began with Moses. The promises of this covenant were material and conditioned upon following moral, civil, and ritual requirements, and animal sacrifices were the demonstration of faith, which brought forgiveness of sins. God's judgment on Israel for its failures was first the Babylonian captivity, then the scattering of the Jews in A.D. 70. From that time until the rapture of the Church, God's plans for national Israel are suspended, and Israel will be without a kingdom and subordinated to Gentile control until the return of Christ. The re-establishment of Israel as a political entity in 1948 forced a new understanding of this suspension, and most dispensationalists interpreted the event as the beginning of the "last days."

SLIDE: –Grace

The dispensation of grace began at Pentecost and is characterized by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit among believers. Sanctification comes not through deeds of the law but by relying on the internal, invisible work of the Holy Spirit. The Church's primary mission is to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. The Church age will end when the Church is raptured from the earth.

SLIDE: –Kingdom

The final dispensation is the Kingdom, during which God resumes His activity with the Jews. During the seventieth week of Daniel, oppression by the antichrist will prompt Christ to return to earth. National Israel will then recognize Him and repent, whereupon Christ will establish a physical kingdom and rule the earth as Messiah for a thousand years.

What makes dispensationalism distinct from other historical perspectives is that a new dispensation is generally not responsible for the revelation intended for other dispensations. The Church is not under the obligations of the Old Testament law, and in fact is not subject to any law at all. As Lewis Sperry Chafer explained, whereas the command of the Old Testament was “repent,” the command of the New Testament is “only believe!” A person's salvation cannot be gauged by good works. Similarly, some of Jesus' teachings (most notably, the Sermon on the Mount) are intended for the “kingdom of heaven,” which is the next dispensation, and not for the Church age. Likewise, the Church is not the recipient of the promises made to Israel. The new covenant of Jeremiah 31 is for Israel, not the Church (and thus refers to the Millennium), because they are under different dispensations.

SLIDE: Seven Parables

In introducing the dispensation of Grace, Jesus uses seven parables, called the “mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.” They are called “mysteries” because they had never before been revealed.

It should be noted that a parable not only reveals a truth, but it is also given to hide a truth. (Matthew 13:10,11)

“And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speaketh thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”

It is held that Jesus, in these seven parables pulls back the curtain of the future and gives us a prophetic view from the beginning to the end of the age of Grace. These parables teach us how the true gospel, with Jesus at the very center, will become so corrupt by man- made dogmas and creeds that it will end with Jesus being on the outside. This Scripture in Revelation chapter three details the sad and sorry state of the end of the dispensation of Grace. From Revelation 3:15-17:

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

SLIDE: Sower

Also known as the four kinds of soil. Matthew 13:3-8:

“And he spake many things unto them Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth; And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.”

Even in the church of my youth, this parable was taught and explained. The seed, of course, is the teaching of Christ and the different types of soil are different people who either reject outright, readily accept then become apostate or accept fully the word. One paper I read indicated that these types of people are roughly

equally distributed and fully 75% of people hearing the teachings of Christ will fail to profit from it.

SLIDE: Tares

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.” (Mathew 13:24-26)

We see that the tares, the counterfeit, are the results of seed that had been sown along with the good seed. The tares are so similar to wheat that it must be difficult to distinguish them from the wheat. We are not to gather them up, but we are told to let them alone.

“He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” (Matthew 13:28-30)

We see then, wherever the good seed is sown, Satan also sows seed, the tares. This is still true today.

Tares are a grass like plant which is difficult to remove from the cultivated grain, the analogy is people who have accepted something other than the teaching of Christ and, like the master who decides to wait until the harvest before separating the tares from the grain, god will wait until the final judgement to separate the damned from the “saved” (nice guy).

SLIDE: Mustard seed

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and

becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”
(Matthew 13:31,32)

The third parable, the “Mustard Seed,” adds evidence of what Jesus taught in the first two parables, where apostasy will become a major part of professing Christianity. The unnatural growth of such an insignificant herb into a large tree is a picture of what happens when every false doctrine is accepted as truth.

To enlarge the size and scope of religious organizations, the fowls of the air gives the clue as to who is responsible for the abnormal growth of the “mustard seed.” The fowls represent the wicked professors that find a welcome in the apostate body of Christianity.

This parable teaches that just because a religion is universally accepted does not mean that it is the true religion. Nowhere in Scripture is it taught that in the age of Grace true believers will be a popular group. As this age progresses, apostasy and false doctrine will increase until the end. If you think that “true Christianity” will be accepted by the masses, you have not read, or you do not believe the Bible.

SLIDE: Leaven

“Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.”
(Matthew 13:33)

The most commonly accepted explanation as to what the leaven represents in this parable is that the leaven is the “gospel;” the woman representing the “church,” and the three measures of meal represents the world. The woman, (the church) by preaching the gospel (the leaven) will convert the whole earth (the three measures of meal) to Christianity. This interpretation not only violates the Word of God, but history as well.

Leaven always represents evil and error in doctrine or morality. Jesus warns concerning three types of leaven.

1. The “Leaven” of the Pharisees. “Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and and

of the Sadducees.” (Matthew 16:12)

“And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the leaven of Herod.” (Mark 8:15)

The “leaven” of the Pharisee was the erroneous doctrine of works for salvation.

“And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.: (Acts 15:1)

“But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.” (Acts 15:5)

2. The “Leaven” of the Sadducees. “For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit:” (Acts 23:8)

The “leaven” of the Sadducees was the denial of the Word of God.

3. The “Leaven” of the Herodians. “They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.” (I John 4:5)

The “leaven” of the Herodians was a doctrine of worldliness and politics in religion.

These unbelievers now permeate the ranks of true Christianity today and why they are accepted is beyond me. Instead of being called what they really are, liberals and modernist, they are called professors, pastors and Bible teachers.

The Pharisees doctrine of “works for salvation,” the Sadducees doctrine of “denying the Word of God,” and the doctrine of the Herodians, “that all the world’s problems can be solved by the political process,” is very much with us today. Never has there been so much error mixed with the truth. Many find it difficult to discern the difference between “truth” and “error.” It is growing more corrupt every day, and after God has taken the true believers in the Rapture, this world will end up with an unholy alliance of politics and religion.

The corrupt, apostate church will be judged in the Tribulation and is vividly described in Revelation, chapter eighteen.

SLIDE: Hidden treasure

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” (Matthew 13:44)

A commonly accepted interpretation of this parable is that the “treasure” is Jesus Christ, or salvation. The buyer of the field is the sinner. This, of course, is a complete contradiction to Scriptural revelation concerning salvation.

The “sinner” does not seek the “treasure;” neither does he have the money to buy salvation. Salvation is not for sale. The “sinner” is not hidden in a field, nor having found Christ, is he hidden again. This interpretation has no merit at all.

Little discernment is needed to see that Christ is the only One who has the price of redemption for both the “field” and “that which was lost.” Therefore we must look elsewhere for the answer to this most interesting parable.

I believe we will see from Scripture the “treasure hid in the field” is none other than the nation of Israel. A number of verses are quoted to justify this assertion that we need not go into here.

SLIDE: Precious pearl

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” (Matthew 13:45,46)

A most universally accepted interpretation of this parable is that the merchant man is the sinner; the pearl of great price is salvation and the Lord Jesus Christ. The sinner sells all that he has and pays the purchase price for his redemption. This interpretation is so diametrically opposed to the doctrine of salvation by grace one would wonder how anyone can be so blind that they cannot see the error of such application.

The true application is that the “pearl” is “the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.” The “merchant man” is “the Lord Jesus” who, to obtain the precious pearl, sold all that He had. He left His home in glory, became man, and paid the infinite price

with his own blood to redeem us for His own.

One day this pearl (the Church) will be complete. The Lord will then present her to Himself “a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle.”

SLIDE: Dragnet

The seventh parable completes the description of the program of “the dispensation of grace.” It is the parable of the “dragnet.”

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.” (Matthew 13:47,48)

Jesus immediately gives the interpretation of this parable. The net is the “gospel.” The fish represents “people.” The sea is the “nations.” The gospel net is cast into the sea of nations. Into this net there came a great number of both bad and good. It is the same lesson as the “wheat and tares,” the “mustard seed,” and the “leaven and the meal.” It is a picture of the organized church, made up of not only the “true children of God,” but also the false professors and hypocrites.

One look at the professing church today we can readily see all of the false doctrine, tradition, and error presented in this parable. We learn from this parable that we are not to judge who in the professing church are genuine believers and who are the pretenders. That is God’s business, and believe me He knows the difference!

Again, no amount of preaching or praying will make the “bad fish” good, no more than the “tares” can be made “wheat.” This is the reason I have never brought a lesson trying to expose the false doctrine of the day. We would be spending all our time and resources on such a venture. However, if we teach the truth, believers will recognize false teaching when they hear it.

If you will allow me now, I want to read verbatim, a section from one of the documents which I found presenting the sequence of arguments with scriptural reference for the replacement of the law by grace:

If the Law is not in force today, what happened to the Law? If God knew that

man could not keep the Law, did God then lower the standards? Absolutely not! The Word of God tells us exactly what happened to the Law.

For mankind to ever be in the presence of God, the Law must be upheld in every detail. Jesus said:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” (Matthew 5:17)

God made provision for man’s failure before He ever created man.

“But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:4,5)

“For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26)

Jesus met every demand of the Law. He lived a perfect life, and therefore became a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. The proof of His accomplishment is his resurrection.

Every born again believer died with Christ when He died. “The soul that sinneth it shall die.” The Law demands death.

“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:19,20)

Paul not only says he is dead “through” the Law, but also dead “to” the Law. Paul does not say that the Law is dead. He is saying that the Law exacted its penalty. The Law demanded death; and the price has been paid by the Son of God, on the cross. Paul says also that believers are “dead to the Law.” If, then, believers are dead to the Law, the Law has no more claim over them. By our Lord giving His

life, on the cross, every demand of the Law was met, and the penalty demanded by the Law was paid in full.

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.” (Romans 7:4)

Believers being “dead to the Law,” there is no more the Law can do. By the Lord Jesus paying the penalty, by giving His life on the cross, the Law has no more claim on the believer. This is why Paul could say:

“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” (Romans 6:14)

Not only have we seen from the Scriptures that the believer is dead “through” the Law, and dead “to” the Law, but the believer is also “free” from the Law.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2)

We are “redeemed” from the Law.

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” (Galatians 3:13)

Being redeemed from the Law, we are then “delivered” from the Law.

“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of the spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.” (Romans 7:6)

Being therefore delivered from the Law, we are also “free” from the Law.

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2)

Being free from the Law means that the Law has “ended” for the believer.

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (Romans 10:4)

We see why the Law ended – it was “abolished”.

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” (Colossians 2:14)

Just a word of warning to those who believe that one must keep the Law to be saved. The Scriptures say:

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” (Galatians 2:16)

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.” (Galatians 3:10)

A warning to you who would mix law and grace:

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4)

You see, it is not Law AND Grace, but it is Law OR Grace.

SLIDE: Discussion

SLIDE: Conclusion

The concept of a change in the application of the content of the old testament after the crucifixion of Christ is common among Christian religions. I don't recall

discussing it much in my Sunday school or catechism classes, it was just accepted. The dispensationals have rigorously formalized it because of the importance of literal interpretation of the bible while reconciling modern practice. For an external observer, the age of grace appears to be a device to escape the portions of the bible which are inconvenient, however, a strict application of the arguments which support the age of grace would appear to render as invalid a lot of the “moral” restrictions which the fundamentalists appear to consider so inviolate.

If salvation is only through accepting Christ as saviour, why are the laws on sodomy so important? A caustic view might see the dispensational churches as a precariously constructed house of cards, just so much has been removed, just so much left in, just so much good sense, just so much allegory. If one begins to look for consistency, then the whole house could collapse. Questions, then have to be nipped in the bud and one can see a real fear of change.

If the rules of marriage can be questioned, if the moral rules are flexible, if salvation really is only through Christ, then where will change stop once it starts? What is the role of the preacher when Christ alone is the path to salvation, what is the argument for tithing? One can see why such churches are fighting so hard what we can only hope is a rearguard action.

SLIDE: thanks