

## ***"How Free Is Free?"***

### ***Part 2***

#### ***Introduction to Paul's Letter to the Romans, Dispensationally Considered:***

- ***Paul's letters are the source of our knowledge about how God is working today. His letter to the Romans is one of the two letters (the other being to the Ephesians) that are truly essential for the understanding of God's Dispensational Plan for believers today. Our plan for our next studies is to look at Romans from the perspective of God's plan for today in relation to his plan for others of his several programs for managing the human race. The Romans gives us that understanding with a special emphasis on the contrasts between Law and Grace while the Ephesians letter specializes on the doctrines of Grace specifically with only a little emphasis on Law.***
  - ***Last time we looked carefully at Paul's ending to Rom. 7 and then his life changing teaching in chapter 8 where we saw the general and the specific teachings on the blessings granted to the believer under grace. These are already ours having been granted by grace. The simple yet life changing affirmation in Eph. 1:3 was the capstone on that teaching of the apostle, that "every spiritual blessing" in Christ Jesus is indeed ours. But these teachings are not in a vacuum but historically and doctrinally they must all be put into the fabric of the complete corpus of scripture. And that revelation is predominantly about the Mosaic Law, the Kingdom Law, and not grace. So the apostle necessarily often in his teaching contrasts Law and Grace. We have considered well this teaching and its power such as in those verses we considered last time where our focus was in chapter 8 of the Romans which begins with these verses:***

#### ***Rom. 8:1-4***

***1 There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***

***2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.***

***3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:***

***4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.***

- *Grace reigns independently of all works as we read here of Paul's testimony. The righteousness of the law is the declaration of righteousness by Almighty God and what verse 3 says so clearly is that Christ's perfect sacrifice for us, on our behalf, in our place even as that was the only way it could be effective, fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law for each of us. Therefore our lives and our walk are in this new realm of the spirit, and not the flesh. There was nothing else that was able to please God as verse 3 makes so evident. If we do walk in the old realm, that of sin and death, as if we could live there, we will be miserable indeed, but we are still righteous in God's sight because he sees us through Christ's completed work and therefore sees us as righteous in him. You see how much meaning there is then in these words "in Christ" and "in Christ Jesus". Praise the Lord for such free and unlimited grace.*

#### **Our Outline Today:**

- *How Free Is Free? The Full, Complete, and Eternal Forgiveness of Our Sins – The Pauline Teaching Stated*
- *How Free Is Free? The Full, Complete, and Eternal Forgiveness of Our Sins – The Contrasts with the Law*

*Oh, the glory of this revelation that has now been unveiled and never before revealed by the prophets (because it could not be, as long as believers were living under a Legal System where works and sacrifices were required).*

*This is our subject today! May the Lord graciously bless.*

#### **I. How Free Is Free? The Full, Complete, and Eternal Forgiveness of Our Sins – The Pauline Teaching Stated:**

**[READ ] Eph 1:7 ...** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

**[READ ] Col. 1:14** [His dear Son]... In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins...

**[READ ] Eph. 4:32** And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven [Lit. "engraced"] you.

- *What are the implications of this? We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. We emphatically*

**DO NOT POSSESS every physical blessing. And there are no limitations or prerequisites either. We have been freely granted these as Rom. 8:28-30 indicate. But forgiveness is not on that list although justification is.**

- **The revelation of God's plan under the Law for sinners is quite different as we will be seeing today, however. For the "Sermon on the Mount" and the requirement and burdens placed on believers by that Law and the addition of the necessity of enduring to the end is not at all like where we are living under not law but the higher ground of grace!! What a contrast! We will look at that Sermon a little today and also to other scripture from previous dispensational plans. Our eyes will be opened, I hope, for his glory and for the exaltation of the word of grace under which we are called and live. Praise God!**

**So dispensationally, the two programs are different as to how they see the Cross:**

- **One looks forward to the Cross while the other looks back — what a difference?**
  - **One has the earthly kingdom in view while the other has our eternal and heavenly hope.**
  - **One promises the Holy Spirit enabling the keeping of Kingdom Law while the other provides the indwelling of Christ and the Spirit in us all NOW, our hope of glory.**
  - **One offers forgiveness dependent on repentance, confession and forgiveness of all others while the other provides a perfect forgiveness as our reality now, the free gift of a full and complete forgiveness independent of any of our works.**
  - **One offers a salvation dependent on our obedience to do all that the Lord has commanded while the other provides a salvation that has been gifted to us in spite of our disobedience and sin.**
- **So we have a high and heavenly basis for forgiving one another now, no matter what the practical and personal issues may be. We ARE justified. No charges may any longer be brought against us, even by Almighty God.**

- ***FINALLY, let me emphasize that Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit uses an additional word to describe our situation before Almighty God today. That word is “GLORY”! And we could go to so many scriptures to see this so clearly manifested in Paul’s letters. But for now let us just leave it at this.***
- ***GRACE IS ENOUGH FOR GOD’S GLORY TO BE MANIFESTED: Nothing more is needed! In other dispensations the program was different indeed. God had a nation and a people to exalt in the Mosaic dispensation of the law. He had a king and a kingdom to glorify in his millennial kingdom. But today he is working according the wealth of his grace, and so his grace is not only sufficient, BUT POWERFUL INDEED!***

**II. How Free Is Free? The Full, Complete, and Eternal Forgiveness of Our Sins – The Contrasts with the Law:**

**[READ ] Acts 13:26-30**

26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

28 And though they found no cause of death *in him*, yet desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 And when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, they took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.

30 But God raised him from the dead ...

...

**[READ ] Acts 13:38-41**

**38 Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:**

**39 And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.**

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets;

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

- ***Note the context here. Paul was preaching to the Jews of the synagogue in Antioch in Pisidia. The subject was forgiveness in the realm of Verses 38 and 39 contain the heart of the teaching.***

- ***You will recall the grand list of what God has freely given to us under grace: Rom. 8:30: “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” But our forgiveness is not included. If those blessings were given freely as a result of Christ’s death-substitution for us, then logically it remains true that before his death there was no forgiveness (nor either the others as well, for that matter).***
- ***A true forgiveness while the Law was still in effect was therefore, it seems, not a real possibility. But the Word given under the Law does however mention forgiveness often but also that this was not complete even though it is referred to there in one place in the Psalms:***

**Psa 130:4**

**But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.**

- ***But there were limitations on this forgiveness as some verses make clear:***

**Jos. 24:19** And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.

- ***But under the terms of the law there was a sin covering provision and a hoped for forgiveness looking forward, and that even being a more true and complete sense of the term. But no real provision was yet available under that covenant as Solomon indicated in his words of dedication of the temple (for there were prerequisites that were required):***

**1 Kings 8:29-36**

**29** That thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day, even toward the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there: that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make toward this place.

**30** And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive.

**31 If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house:**

**32 Then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness.**

**33 When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house:**

**34 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers.**

**35 When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against thee; if they pray toward this place, and confess thy name, and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them:**

**36 Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel, that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk, and give rain upon thy land, which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance.**

- ***So there were requirements to gain forgiveness, such as proper prayer, confession, repentance, and offerings, of course, according to the requirements of the law.***

***But the Prophets pointed forward beyond the Law to a better provision yet future, to a New but Future Covenant:***

***Jer. 31:31-34***

**31 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:**

**32 Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD:**

**33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.**

**34 And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of**

them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

- *So under the Law of Moses while there was no true forgiveness yet, there was provided a temporary “covering of sins” since every year those same sins demanded a new repentance, confession, and perhaps even sacrifice on the Day of Atonement:*

**Ex. 30:10** And Aaron shall make an atonement upon the horns of it once in a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements: once in the year shall he make atonement upon it throughout your generations: it *is* most holy unto the LORD.

**Lev. 5:18** And he shall bring a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his ignorance wherein he erred and wist *it* not, and it shall be forgiven him.

- *Certain works therefore were required for “forgiveness” under the Law. This changed somewhat after the Cross, but even then during the Pentecostal Period there were requirements demanded as well such as water baptism, for example, and the giving of forgiveness of others debts or transgressions and more were still required. Our Lord taught that looking forward to after the cross with those famous words concerning the coming Kingdom Law. The Twelve upheld that teaching in the Pentecostal Period:*

**Matt. 6:9-15**

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

**14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:**

**15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.**

**Acts 2:38** Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

- *As long as the Lord was still dealing with the nation of Israel free grace and complete forgiveness was not available. Only Paul revealed that later in his preaching and that outside the land of promise! He preached it even to Jews in foreign lands as we saw in Acts 13. But the preaching of the Twelve was limited as we have seen in these verses. This was true during the so-called Transition Period from the raising up of Paul until the setting aside of Israel altogether in Rome as Acts 28 indicates. For as long as Israel and the Law were still the center of focus, believers were living under a different and quite legalistic rule. James in his letter which was written very early and in his pronouncements as recorded in the Acts and in the Galatians makes that clear.*

*We saw a good introduction to the Dispensational differences we are considering here last time in verse 3 of Romans 8: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh...". So there was indeed much that the Law could not do in God's sight. And that included forgiveness, for both sin and sins, and there is a difference between them.*

- *But oh, the contrasts between Law and Grace are so very great indeed! We will close with again some key verses in Paul's letters that highlight the riches of God's abundant grace towards us in Christ Jesus:*

**Eph. 1:6-7**

**6** To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

**7** In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

**Col. 1:14** In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

- *We were dead in trespasses and sins (verses 1 & 5, Col. 2:13), but God found a way to reconcile us to himself through the sacrifice of his precious Son. Praise God, praise God, praise God. Unconditional forgiveness has been granted apart for any and all works. We stand*



***justified and forgiven also as well! For who can bring any charge  
against God's elect? Romans 8!***

***How Free Is Free? Free Indeed. Even Justified! Forgiven Fully and Forever.  
Amen.***