

***“Paul’s Letter to the Colossians, Introduction —
The Seven Dimensions of the Mystery, Part 5”***

Review: “The Seven Dimensions of the Mystery, The Blessed Hope, Conclusion”

Col. 1:26-27

26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

- ***We see here that great secret, kept hidden in God from before the foundation of the world, that for Gentiles, apart from the covenants and promises given to Israel, God’s “chosen people”, God had planned and prepared a great salvation indeed, and all though the riches of grace made sure for us by the completed and perfect sacrifice of his own beloved Son, Christ Jesus. This is most wonderful and blessed and is at the heart of Paul’s doctrine. This blessing is part of the whole realm of blessings, under grace, which he describes here at the beginning as “given to me for you (or “for your benefit”). This teaching is contained in seven (or more) parts and I have called them here the various Dimensions of the Mystery”, The Seven-Fold Dimensions of the Mystery Dispensation of the Grace of God (Eph. 3:1-9):***

- 1. A Better Gospel, Given for the Faith of Sinners (1 Cor. 15:1-8)***
- 2. Every Benefit of Christ’s Work on Calvary, Fully Provided (Eph. 1:3; Rom. 8:28-30)***
- 3. An Abundant and Eternal Life, Offered Freely, Based on Christ’s Righteousness (Rom. 5:17), and The Indwelling of the Triune God, Providing Constant Resources in Living (Col. 1:26-27; Rom. 8:8-10)***
- 4. The Church Which Is One Body, Given for Our Mutual Blessing (Eph. 4:4; 5:32)***
- 5. The Blessed Hope & Expectation. Assured by Almighty God (Tit. 2:11-14; 1 Cor. 15:51; 1 Thess. 4:15-18; 5:9-11; 2:1-3; 2:13-17)***
- 6. The Mature Life of the Believer Under Grace, Endowed in Every Way to His Glory (Gal. 5)***
- 7. A Heavenly Warfare, Demanding Our Constant Engagement (2 Thess. 2:6-13; Eph. 6:10-12; 2 Tim. 4:1-4)***

Review: Part 2 of the Rapture Teaching Regarding Our Blessed Hope:

- ***The Presence of Grace - The Blessed Hope Delivers Us From Fear (2 Thess. 2:1-3)***
- ***The Power of Grace - The Blessed Hope Protects Us From License (Tit. 2:11-14)***

The Presence of Grace - The Blessed Hope Delivers Us From Fear (2 Thess. 2:1-3)

- ***Our Heavenly Hope Is So Profoundly Different From the Prophetical Hope - the Sequence of Events Is Key Though the Timing Is NOT Revealed in Scripture.***

2 Thess. 2:1-3

1 Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

2 That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.

3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;

- ***Here Paul makes the contrasts so clear, for according to the prophecies given in the Old Testament and in the teaching of Lord himself, believers were commanded to prepare for the end times where there would be great suffering before the glory was revealed at the return of the Lord. They were not told to rest and be comforted. Instead they were to watch and prepare as the Lord also says in Matt. 24 and 25 so clearly state. Though the translations generally miss the point here, Paul's language in verse 3 in fact pinpoints the beginning of the Tribulation period as the next event following the Rapture itself, which he here calls "a falling away". The Greek here though would be better translated quite literally as: "the standing apart"!! And what a dramatic event that will be. Amen and amen. Do we yearn for that day?***
- ***We should have no fear of future events that are part of prophecy. Many today who are false teachers use fear of those events of prophecy as part of their mechanism to control the believers. Generally they use the prophecies given to Israel suitably misinterpreted as food for their satanic lies.***

- *But, instead of all of that to look forward to, Paul simply writes this at the end of chapter 2 of 2 Thessalonians:*

2 Thess. 2:13-14, 16-17

13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth:

14 Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

...

16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given *us* everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

- *Paul therefore teaches not the timing of the Rapture or Catching Up, but the Sequence in reference to the return to the Prophetic Program revealed for Israel and the Time of Jacob's Trouble. The Rapture is BEFORE the Tribulation period begins. Period.*
- *The Power of Grace - The Blessed Hope Protects Us From License (Tit. 2:11-14)*
 - *Its Hidden Blessing - deliverance from the power of sin*

Tit. 2:11-14

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared (there has been an epiphany!) to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

- *This is a very important aspect of the Rapture Teaching, that it in its very essence is a tool in the Lord's hand to draw believers who have this teaching and this conviction to holy living. Fruit bearing is the order of the day therefore for believers that have THIS HOPE.*
- *It is also of value to consider what IS NOT stated here, namely, that it is the Law is that the TEACHER of holy living. Many are teaching*

this today and as a result legalism among believers continues to flourish.

- ***So Paul is making a statement about the Dispensational change from Law to Grace that had occurred. Since the false teachers had refused to accept that change, they still compelled submission to that law, even for the new Gentile believers. But that teaching so corrupted the grace teaching of Paul, that it cut it off at the roots, as it were. So the teaching of grace regarding the Christian life is so different that what is so often heard and Tit. 2 states it so clearly, that it is not the Law or any legal system of works that brings godliness in living, but the teaching regarding unlimited grace. Amen and amen.***

HOW IMPORTANT THEREFORE IS PAUL'S TEACHING OF THE SACRED SECRET?

Today's Study:

- **The Mature Life of the Believer Under Grace, Endowed in Every Way to His Glory (Gal. 5) – The Dynamic of the Christian Life, Under Grace – Part 1 (Gal. 1-3)**

Introduction:

Christian legalism is as dangerous to the maturing life of a believer under grace as cutting off the root of a tree is to its fruit bearing. This is a teaching that believers must understand or the outworking of grace in their lives surely will be thwarted. We consider that great teaching of the Apostle Paul today as he provides it in the Galatians letter in particular.

Our Outline:

- ***The Gospel of God's Grace was Revealed to Paul by the Heavenly Christ***
- ***The Gospel of God's Grace Exhorts Believers to Holy Living, Not License***
- ***Under Grace, Christian Maturity Must Be By Faith and Never by the Flesh***
- ***Under Grace, the Believer Possesses a Foundational, Multi-faceted Liberty***

- ***[NEXT TIME] The Dynamic of Christian Living Is Above and Beyond Our Works***

I. The Gospel of God's Grace was Revealed to Paul by the Heavenly Christ:

[READ] Gal. 1:11-17

11 But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

12 For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

13 For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

14 And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called *me* by his grace,

16 To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

17 Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

- *There is so much of great importance here beginning with Paul's statement in verse 11 regarding the origin of the gospel he preached. That gospel, he declares in such powerful and clear language (using the verb "to certify", or "to make known authoritatively", was "not after man". That gospel, he writes here in contrast to what had been preached by the Twelve as he went on to write in the next verse, "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." This gospel was distinctive therefore not only in its content but also in its origin. It was from Christ himself, not on earth, but in heaven, that he received this good news of redemption through faith alone. We looked at Acts chapters 9, 22, and 26 and also in his letters recently to see what further is written about this. Because it was not taken from the Twelve therefore, Paul had no reason to "... confer with flesh and blood."*
- *In addition, Paul describes this distinctive gospel, never revealed before since it was kept secret as part of the Mystery Revelation, "my gospel" in three places in his letters, in Romans 2:16, 16:25, and 2 Tim. 2:8. In the latter Romans verse it is revealed that it is part of the Sacred Secret or the Mystery:*

[READ] Rom. 16:25-26

25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith:

- *And so, here in the Galatians letter, the letter that is most explicitly focused on the maturing of the saints and their living under grace, he begins with this remarkable statement about the gospel of grace itself. We shall see why as he proceeds in the next chapter.*
- *But before continuing there, let's stop for a moment just to recall what Paul writes about that Gospel of the Grace of God in 1 Cor. 15. It is so clearly written here, but how many know it today. Normally what we hear today has the emphasis on what has been added to the gospel of grace by false teachers.*

1 Cor. 15:1-8

1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

II. The Gospel of God's Grace Exhorts Believers to Holy Living, Not License:

[READ] Gal. 2:11-16

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before *them* all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 **We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,**
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. [Even Jews were justified, declared righteous, only through faith and not by works of the law!]**

...

[READ] Gal. 2:18-21

18 **For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.**

19 **For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.**

20 **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.**

21 **I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.**

- ***Here we have some of the most wonderful words in the English language (and some of the most blessed words in the original Greek language as well, of course). They are strong words for legalists, since Paul here writes in verse 19 that he was in effect “killed” by that law, not given life. But the blessedness of that is in the same verse: “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.”***

Or, as verse 20 says, restated, the blessedness is this: “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.”

- ***Verse 21 stands as a lighthouse of truth and faith for us all:*** “I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”
- ***So many today however are frustrating the working of the grace of God by their teachings ...***
- ***That the apostle of course again here sets himself up as a living example of this truth was so relevant to those to whom he is writing. Is it equally relevant to us? My life was transformed by these verses so long ago. What about yours?***

He also writes of this in Romans 7:7-13. Please study that for yourselves.

Rom. 7:7-13

7 What shall we say then? *Is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.

8 But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.

9 For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

10 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

11 For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*.

12 Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

13 Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.

- ***The foundational teaching of the gospel of grace itself having been layed, Paul now proceeds to the practical. Yes, The Gospel of God's Grace exhorts believers to holy living, not license.***

And so we shall see why he began there when his primary focus and emphasis in the letter is not on the gospel but on Christian living. They are intimately connected, he now continues in chapter 3.

III. Under Grace, Christian Maturity Must Be By Faith and Never by the Flesh:

[READ] Gal. 3:1-3

1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

- ***So Paul addresses directly the false teachings that had come by way of the Judaizers into the churches of Galatia. Their heresy was damnable indeed since it destroyed the entire meaning of Christ's death for sin and sinners and its full consequence.***

- *His refutation of their teaching here relied on the simple reminder of how they had been saved in the first place. Paul had preached Christ crucified and risen again in their midst and they had seen him as “a stand in” for the risen Christ. Amen. Deep teaching indeed.*
- *For Paul had been so humbled under the hand of God that he could preach so powerfully concerning the crucified and risen Christ that the Galatians could see Christ in him as he preached the words that Christ gave him. Or, as he wrote here: “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you.” Or, as written in Chapter 4 of Galatians:*

Gal. 4:13-16

13 Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first.

14 And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus.

15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if *it had been possible*, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me.

16 Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?

- *And so they became believers through that preaching and the great work of the Spirit of God. It was of that that he reminded them here in this letter. It is that contest and background, that shared history even, that they had in common and which we must also grasp if we would understand his next words here in the Galatians letter:*

IV. Under Grace, the Believer Possesses a Foundational, Multi-faceted Liberty:

Gal. 3:22-25

22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

23 But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

24 Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

25 But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

- *So the Jews were also set free from the law though their reception by faith of the truth Paul preached. So what was the Gentile*

***blessing if the blessing of the Jews that believed was that great?
 Let us see what the apostle will say regarding that:***

[READ] Gal. 3:26-29

26 For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

27 For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

- ***The Law bound the Jews until faith in Christ could be realized. The law had brought bondage, not liberty, bondage to hundreds of legal requirements. But when Christ had provided a full and complete redemption available through faith alone and independently of any works of law, then not only Jews but also even Gentiles might be declared to be the sons of God and saved by grace through faith alone.***
- ***He writes here also that we Gentiles that have believed, without covenants and promises written to us as they had been to the Jews, also became heirs of God and liberty from the bondage of the Law of Moses that the Jews had been subject to, and liberty from every binding, such as Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female. My, such a liberty indeed this is, and all by his abundant grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Amen and amen!***
- ***But there is more! For under grace, legalisms have no rightful place. Next time we will launch our study into the Dynamic of Living Under Grace here, for if legal works were intended to be a part of our walk, then, as the apostle wrote, Christ died in vain.***

Our Hymn: "Free from the Law, Oh Happy Condition"