

### QUIET TIME

#### Theme: The law and grace

- Try to make a specific time every day to meet Jesus Christ through reading and meditating his Word.
- Pray, talk with Jesus Christ and make a few short notes about this Bible passage in your notebook.
- Record what you discover, what speaks to your mind and heart, what you find difficult or what you understood.

Day 1<sup>BS</sup> Exodus 20:1-17

The moral law in the Old Testament

Day 2 Romans 13:8-10

The moral law in the New Testament  
(cf. Mark 12:28-34)

Day 3 Romans 5:1-11

You can only experience God's grace when you believe in Jesus Christ

Day 4 Romans 9:6-18

God's grace is a gift.  
You cannot earn it

Day 5 Colossians 2:13-15

Jesus Christ has fulfilled the law

Day 6 Ephesians 2:11-18

The ceremonial law has been fulfilled and has been set aside

Day 7 Galatians 3:19-25

Goal of the law: it is put in charge until the first coming of Christ

Day 8 1 Timothy 1:8-11

Goal of the law: it causes people to know what sin is

Day 9 Hebrews 7:11-28

The priesthood in the ceremonial law has been fulfilled

Day 10 Hebrews 9:8-28

The sacrifices in the ceremonial law has been fulfilled

- Think about Hebrews 13:5-6.  
Pray with confidence and conviction, because God will never leave or forsake you!  
No man can permanently hurt you!
- Pray every day for someone or something specific and wait in expectation for what God is going to do (Psalm 5:3).

### STUDY

#### Theme: God's law and God's grace

Read study 9 carefully before the next meeting. If you have questions, write them down and mail them to one of your group leaders. We will seek an answer together.

### BIBLE STUDY

#### Theme: The Ten Commandments

If you like, you may already prepare the Bible Study for the coming meeting by reading through the Bible passage. Make use of the 5-step Bible Study method. The Bible passage is: **Exodus 20:1-17**

### MEMORISATION

#### 1. Motivation

Jesus memorised Bible verses (Luke 4:4-13). Are you doing that?

#### 2. Memorisation

Memorise this verse in the Bible version of your choice.

#### THE LAW

#### Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding,  
except the continuing debt to love one another,  
for he who loves his fellowman  
has fulfilled the law.

#### Romans 13:8 (NIV)

#### 3. Review and back-review

*Review* the last 5 memorised verses once every day and back-review all other memorised verses once every three weeks.

#### 4. Memorisation of the Bible books

*The 5 poetical books:*

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs,

*The 5 great prophetic books:*

Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel.

## 9. God's law and God's grace

**God created man in his own image. He wrote his moral laws in the heart of all human beings and gave them all a conscience in order to remind them about these moral laws (Romans 2:14-15). But as a consequence of man's fall into sin, the knowledge of God's laws became worn out within the hearts and consciences of man. Therefore God's covenant with Abraham (2092 B.C.) 645 years later (1447 B.C.) received an addition. Then God confirmed his covenant to Moses and added the law to the covenant.**

### GOD'S LAW

#### A. The addition of the law to the covenant

##### 1. The addition of the law to the covenant

At the creation of man God had 'written' his moral laws on the heart of every man (Romans 2:14-15). After the fall of man into sin these moral laws were erased more and more from the minds and hearts of people.

When Israel had grown in numbers and had been disobedient to God a number of times, God *added in* 1447 B.C. *written laws* to his covenant with Abraham (Galatians 3:17). Paul follows the incorrect calculation of time of the Greek translation of the Old Testament and says that this happened 430 years after the covenant was made with Abraham (2092 B.C.). However the correct Hebrew text says that this happened 430 years after Jacob and his family came to Egypt (1877 B.C.) (Exodus 12:40-41).

Three groups of laws were added to the covenant made with Abraham: the moral laws, the ceremonial (ritual) laws and the civil (social) laws. These laws became necessary due to sin. Each of these three groups of laws had its own purpose.

##### 2. The purpose of the law

The law was added to God's covenant for the following reasons:

###### *The moral law*

The moral law was added to teach God's Old Testament people (Israel) how they should relate to God and their neighbour; to make them aware what 'sin' is (i.e. what is 'good' and what is 'bad' in God's eyes) (Galatians 3:19); and to keep a check on sin (1 Timothy 1:8-11)

###### *The ceremonial (ritual) law*

The ceremonial law was added to teach God's Old Testament people (Israel) how to approach, worship and serve God appropriately

###### *The civil (social) law*

The civil (social) law was added to teach God's Old Testament people (Israel) how they should live as a community of God's saved people within the limits of his laws among the unsaved nations of the world (Exodus 20:1-2).

###### *The law as a guardian*

The law was added to prepare God's Old Testament people (Israel) for the first coming of the Messiah (Galatians 3:23-25) and the coming of God's grace (John 1:17). The law functioned as a supervisor or guardian over 'immature children' until they would receive Jesus Christ as the atonement for their sins and so become 'mature sons and daughters' of God (Galatians 3:26 – 4:7).

However, the law cannot serve as a means by which people could be justified (saved).

#### B. The moral law

##### 1. The moral law in the Old Testament

The purpose of the moral law was to teach God's people how to live as God's people with God and with one another in order to please and glorify God. The moral laws in the Old Testament are summarised in the Ten Commandments (Deuteronomy 5:6-21). The first four laws of the Ten Commandments teach God's people how they must love God and the last six laws of the Ten Commandments teach people how they must love their fellowmen.

##### 2. The moral law is fulfilled in the New Testament, but has not been abolished. It has been correctly explained and re-affirmed!

In the New Testament Jesus explained the correct and complete meaning of the Ten Commandments in Matthew 5:21-48. The moral law must be explained in the light of the New Testament revelation. Jesus and the apostles reaffirmed the moral law. It has never been recalled or abrogated and is still the rule of life for all Christians in all the nations (Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8-12).

Jesus summarised the Ten Commandments in Mark 12:30-31, "Love the Lord, your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." The second commandment is, "Love your neighbour as yourself."

## C. The ceremonial law

### 1. The ceremonial law in the Old Testament

The word: 'holy' means 'separated from what is wrong and evil' and 'dedicated to what is right and good'. God is a holy God. Unholy people by themselves cannot draw near to the holy God (Leviticus 19:1-2; Isaiah 6:1-7). Therefore God introduced the ceremonial law. The purpose of the ceremonial law was to teach God's people during the Old Testament period how to approach God, how to worship God and how to serve God.

The ceremonial law taught the rules for the holy servants (the priests and Levites), the holy places (the tabernacle or the temple), the holy times (the day of fasting, the sabbath, and the religious festivals) and the holy acts (the physical circumcision, the animal sacrifices, the ceremonial washings or ablutions, the eating of clean foods, the dedication of the firstborn, the bringing of the first fruits of the harvest and the giving of tithes).

### 2. The ceremonial law has been fulfilled. The shadows have been replaced by the realities!

All the ceremonial laws during the Old Testament period were only 'shadows' of the 'realities' that would be revealed with the first coming of Christ at the beginning of the New Testament period (Colossians 2:16-17; Hebrews 8:5,13; 9:8-10; 10:1). When there is a change in the Old Testament priesthood, there is a *change* in the Old Testament law (Hebrews 7:12). The New Testament books of Romans, Galatians and Hebrews teach clearly how Jesus Christ *fulfilled* the Old Testament ceremonial law and introduced *the realities* themselves.

For Christians, their only *priest* is Jesus Christ, who lives forever and is perfect (Hebrews 7:23-28).

For Christians, their only *temple* is the worldwide body of believers called the Church (Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:4-11).

For Christians, their *Sabbath (rest day)* is one day every week which they regard as 'holy' and thus set apart to rest from their daily work (Exodus 23:12), to have a sacred assembly (Leviticus 23:3) and to do good and save lives (Mark 3:4). However, their final *Sabbath* is when they enter the eternal rest, initially in heaven and finally on the new earth (Hebrews 4:1-11).

For Christians the *fasting with mourning* has been exchanged for celebration and never-ending joy, because Jesus Christ has fulfilled everything needed for salvation and is always present with them (Mark 2:18-22; John 16:19-22; Matthew 28:20).

For Christians, their only *Passover and other celebrations around the table* are commemorating Christ's substitution sacrifice with sincerity and truth (1 Corinthians 5:6-13; 11:18-32).

For Christians, their only *substitution sacrifice* is the death of Jesus Christ on the cross (Romans 3:25, Hebrews 2:17; 9:28; 1 John 4:10).

For Christians, their only *circumcision* is the circumcision of their sinful hearts (regeneration) (Romans 2:28-29; Colossians 2:11).

For Christians the only *purification rite* is the baptism with water, which symbolises the baptism with the Spirit (regeneration) and the participation with Christ's completed work of salvation. For example, Christians possess complete forgiveness of sins (Mark 1:8; John 3:22-25; Acts 10:47-48; 22:16).

For Christians all kinds of *food are clean* and suitable to eat (Mark 7:19).

For Christians, not only *the firstborn*, but everyone is to be consecrated to God (Matthew 6:33; Luke 9:23).

For Christians not only *the first fruits*, but everything they possess is to be consecrated to God (Luke 14:33; Philippians 3:7-8).

For Christians, *the various kinds of tithes* in the Old Testament, which were given to support the Old Testament temple worship with all its ceremonies and the Old Testament social tax, are replaced by generous giving as each Christian freely decides in his own heart to give (Luke 6:38; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15). The gifts are for the worldwide Church in its task to extend the kingdom of God.

### 3. The ceremonial law has been cancelled and abrogated!

The Bible clearly teaches that Christ *upheld* the moral law (Matthew 22:36-40), but *fulfilled* and then *cancelled* the ceremonial law with its requirements (Colossians 2:14) and set believers (the Christian Church) free from its regulations. Moreover, the Bible clearly teaches that the regulations of the ceremonial law were *abolished* and may not be reintroduced into the Christian Church and thus again bring divisions among believers (Ephesians 2:14-15)!

When Jesus Christ died on the cross as a sacrifice of atonement for our sins, all animal sacrifices together with the priests who sacrificed them and the temple where these sacrifices were brought, terminated!

By his death Jesus Christ not only made peace between people and God, he also made peace between Jewish believers who used to have the ceremonial law and Gentile believers from the other nations who never possessed the ceremonial law. He united these two groups of believers into one Body (the Church) (*Read* Ephesians 2:11-22).

All the ceremonial laws that differentiated Israel from all the other nations were fulfilled and therefore cancelled and abrogated. “There is no difference between Jew and Gentile” (Romans 10:12). “Whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – we were all baptised by one Spirit into one Body and we were all given the one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

That is why Christians may never import ceremonial laws into the New Testament Church again! And that is why Christians may not introduce ‘Jewish messianic congregations’ (that retain parts of the Jewish ceremonial law), just as they may not introduce Christian congregations that retain parts of the religious laws of the other world religions.

#### D. The civil (social) laws

##### 1. The civil law in the Old Testament

The civil laws taught the rules for living within the nation-state of Israel during the Old Testament period. They contained rules for government and politics, rules for society and social relations, rules for the courts, jurisprudence en penal law, and rules for the military. The penal law contained laws for transgressions against the moral laws.

The moral laws within the civil laws in the Old Testament have not been abrogated, but should be evaluated in the light of the New Testament revelation.

Examples of civil laws: There were political rules for the appointment of the 12 leaders of the 12 tribes (Numbers 1:16) and for the appointment of kings (Deuteronomy 17:14-20). There were social rules for relating to Hebrew slaves (Exodus 21:1-11). There were legal rules against manslaughter and murder; against abuse and kidnapping; against quarrelling and causing damage (Exodus 21:12-36); against theft and for restitution (Exodus 22:1-15); against sex before marriage and against magicians. And there were social rules for the payment of a dowry, for relating to foreigners, widows and orphans and for making loans to the poor (Exodus 22:16-31; Deuteronomy 24:17-18). There were moral laws against all forms of sexual immoral behaviour (Leviticus 18:1-30). There were spiritual laws against occultism (Leviticus 19:26-31; Deuteronomy 18:9-14; Isaiah 8:19-20). There were social rules to respect the elderly and foreigners (Leviticus 19:32-33). There were economic rules against corruption in business (Leviticus 19:35-36).

There were military rules for military service in Israel and for the waging of wars (Deuteronomy 7:1-4). And there were laws concerning jurisprudence (Exodus 23:1-9; Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 16:18-20).

##### 2. The civil law has been fulfilled and replaced by the rules of life within the kingdom of God

Israel had a special function during the Old Testament period. Israel would bring forth the coming Messiah (John 4:22) and would be the beginning of God’s covenant people (Exodus 19:3-6). That is why Israel had to live as a holy and righteous people among the Gentiles. Israel possessed these functions as a preparation for the coming of the Son of God (Galatians 4:4).

During his first coming Jesus Christ fulfilled the Law and the Prophets (Matthew 5:17) and founded the kingdom of God, not only in Israel, but in all the nations of the world (Matthew 12:28-30; Mark 1:15; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23).

The former special functions of Israel as God’s Old Testament people with its ceremonial and civil laws came to an end.

*Israel (God’s Old Testament people) was not terminated or replaced, but was continued on a higher plane (i.e. in the kingdom of God) and extended to include believers from all the nations in the world (cf.*

*1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11).*

From the first coming of Christ the rules of the civil law of Israel were replaced by the rules of the kingdom of God, as Jesus taught them in the Sermon on the Mount and in all his parables about the kingdom of God. The teaching of Jesus Christ teaches all believers from all the different nations how they should live in the kingdom of God by adopting the culture of the kingdom of God. The rules of life within the kingdom of God are mainly moral laws.

*Read* how in the New Testament new rules are given for political issues (Matthew 22:21; Acts 4:19-20; 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-23). There are social rules against social evils (1 Corinthians 5:9-13) and against sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 6:12-20). There are rules for how Christian men and women (boys and girls) should relate (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8), for Christian marriage (1 Corinthians 7:1-40; Ephesians 5:22-33) and for the Christian family (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21). There are rules for the Christian lifestyle in the world (Ephesians 4:17-5:21), for Christian labour relations (Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:19-4:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12) and against discrimination and exploitation (James 2:1-13; 5:1-12). There are rules for jurisprudence (Matthew 5:38-42; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Corinthians 6:1-10; Hebrews 10:34; 1 Peter 2:18-23; 1 John 5:17). And there are rules for

military issues (Matthew 26:52-54; Luke 3:14; 6:27-28; John 18:36).

We divided the law into three parts: the moral, ceremonial and civil laws, but there was not always a clear distinction between these laws in the Bible. Sometimes these laws were presented in a mixed form. Some ceremonial and civil laws contain moral and spiritual principles. And some moral laws contain ceremonial aspects. The moral and spiritual aspects of the Old Testament laws remain valid, but the ceremonial aspects should be terminated (e.g. the day of rest does not need to be kept literally on the seventh day of the week).

## E. Jesus and the law

At his first coming Jesus Christ did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil them (Matthew 5:17; cf. Luke 24:25-27,44-47). The life, death, resurrection, ascension and enthronement of Jesus Christ are the key to understand and to explain the Old Testament correctly! The Old Testament cannot be understood or explained correctly without the revelation and fulfilment of the New Testament (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:14-16; Luke 24:25-27,44)!

“In the Old Testament the New Testament is hidden. In the New Testament the Old Testament is revealed.” (Augustine)

The final decision how something in the Old Testament must be understood and explained is given in the New Testament!

The Old Testament covenant is a promise and the New Testament covenant is the real fulfilment of this promise (Matthew 5:17). All promises in the Bible, including the promise of God to his Old Testament people (Israel), have been fulfilled, are being fulfilled or will be fulfilled *in Jesus Christ to all God's people, that is, to all the believers in the Bible from all the nations in the world* (2 Corinthians 1:20; Ephesians 3:3-6).

God's revelation through Jesus Christ in the New Testament is God's final Word to all people (Hebrews 1:1-2)! Jesus Christ is the final Prophet, because he is not dead like all the other prophets in history.

## GOD'S GRACE

### F. What is God's grace?

#### 1. God's grace is a gift

The word 'grace' in the Bible means 'an undeserved favour' in which deserved debts are forgiven and undeserved blessings are bestowed.

'Mercy' is God's love for miserable people. 'Grace' is God's love for guilty people.

God's grace is a divine gift (Ephesians 2:7-8; Romans 3:21-26; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 9:15) and not a human right. You cannot earn God's grace by keeping his laws (Galatians 3:10-11; James 2:10; Romans 4:4-5). "You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

#### 2. God's general grace

God's general grace pertains to God's *creation* and is concerned with *all people*. God shows his general grace to people on earth when he lets his sun shine on them and when he gives them rain and food to enjoy (Acts 14:16-17).

And due to God's general grace God's moral laws have not been completely erased from the hearts of people. God's moral laws are still written partly in the hearts of unbelievers (Romans 2:14-15), so that they can know that God is a moral God for whom 'good' and 'evil' exists. This moral law helps them to suppress the power of sin in their lives, so that sin does not always become visible in their lives and it looks as if non-Christians live 'good' lives. God's general grace causes life to be bearable and even pleasant at times.

#### 3. God's special grace

God's special grace pertains to *salvation* (justification) and is concerned only with *God's elect* (genuine believers). Salvation does not originate with man who chooses God, but begins with God who chooses particular people (John 15:16; 2 Timothy 1:9) and then draws them to Jesus Christ (John 6:44,37). God's special grace means that God has already chosen certain people before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4). It means that God has given these people to Jesus Christ (John 17:2,6,9,24) and he brings them to new birth, faith and conversion. He gives them his special grace by giving them eternal life (salvation) for ever. He lets them inherit his glory (Ephesians 1:3-8). He gives this grace out of his compassion and mercy (Romans 9:14-18; 4:4-8). Man cannot choose this special grace. God gives it to him.



People who think that God is unjust by choosing (electing) certain people for himself, forget that all people have fallen into sin, are totally lost and *deserve* eternal damnation (Romans 3:10-12,23).

This special grace of God becomes visible in God's plan of salvation.

**God's plan of salvation consists of the following:**

God's appointment of Jesus Christ as the Saviour and Mediator between God and people before the creation of the world (1 Peter 1:20-21; Ephesians 1:9b-11).

The election of certain people to become his children before the creation of the world (John 6:44,37; Romans 8:29-30; Ephesians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:9-10; 1 Peter 1:1-2).

The establishment of the covenant with Abraham and all believers (Galatians 3:29).

The sending of Jesus Christ to this earth to redeem people under the law (Galatians 4:4).

The proclamation of the gospel (Romans 10:14-17).

The cause of regeneration. People are born again by the work of the Spirit of Jesus Christ in their mind, conscience and heart (John 3:3-8).

The cause of faith. God gives faith (Acts 13:48; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29), which man must exercise (Mark 1:15; Romans 4:3; Hebrews 11:6).

The cause of justification. God justifies believers apart from the law (Romans 1:28).

The cause of sanctification. God sanctifies believers in solidarity with Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30).

The cause of glorification. God finally glorifies believers (Romans 8:17,30; 1 John 3:2; Philippians 3:21).

## G. Living under God's grace

Read Romans 6:14. The Bible clearly teaches that Christians are no longer 'under the law', but are 'under grace' and may live 'under grace'!

### 1. The law and grace

God's law is God's righteous requirement that all people must be absolutely perfect in order to be accepted and that all transgressions of his laws must be punished. All people have sinned against God's law (Romans 3:23) and stand by nature under God's judgment (Romans 8:1-2; John 3:18,36; Galatians 3:10-11; James 2:10).

But because God is not only righteous, but also love, he saw to it that atonement was made for the sins of all the people that believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 8:1-2; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9-10). Jesus Christ fulfilled God's law (God's righteous requirement) in our place (Matthew 5:17; Romans 10:4; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18a). All people who believe in Jesus Christ no longer stand under the law or under God's judgment, but stand under God's grace. God declares, regards and treats all believers in Jesus Christ as completely and perfectly (100%) righteous (forgiven, saved) for ever (Hebrews 10:17-18)!

### 2. Living under God's grace

'Living under God's grace' means that you no longer stand under the law and its condemnation! You stand under God's grace and its forgiveness.

Even when you as a Christian commit a particular sin, you need not fear that you would lose the love of God or the love of your brothers and sisters in Christ (Romans 8:33-35)! For a Christian the consequence of committing a sin is never condemnation, punishment and rejection by God, but rather is a disturbance of the good relationship with God!

If you have made a wrong choice and have committed a particular sin, you always have the choice to return to God and live under his grace. You need not continue to live under feelings of guilt, shame and fear of condemnation. When you have broken a moral commandment or a kingdom rule, you always have the choice to restore your relationship with God! You always have the choice to choose between not loving and loving, between feeling guilty and feeling completely free, between feeling anxiety and feeling sure, between being rejected by certain people and always being accepted by God! When you live under grace you focus on how you live. And when you do something wrong, you immediately return to God, confess your sin, receive his forgiveness and continue to live under grace in a close relationship with God (1 John 1:9). In this way you continue to experience God's grace and continue to be sanctified more and more.