

## **Glossary - Terms for Law and Grace**

**Law** - The **Law** is most commonly used to speak of God's moral standard by which He judges righteousness among mankind, both in people's relationship to God and people's relationship to neighbor, as outlined in the writings of Moses.

**Grace** – An attribute of God's nature which is His merciful, patient and loving disposition. The Lord God is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth" (Ex 34:6). Therefore, grace is almost always associated with mercy, love, compassion, and patience as the source of help and with deliverance from distress. God's grace is chiefly expressed in the person and work Jesus, God the Son, and His work to save ungodly sinners from His wrath toward them because of sin.

**Covenant** – An agreement between two people or two groups that involves promises on the part of each to the other. The concept of covenant between God and His people is one of the most important theological truths of the Bible. A covenant, in the biblical sense, implies much more than a contract or simple agreement. A contract always has an end date, while a covenant is a permanent arrangement. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986)

**Mosaic or Old Covenant** – The commands and regulations given to Israel by God, through Moses at Mount Sinai. It was an agreement between God and His holy people Israel, whom He set apart for Himself out of all the nations of the earth. These commands and regulations are contained in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

**New Covenant** – The covenant that God has now used to fulfill the old covenant which has been established upon the person and work of Christ. In the New Covenant, God powerfully works to save sinners by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit whereby they are given faith as a gracious gift from God. The believing sinner can be justified before God, adopted into His family. In this work, the believer is joined to Christ and indwelt by the Holy Spirit of God forever and moved by God to fulfill His law and serve Him by the power of the indwelling Spirit. This covenant also guarantees eternal life to its beneficiaries.

**Moral Law** – The strict moral code that God gave to govern the society of the Israelites, God's chosen people. It is summarized in the Decalogue (10 Commandments). It was instructive, teaching them how to treat one another in a Theocracy (a society governed by God),

**Ceremonial Law** – The regulations contained in the Torah for how God was to be worshipped, through the means of a Priesthood, an altar for blood and grain sacrifices, performed at a Tabernacle. It also included the celebration of annual feasts and various rituals for various expressions of worship and devoted life.

**Civil Law** – The laws, both perceptive requirements as well as penal sanctions, that were meant to bring authoritative *order* to the entire Israelite assembly. This means that God, as Lawgiver and Judge, would command for people to do certain things (perceptive requirements), and NOT to do other certain things for which there were penalties which could be even as severe as death (penal sanctions). Therefore the governance of this Israelite society was seen as a matter of the

authority of God their ruler and King, under His holy **Law** as their Lawgiver, by which the people would be judged in His court as their Judge, implemented by the priesthood and the people.

**Pentateuch** – The first five books of the Bible all written by Moses. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

**Torah** – The Hebrew word for “*law*.” It signifies the writings of Moses in the Pentateuch. Many times it is used as a specific reference to the commands of the law of Moses as a whole.

**Continuity** – A term used to describe the similarities between the Old and New Covenants in the Bible. Some people see much similarity between the two. At the heart of the discussion is the question, “*Were people in the Old Testament saved in the same way as people in the New Testament?*” Many who hold the answer to be “yes” see continuity between the covenants.

**Discontinuity** - A term used to describe the differences and distinctions between the Old and New Covenants in the Bible. Some people see much discontinuity between the two. The extreme form of this view would hold that people in the Old Testament were saved in a completely different way than people under the New Covenant.