

Authority - The Grace Believer

a study for the College and Career Class at Gulf Coast Baptist Church

by Steve Thomas 11/21/21

Introduction

God is kind and loving, and He has given His people blessings throughout time. These blessings have varied in form and method of delivery for each grouping of His people. Adam and Eve had their needs met, but in a different way than say David. God required each of them to do different things, not for salvation, but to receive these blessings. God “dispensed” His property to His people in different ways, and gave unique gifts to each group of people. The Grace Believer (called that because this is the Dispensation of Grace in Eph 3:2) has been given all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Eph 1:3. The spiritual gifts described in Rom 12 and 1 Cor 12 were not given to other groups of believers. The access that Grace believers are given was not given to other groups of believers. Every believer today is a royal priest, this would be unheard of in past dispensations. Salvation for each group has always been by grace, through faith, and based on the crosswork of Christ. But each group is taught something unique about themselves with the different method of stewardship.

Civil Authority

The believer is given spiritual authority, this is in contrast to the Civil Authority that still currently resides with the Prince of the Power of the Air - Satan Eph 2:2. According to several NT passages, the believer should submit to this power, understanding that it is ultimately from God that the Evil One received this power and must still be accountable to God on how it is used Titus 3:1, Rom 13:1, 1 Peter 2:13-17. If the civil authorities asked us to do something that would be described as sin, then we would obey God, along the same line, if the civil authority asked us not to do something that God asked us to do, we would also obey God, in every other instance we should obey the civil authority.

A Royal Priesthood

Peter calls the believer a royal priesthood 1 Peter 2:5,9, this description could not be used of any other group of believers in history. This passage precedes the passage reminding the believer of his responsibility to civil authority, and to his master, etc. Peter was clear to remind the reader that this was a spiritual area of authority that was being given to them. There are seven ways the NT describes the sacrifices that the believer can offer. In the Old Testament, animal sacrifices were used to please God. But today, under Grace, believers don't have to bring animal sacrifices to the altar. We are a living sacrifice. Romans 12:1-2 The believer brings spiritual sacrifices that are pleasing to God. There are 7 spiritual sacrifices and are ways we can be pleasing to God. God's word says that these spiritual sacrifices are seen by Him as a sweet smelling aroma Philippians 4:18.

Rom 12:1-2 Presenting our body to Him as a **living sacrifice**

Heb 13:15 **Praise** *Praise – giving thanks to God and attach thanksgiving to His character (example: God you are so good and because of your goodness you have provided for our family

a home etc.) **Heb 13:15** *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*

Heb 13:16 **Good Works** fellowship is mentioned in this verse as well.

Phil 4:18 **Giving** *Remember God's word says giving is not an obligation, but from the heart 2 Cor 9:7-8 and with a willing mind 2 Cor 8:12 **Php 4:18** *But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God.*

Phil 4:6, Col 2:7, Col 4:2, 2 Cor 4:15 **Thanksgiving**

1 John 1:7, Heb 10:25 **Fellowship** *Walking in the light means to manifest, make seen, the life of Christ **1Jn 1:7** *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*

Phil 2:17 **Faith** **Php 2:17** *Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.*

The believer can offer intercession in a way similar to the OT priest. In Heb 10:19, the author of the passage encourages the believer to approach boldly. He uses OT language to describe the believer's cleansed state in verse 22. This access was unprecedented in history. Since Ex 19, God had maintained a distance and a barrier between Himself and His people. There was a time when God could be found and His people walked with God, but since God established the Law of Moses to show His people that they could not earn this right, man had to approach God through a mediator. Christ, having kept this law became the Mediator to the Grace Believer, providing the access that he now has.

Complete In Him

The believer's access is part of the benefit that comes with being In Christ. Paul discusses some of these benefits in his letter to Colossians. In Chapter 2:9 the believer is described as being Complete in Christ. Christ is the supreme head of all power. This statement leads to Paul's statement to not let anyone judge or spoil the believer with an encroachment on this authority. Individuals will seek to limit the freedom that the believer has with different forms of law. This leads to the teaching of the New Man in chapter 3. Paul is contrasting the dead things of the past with the new situation the believer finds himself in. When the believer frames his mind on things above - namely his position in Christ, he will not be in bondage to the items that steal the freedom of others.

This position in Christ is described in various ways. Paul said that the believer is crucified with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, ascended with Christ, and now seated in the heavenlies with Christ. This position carries with it certain possessions. The believer can consider himself to be Built together with other believers, Workers together, Citizens together, Suffering together, Knit together, Chosen together, and even Slaves together. The World system seeks to divide the believer from others based on race, wealth, interests, and so on. But the unity given to believers is above these divisions. It is based on Christ.