

## Who Are You?

As followers of Jesus Christ, our identity gives us authentic 'Throne Rights', which we must recognise and learn to use over time!

*<sup>16</sup> Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

(Heb 5:16)

*<sup>12</sup> In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

(Eph 3:12)

### Throne Rights 2

#### You now live under God's Grace, not under the Old Law

We first need to understand what the Old Covenant Law was about.

It was a legal system, given by God to Israel, for regulating life as a means of, firstly, restricting the impact of sin, and also providing them a way of being 'right' with God, which was mediated to them through the Priesthood on behalf of God.

*<sup>20</sup> The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, <sup>21</sup> so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Rom 5:20-21)*

*<sup>14</sup> For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. (Rom 6:14)*

Interestingly, Paul describes this provision by God as a 'schoolmaster,' or 'a trainer of children' – a *paidagogos*. So, the old Law was designed to be a tutor, or a 'set of training wheels', with the purpose of leading them to Christ:

*<sup>19</sup> What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. <sup>23</sup> Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So the law was our guardian [schoolmaster] until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.*

(Gal 3:19, 23-25)

Paul sums up the situation well when he says:

*<sup>10</sup> For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.' <sup>11</sup> Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because 'the righteous will live by faith.' (Citing Habakkuk 2:4)*

(Gal 3:10-11)

<sup>4</sup> *Christ is the end [telos – fulfilment or end purpose] of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.* (Rom 10:4)

So, the situation has radically changed under the New Covenant, and has now become a grace-based relationship through Holy Spirit-inspired faith in Jesus Christ:

<sup>1</sup> *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.* (Rom 5:1-2)

God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ is the solid foundation on which we now stand!!!

### **Understanding the New Dynamics of a Grace-Based Faith Relationship**

What Paul means by the phrase, *'this grace in which we now stand'*, is referring to the safe place that we now have in God's eyes, standing in his 'divine favour' – a favourable kindness toward us resulting in an affectionate response of free acceptance.

The reason for this is because we have responded in faith toward his offer of salvation through his Son's sacrifice of his perfected human life, by which he paid the penalty for our sin, which we had no way of paying ourselves.

This is all about relationships – God's offer of a relationship with us as our creator and redeemer as we enter by faith into his covenant of love through Jesus, and our responding relationship to him of thankful love and growing obedience to his loving will for our lives through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit within us.

<sup>4</sup> *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.*

(Eph 2:4-7)

The writer of the Book of Hebrews gives us a great analogy as to why the Law was so ineffective and unable to perfect our faith:

*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming – not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.*

(Heb 10:1)

<sup>17</sup> *These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.* (Col 2:17)

*Skian* – shadow: can be either the shaded area between, or the outline cast by, the shadow.

So, the law is a shadow – it is a hazy expression of the thing that is making the shadow.

The One that has cast the shadow, which is the law, is Christ, who is the visible expression of the invisible God.

<sup>15</sup> *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.* (Col 1:15)

But the question is, in what way was it intended to lead us to Christ?

We begin to get a picture of how this might work when we look at the dynamics involved in its initial bestowal to Israel in Exodus Chapters 19 & 20.

When originally given by God, the Ten Commandments were a verbal/written expression of the dynamics of a love relationship between God and his image bearers. In other words, it was an attempt to make a list of the heart attitudes that are generated by the love relationship between God and his people.

Therefore, the law is a verbal outline of what a love relationship should look like, but a list is powerless to produce the love that it is describing.

Tell the story of the young married man talking to a much older couple who are clearly deeply in love, and looking for tips from them on our to improve his relationship with his wife.

So, how does the Law lead us to Christ?

Primarily, by proving to us practically, that we can never fulfil the Law (there actually 613 laws in O.T.), only God can do that – which, in turn, leads us to Christ as our only means of salvation through faith in his perfect sacrifice, given out of his love for us, and on our behalf!!!

Through the faith that God inspires in us, we are empowered to enter into the freedom of God's love and grace – by God's grace and kindness we are saved, becoming unconditionally loved children of God who now live under God's grace, not under the old law that condemned us to death!!!