

THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

Rule for study: Rom 3:4 – “...let God be true, but every man a liar....”
Don't take any man's word for truth--
not mine; not your pastor's; not even your own ideas.
Confirm everything. Look up the scripture and read what God says.

In this study of the Bride of Christ, I am going to prove by the scriptures that the Bride of Christ is neither a mystery doctrine of the dispensation of grace nor is it the church of the dispensation of grace, the Body of Christ. After thoroughly studying who the Bride of Christ is not, we will discover who the Bride actually is. The only way to come to accurate conclusions in this or any other Bible study is through right division of the scriptures. First we must be able to rightly divide (separate) grace doctrine from kingdom doctrine. Therefore the first portion of this document will be dedicated to teaching you how to “rightly divide”.

ROMANS 16:

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

The gospel for the dispensation of grace, is referred to by Paul as “my gospel” because it was a mystery in that it had been kept secret since the world began until it was revealed to the apostle Paul.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,
8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

The “we” spoken of by Paul include those “dispensation of grace apostles” to whom the secret was revealed after it was revealed and announced to the world by Paul.

Reference: 1Th 1:1 – Notice that Paul is the writer of this epistle; however, he is writing in behalf of himself, Silvanus and Timothy.

In 1Th 2:6 Paul identifies all three (himself, Silvanus and Timothy) as apostles of Christ.

1 THESSALONIANS 2:

6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:

28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues.

The first appointment is apostles. Paul is the primary apostle to the Gentiles, the first to whom the mystery doctrine was given. After Paul, secondary apostles were appointed by God. Some of these secondary apostles were people such as Silvanus, Timothy, Barnabas, Apollos, Titus and others. As well as receiving face to face instruction from Paul, these dispensation of grace secondary apostles received revelation for God pertaining to mystery doctrine in order to aid Paul in spreading the message.

COLOSSIANS 1:

25 of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God,

26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

GALATIANS 1:

11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man.

12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

EPHESIANS 3:

9 and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;

In contrast, kingdom doctrine for Israel was prophesied. Compare the “delivery by Paul” references above with the “prophesy” references in Acts 3:21 and Acts 10:43.

ACTS 3:

19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

20 and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before,

21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

Notice that “Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out . . .” is kingdom doctrine – spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began is not mystery dispensation of grace doctrine. Furthermore, the confession and baptism for remission of sins message in place for the kingdom gospel involved works – it is not a purely grace message.

ACTS 10:

43 To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.”

Prophets witnessed that belief in Him though his name results in remission of sins. This is the same thing said by Peter when he declared Jesus to be “the Christ, the son of the living God.” This is all kingdom doctrine – believing in His name (that He is the Christ, the promised Messiah). This is what kingdom Jews had to believe concerning Jesus.

On the other hand during the dispensation of grace, belief that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God will not result in salvation. It carries no more weight than believing that there is a God. We must believe that he is our savior. That he did everything necessary for our complete and eternal salvation. This is all grace. If I were asked by Jesus, “Who am I,” I would reply, “You are my savior.”

Some claim that marriage, as taught in the Pauline epistles, is an example of the relationship between the church and Jesus. The Bible does say that we married folks ought to love one another even as Christ loves His Church; but no where in the Pauline epistles does it say that marriage represents Christ and His Bride.

There those who teach that those rewards and punishment directed toward the seven churches of Asia as mentioned in the book of Revelation lays the groundwork for reward and loss of reward for the church, the Body of Christ. A popular belief is that un-confessed sin results in loss of fellowship with God and that all Christian service which is accomplished during this period of being out of fellowship is human good and/or evil. They cling to 1 John 1:9 (a New Covenant book written by a kingdom apostle to other kingdom Jews, which has no relative doctrine for the Church, the Body of Christ. In fact, confession of sin is a part of Old Testament Law and such is classified as wood, hay or straw. It is pure legalism. This doctrine teaches that the human good accomplished during this out of fellowship period is the wood, hay and straw that is to be burned at the judgment seat of Christ. This is more unsubstantiated conjecture that cannot be found in the scriptures; however a careful study of the referenced scriptures in First Corinthians can reveal what is referenced by the gold silver and precious stones and the wood, hay and straw.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:

10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, (Paul was given the mystery doctrine of the dispensation of grace) **as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation,** (the foundation laid by Paul was grace) **and another builds on it** (The another is you and me). **But let each one take heed how he builds on it.**

11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ (That “no other foundation” is the grace foundation as given to the apostle Paul by the risen Jesus Christ).

12 Now if anyone builds on this foundation (of grace) **with gold, silver, precious stones,** (grace doctrines) **wood, hay, straw,** (works, good deeds, commandment/law keeping, etc.)

13 each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.

14 If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

15 If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (He will suffer loss of reward because he has built on a foundation other than that grace foundation given to Paul by the risen Christ).

The foundation laid by Paul is the doctrine of the grace of God. It is the foundation for the church of Jesus Christ during the dispensation of grace. This foundation can only be found in the epistles which he wrote. Paul is the master builder with the blueprint. Paul was the master builder in that to him and to him only was given the mystery doctrine for the dispensation of grace. The foundation of that mystery doctrine is the grace of God revealed by the risen Lord Jesus Christ. The risen Lord gave that doctrine to Paul and Paul built upon it. For the dispensation of grace no other foundation can be laid and nothing but the doctrine of grace can be built upon it. If any man build on the foundation of the grace of Jesus Christ, his work will be as gold, silver, precious stone, and will produce reward. But if any man build on any other foundation other than the grace of Jesus Christ, his work will be as wood, hay, stubble, and be burned. The “any other foundation” referred to as wood, hay and straw are the doctrines of the Law. This other foundation was built on by Peter, James, John, and the rest of the apostles to Israel. Their foundation was given to them by Jesus Christ during his earthly ministry and is the kingdom foundation for Israel; not the church. It is a foundation of faith plus the works of the Law. This was appropriate for Israel and will be effective again for them under the New Covenant once the church is raptured. But it is inappropriate for the dispensation of grace and will result in loss of reward at the judgment seat of Christ.

DOCTRINE OF GRACE

Paul: The 13th Apostle, and the only apostle to the Gentiles.

A. Rom 11:13

- B. Rom 15:16
- C. Eph 3:8
- D. 1Tim 2:7

Reference: Acts 1:23-26 – Many religious people today teach that the selection of Matthias as the 12th apostle, replacing Judas, was the result of human effort without the endorsement of God. Their view is somewhat clouded by their taboo of gambling. They can't imagine an apostle being selected by the casting of dice; however, while in the wilderness, it was the procedure that God commanded be used for selecting between the sacrificial goat and the scapegoat.

LEVITICUS 8:

8 Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats: one lot for the LORD and the other lot for the scapegoat.

9 And Aaron shall bring the goat on which the LORD's lot fell, and offer it as a sin offering.

10 But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD, to make atonement upon it, and to let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

In Acts 2:14, we are told that Peter is standing with the other 11 apostles. Since Judas is dead and Paul, at this point, is still unsaved and certainly not yet an apostle, it is obvious that Matthias is numbered as the 12th apostle. In the future, after his conversion, Paul will become the 13th apostle. This is what the Bible says. Remember the rule: "...let God be true, but every man a liar...."

The other 12 apostles: Were apostles to the Jews (Israel).

- A. Gal 2:8
- B. Gal 2:9

Reference Luke 22:29-30 – The 12 apostles, which included Matthias, were apostles to the Jews and only knew and taught kingdom doctrine. Their destiny will be to sit on 12 thrones and rule over the 12 tribes of Israel during the earthly kingdom and reign of Jesus Christ. But in contrast, Paul's is the apostle of the Gentiles. His destiny is the same as ours. Our citizenship is of heaven and our destiny is heavenly places. Positionally, we are already seated in heavenly places in Jesus.

EPHESIANS 2:

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

PHILIPPIANS 3:

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

There are two kingdoms of God. Reference the "so called" Lord's prayer; when He said "Thy kingdom come Thy will be done on earth as in heaven." Notice a kingdom in heaven and another one destined to come to the earth. When Jesus, or any of the 12 apostles speak of the kingdom of God they are referring to that kingdom on earth which is to come; whereas, when Paul speaks of "the kingdom of God, he is referring to that heavenly kingdom that already exists wherein we dispensation of grace believers are already considered citizens.

During the lifetime of Paul, as the scriptures have amply noted, there were two churches in existence. In the Gal 6:16 we can find where Paul pronounces a blessing on both groups:

" And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them," The first half of verse 16 addresses the church, the Body of Christ, but so as not to leave out that other group of saints which still existed at that time, Paul also acknowledges them, **"and upon the Israel of God."** Who is this "Israel of God" whom he addresses? Obviously, they are none other than "the circumcision" to whom Peter, James, and John agreed to confine their ministries.

GALATIANS 2:

9 and recognizing the grace that had been given to me, James and Cephas and John, who were reputed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, so that we might go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised.

I have a question. If Peter, James and John agreed to only to go to the circumcised (and they did) why would Peter, James and John write epistles containing Gentile doctrines of grace?" Answer: They didn't. All books of the Bible except the epistles of Paul are written exclusively to kingdom Jews and contain only doctrine pertinent to them.

The revelation of the mystery doctrine of the dispensation of grace was given only to Paul after his conversion and can only be found in the Pauline epistles. He is the Apostle of the Gentiles.

I. The mystery dispensation of grace.

- A. Hidden from all past ages and generations.
 - 1. Rom 16:25
 - 2. 1Cor 2:6-8
 - 3. Col 1:25-27
- B. First revealed only to the Apostle Paul.
 - 1. Gal 1:1-12
 - 2. Eph 3:1-10
 - 3. Found only in the Pauline Epistles.
- C. The grace plan of salvation: Faith alone in Christ alone for eternal salvation.
 - 1. Rom 3:20-3:26; Rom 3:28; Rom 4:4-5; Rom 5:1; Rom 9:30
 - 2. 1Cor 15:1-3
 - 3. Gal 2:16, Gal 3:11
 - 4. Eph 2:8
 - 5. Phil 3:9
 - 6. 2Tim 2:13
- D. Dry baptism for the dispensation of grace believers takes place at the point of faith.
 - 1. Water baptism is not a part of the gospel of grace.
 - a. 1Cor 1:14-17
 - b. Rom 6:3-4 – Christ didn't drown; no watery grave.
 - c. 1Cor 12:13 – We are baptized into the body of Christ, not water; by one Spirit (God the Holy Spirit), not some man in a pool of water.
 - d. Gal 3:26-27 – Sons of God through faith; baptized into Christ, not water.
 - e. Eph 4:4-6 – That one baptism is not water; it's the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

DOCTRINE OF THE KINGDOM

Kingdom doctrine was revealed by John the Baptist, Jesus (during His earthly ministry), and His 12 Apostles.

- A. Prophesied by the prophets. No longer in effect today, but will resume during the tribulation period after the church (the body of Christ) is raptured out of this world.
 - 1. Acts 3:21
 - 2. Acts 10:43
- B. Found in the books of the Old Testament including Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, James, Peter, John, Jude and Revelation.
- C. It's plan of salvation: Faith plus works for temporary salvation based on personal perseverance.
 - 1. Mark 1:4-5; Acts 2:28; 1John 1:9
 - 2. John 3:36
 - 3. John 5:28-29
 - 4. Luke 18:18-24, James 1:27; James 2:24; 1John 2:3-6; Heb 10:26-27
- D. Wet baptism for kingdom believers. Water was always present whether baptism was accomplished by John the Baptist, Peter, Phillip or another of the 12 apostles of the kingdom. Water baptism is works and is definitely a part of the gospel of the kingdom.

The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are Old Testament / Old Covenant books of the Bible. They are written to Jews and their doctrine and gospel is not intended for the dispensation of grace under which we live today. Jesus was born under the Law, lived under the Law, and died under the Law. Because of His work on the cross for us who live in the dispensation of grace, today we all were born under grace, live under grace, and will die under grace unless preceded by the rapture.

We can be certain that the four gospels are Old Testament because the Bible says so. Not only does it tell us that Jesus was born under the Law, lived under the Law, and died under the Law, but also that His purpose was to fulfill the Law. Jesus didn't die until the end of the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The book of Hebrews tells us that the Old Testament was in effect until the death of Jesus. Once He died the New Testament came into effect. Both of these covenants are for kingdom Jews and Gentile proselytes such as Cornelius. The Church, the Body of Christ is not under a covenant. We are under grace.

HEBREWS 9:

15 And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

16 For where there *is* a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

17 For a testament *is* in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives.

Salvation for dispensation of grace believers takes place at the point of faith. It results in eternal life and a glorified body in heaven.

Salvation for New Covenant Jews takes place upon perseverance until death and is received at the return of Christ. It results in receiving an eternal inheritance of land (a kingdom) on earth.

The book of Acts is a book of transition. It shows the change in administration from the Old Testament / First Covenant to the New Testament / New Covenant. This New Covenant, like the old one, is only for the house of Israel and the house of Judah. The house of Israel because of the promised land; and the

house of Judah because of the promised king. The New Covenant is for the kingdom. During the time in which the scriptures for the new covenant epistles were written, they had their own doctrine that parallels (co-existed) with the dispensation of grace scriptures but do not in any way apply to the Body of Christ or its grace doctrine. Neither does grace doctrine apply in any way to New Covenant Jews. At the time of the writing of the books of Acts, Hebrews, James, the books of Peter and John, Jude and Revelation the New Testament/New Covenant (call it what you will – they are the same thing) is in place. There are two different churches, two different gospels, two different baptisms, two different groups of people, and two different destinies for these two different dispensations.

In summary, the gospel of the kingdom demanded belief and confession of Jesus as the Christ, the anointed Messiah, the Son of the living God. It required water baptism, repentance, keeping the Law of Moses, circumcision, confession of sin, living a holy life, and perseverance to the end. It was a system of faith plus works. It contained no assurance of salvation.

HEBREWS 10:

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

Question: Do the above two scriptures from the book of Hebrews sound like grace to you? I hope not because it has nothing to do with grace nor the Body of Christ believer; however, it has everything to do with New Covenant, kingdom Jews.

Although Israel failed to keep the commandments of the first covenant, the new covenant empowered them with the ability to keep all those commandments. This will be the standard for the tribulation and kingdom periods.

2 PETER 1:

3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,

4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

Also notice that His promises have made them partakers of the divine nature and have allowed them to escape the corruption that is in the world. In other words they had received the power to resist sin. His promises are contained in the new covenant. This divine power was promised to Israel when they would receive the new covenant. Obviously, this power was given to the elect as they prepared for the upcoming kingdom. Consider the following:

HEBREWS 10:

15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before,

16 “*This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them,*”

17 then He adds, “*Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.*”

18 Now where there is remission of these, *there is* no longer an offering for sin.

EZEKIEL 36:

25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Note that the New Testament / New Covenant is prophesied; therefore, it cannot be part of the dispensation of grace mystery doctrine that was delivered only to the Apostle Paul in person by the risen Jesus Christ. It can only apply to the Jewish kingdom.

Reference: 1Pet 4:18 – Under the New Covenant, at the time when the doctrine of the kingdom was being proclaimed, it's easy to see how salvation must have been a difficult matter. But today during the dispensation of grace, salvation is as easy as believing that the all powerful Son of God did everything necessary for your salvation while on the cross.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:

21 For He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus Christ) who knew no sin (he was sinless) be sin (a sin substitute) for us, that we (ungodly sinners) might become the righteousness of God in Him (might become – is contingent upon whether or not we believe).

ROMANS 4:

5 But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

Although justification is a finished work of Jesus Christ, it is only applicable to the believer at the point of faith.

ROMANS 5:

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Within the introduction all of his epistles, the Apostle Paul proclaims the blessing of “grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” It is obvious that both Paul and God the Holy Spirit desired to instill into every dispensation of grace believer the importance of this message. The message is that God the Father demonstrated His tremendous grace toward mankind by sending His beloved Son to the Cross to die as the sin substitute. While on the cross, the Son of God took all of the sins of humanity upon Himself. God the Father judged Him instead of mankind thereby satisfying offended justice. With justice satisfied by His sacrificial spiritual death, Jesus Christ became the appeasement for the sins of the whole world, believers and unbelievers alike. Sin is no longer an issue or a barrier between God and mankind. The only issue that remained is one of absolute righteousness. The question now facing mankind is not one of sin but of faith in Jesus Christ as savior. Do you, or do you not believe that Jesus provided eternal salvation for you while on the cross? At the point of faith, the believer has the righteousness of Jesus Christ applied to his soul. This is the point of salvation. Jesus provides eternal salvation; not probation. He provides eternal peace with God the Father; not fellowship that can be lost. At the point of faith, the believer receives the baptism of the Holy Spirit which places him in eternal union with Christ. If the believer could lose fellowship with God, then Jesus could lose fellowship also. If the believer could be separated from God, then Jesus could be separated also; but we know these things are not possible. This is the confident assurance of un-interrupted fellowship and eternal salvation – peace with God that all believers ought to have. It is not contingent on having un-confessed sin. It's not about judgment of evil. We are safe, having the righteousness of Christ, hidden in Him and at peace with God almighty, our Heavenly Father. Nowhere in his epistles does the Apostle Paul use the word “fellowship” in a manner that could be construed to mean “out of fellowship” with God. You have a concordance. Look for yourself.

Reference: Rom 5:6 – Today many religious leaders tell their congregations that they need to repent of their sins before they can be saved. This scripture tells us that Christ died for the ungodly. He doesn't clean us up first. He saves us just the way we are – ungodly. In salvation by grace, we share His righteousness because we have none of our own, furthermore, anything less than absolute righteousness is unacceptable to God. Only the righteousness of Jesus Christ is good enough to please God the Father.

Reference: Rom 5:8 – While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He died for ungodly sinners; not for good people. Furthermore, we can't help in our salvation by being good or turning away from sin. He took care of everything pertaining to salvation while on the cross. We can't add anything to the work of salvation nor can we take away from it. If we can't do anything to earn it, we certainly can't do anything to lose it. Fellowship after salvation works the same way. We did nothing to create this peace we have with God and absolutely can do nothing to negate this peace.

The Old Testament and New Testament Jews have always been under a system of faith plus works and they will always be under that system. Their salvation depends on them enduring until the end. And they, most certainly, can get out of fellowship. Dispensation of grace believers have always been under a system of faith alone, in Christ alone, for eternal salvation. And our fellowship with God is based on our unbreakable union with Christ.

The Mechanics of Right Division:

By now you are probably asking yourself what all above scriptures have to do with the Bride of Christ. The answer is: I am trying to give you a scriptural background so you can understand right division. Only right division will allow you to understand the identity of the Bride of Christ. Right division is not difficult, but it does require at least a basic understanding of the concept. If, by now you have a basic understanding of right division, those principles may have already answered the questions concerning the Bride of Christ. As simply as I know how to do it; let me show you how to draw scripturally accurate conclusions through the process of right division.

1. Only Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. His writings are to Gentiles.
2. Only Paul was given information about the mystery dispensation of grace and its church.
3. The writings of Paul are silent concerning the Bride of Christ; therefore, the Bride of Christ cannot be the church, the Body of Christ.
4. John was an apostle to Israel. His writings are to Israel.
5. John was only given information about the earthly kingdom and the New Covenant.
6. John wrote about the Bride of Christ; therefore, the Bride of Christ is Jewish in nature. Furthermore, he wrote about the seven churches of Asia; so they cannot be dispensation of grace churches. They must be New Covenant churches.

Now back to a rebuttal that the seven churches of Asia are dispensation of grace churches.

To begin with, the book of Revelation is a Jewish book, written by a Jewish apostle, to a Jewish audience. There is not one word in the entire book that is written to or about the Church, the Body of Christ. The seven churches of Asia mentioned are not Body of Christ, dispensation of grace churches. They are New Covenant churches. They are an extension of Peter's little flock who were introduced in the first chapters of the book of the Acts of the Apostles.

Most who teach the book of Revelation say that after the verses dedicated to the seven churches of Asia, the rapture takes place, the church is removed from earth and then the rest of the book of Revelation pertains to kingdom doctrine. Some go a step beyond what most teach and are able to find the Church,

the Body of Christ throughout the book of Revelation. However, I submit that the entire book of Revelation contains only future events, all of which are New Covenant/kingdom doctrine. In the first verse we are told that Jesus Christ is revealing future events. This is a book of Jewish prophesy.

Rev. 1:1

¶ The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave Him to show to His bond-servants, the things which must soon take place (haven't happened yet); and He sent and communicated it by His angel to His bond-servant John,

Rev. 1:3

Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words of the prophecy (future events), and heed the things which are written in it; for the time is near (hasn't taken place yet).

Rev 2:10

Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

First, we already know that this verse (because it is written by the Jewish Kingdom Apostle John and not the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul) contains no dispensation of grace church doctrine. The Church of Smyrna is future (because Chapter 1 tells us this is a book of prophesy) and Smyrna is a future Jewish New Covenant – kingdom church. If we didn't already know these facts through right division, we could still determine it through the context. It says "the devil is about to throw *some* of you into prison." The "some of you" mentioned who will be imprisoned by the devil are kingdom Jews of the tribulation period.

Faithfulness is works. It is legalism. This is typical Jewish doctrine. It is the doctrine of perseverance. It is for those Jews who are going to live on earth during the great tribulation period.

When it is taught that the church age believers must persevere until death while on earth to obtain this and the other mentioned rewards at the judgment seat of Christ, then the legalism of the Law is being imposed upon the dispensation of grace. This is teaching salvation by grace but spirituality and reward by obedience to the Law. This idea is condemned throughout Paul's book to the Galatians. We are saved by grace and made spiritual by grace. And the rewards we receive will be bestowed because of grace doctrine that has been instilled within our souls.

I'd like to know what the dispensation of grace believer is supposed to be faithful to unto death in order to receive these rewards. I'd bet the farm some would say "faithful to confess all known sins." (That's just more Mosaic Law!) These folks believe that any un-confessed sin results in loss of fellowship with God the Father and that this fellowship is restored by naming known sins. This is Law not grace. This cannot be found in the writings of the Apostle Paul short of changing his words, adding to his words or pretending that he is saying something he isn't.

Rev 3:5

5 He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

MATTHEW 24:13

13 But he who endures to the end shall be saved.

If this pertains to the Church, Body of Christ then it teaches that one can lose his salvation, and nothing could be further from the truth. We will be raised at the rapture in glorified bodies, like the body of Jesus Christ. That body means everything; clothes to cover it mean little. The kingdom Jews will not have glorified bodies. This clothing is for them. This verse pertains to the kingdom Jew who must persevere until death in order to be saved.

Rev 3:12

12 He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name.

He who overcomes is more legalism – more Jewish kingdom doctrine. The earthly temple is Jewish. We Gentiles have never had anything to do with an earthly Jewish temple. The Jewish temple is associated with the Law of Moses. The body of church age believers is the temple of God the Holy Spirit, and when in a glorified body like that of our savior, we will continue to be the temple of God the Holy Spirit forever. This is a spiritual temple within the body of the believer. This is mystery doctrine.

Rev 2:28

25 But hold fast what you have till I come.

26 And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—

27 ‘ He shall rule them with a rod of iron;

They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter’s vessels’—

as I also have received from My Father;

28 and I will give him the morning star.

I felt it necessary to include verses 25 through 28 in order to get a full picture of what is being said about receiving the morning star. In order to receive these blessing one must do basically the same thing as the other verses require – overcome, persevere, be faithful unto death, etc. What else can I say? Those mentioned in all these verses are on earth during the tribulation period. They are either kingdom Jews or Gentile proselytes.

Let me give you some scriptures that further reveal the difference between kingdom doctrine and grace doctrine. The epistles of Peter and John are generally thought (erroneously) to teach grace doctrine. Let’s look at some of them.

The two books of Peter were written to the Jewish elect that were scattered through out the ancient world.

1 PETER 1:

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To the pilgrims of the Dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

1Peter 1:1 – This is not a letter addressed to Gentiles; neither is it doctrine for the church, the Body of Christ. To treat it as such is the equivalent of reading a letter sent to someone else and pretending that it was sent to and applies to you.

1 PETER 1:

2 elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

1 Peter 1:2 says that you (Jews) were elected (chosen) for obedience to Jesus Christ. The earthly ministry of Jesus taught obedience (keeping the commandments) as a part of kingdom doctrine.

However, we in the dispensation of grace are not required to keep those kingdom commandments of Moses.

1 PETER 1:

**14 as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance;
15 but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,
16 because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy."**

1 Peter 1:14-16 is typical New Covenant doctrine. It involves human conduct. It is works not grace. Notice that Peter is calling for perseverance and obedience. The Law of Moses is said "to be holy". For the Jew, being holy demands keeping the Law of Moses. We dispensation of grace Gentiles are not under the Law. We are under grace. Under grace we are holy by being in union with Jesus Christ and sharing His holiness. Since we are eternally in union with Him, we are eternally holy. And I might add, also eternally in fellowship with both Him and God the Father.

1 PETER 1:

17 And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear;

1 Peter 1:17 is more New Covenant doctrine: judgment according to works. This is not a message for the dispensation of grace; neither are we called to fear.

1 PETER 1:

**18 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers,
19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.**

In 1 Peter 1:18-19 we find that while knowing about the blood redemption of Christ, these new covenant believers were still to conduct themselves under fear because of the judgment of God. All of the books of John were written by an apostle to the Jews. He wrote only to Jews and only had a Jewish kingdom message.

1John 5:5

5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Here we have more faith plus works with emphasis on overcoming (persevering, remaining faithful) associated with believing that Jesus is the Son of God, but there is nothing in this verse pertaining to belief in Him as savior.

1John 5:13

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.

Belief in the name (Messiah) contains no information about the Savior or His saving work on the cross. Notice that John calls on these kingdom Jews to continue (persevere) to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

All of this information that I have just given you in the books of Peter and First John is typical of the information contained in Revelation. All of it is obviously Jewish kingdom doctrine.

REVELATION 19:

7 Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.

9 Then he said to me, “Write: ‘Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!’” And he said to me, “These are the true sayings of God.”

I have included a number of scriptures for Chapter 19 and 20, primarily to help us understand chronologically where we are in time. Voices from heaven are speaking of the marriage of the Lamb and His wife has made herself ready. In verse 11, “Now” means immediately we have the second advent of Jesus Christ.

11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.

12 His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself.

13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses.

The Bible does not say who comprises this army from heaven other than naming them as “His Saints” and “all of His holy ones”. But since, in the verse, armies is plural it probably includes all those categories of Jewish saints who have died and waited in Paradise for this day. In any case they are not Body of Christ believers.

Since the Bible doesn’t identify this army, how can I flatly announce that they are not dispensation of grace, Body of Christ believers?

The answer:

This army from heaven that is with Jesus Christ at His second coming is prophesied not only in this book of Revelation, but also in other Old Testament prophesies.

JOEL 2:

10 Before them the earth quakes,

The heavens tremble,

The sun and the moon grow dark

And the stars lose their brightness.

11 The LORD utters His voice before His army;

Surely His camp is very great,

For strong is he who carries out His word.

The day of the LORD is indeed great and very awesome,

And who can endure it?

Zech. 14:

4 In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

5 You will flee by the valley of My mountains, for the valley of the mountains will reach to Azel; yes, you will flee just as you fled before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the LORD, my God, will come, and all the holy ones with Him!

Also from the New Covenant epistle of Jude comes a quote from Enoch:

JUDE 1:

14 Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, “Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints, 15 to execute judgment on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have committed in an ungodly way, and of all the harsh things which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.”

Paul has already told us that the mystery doctrine of the dispensation of grace church, the Body of Christ was (kept secret) not prophesied. That means there is absolutely nothing in any of the books of the Bible, other than Paul’s epistles, that can in any way reveal or refer to the grace church. Enoch, the seventh from Adam had absolute no knowledge of the dispensation of grace or its church. He did not see an army of ten thousands of church age saints coming to earth with the Lord to execute judgment. He did see an army of Jewish saints. How am I so sure? The Bible says so.

ROMANS 16:

25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

Since the mystery doctrines of grace were kept secret since the world began, until it was revealed to Paul at his conversion recorded in the ninth chapter of Acts, then the Bible definitely says that Enoch, Zechariah, and Joel never at any time in their lives were aware of the existence of the grace church; much less saw armies of them in visions.

REVELATION 19:

15 Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He Himself will rule them with a rod of iron. He Himself treads the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. 16 And He has on *His* robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the birds that fly in the midst of heaven, “Come and gather together for the supper of the great God,

The menu for the marriage supper of the Lamb consists of His enemies whom He has slain at His return. They are fed to the scavenger birds.

18 that you may eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and of those who sit on them, and the flesh of all *people*, free and slave, both small and great.”

9 And I saw the beast, the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against Him who sat on the horse and against His army.

20 Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.

21 And the rest were killed with the sword which proceeded from the mouth of Him who sat on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh.

Since these events are Jewish in nature and contain no dispensation of grace information, they were also prophesied in the Old Testament book of Ezekiel.

Ezekiel 39:

17 “And as for you, son of man, thus says the Lord GOD, ‘Speak to every sort of bird and to every beast of the field:

“ Assemble yourselves and come;

Gather together from all sides to My sacrificial meal

Which I am sacrificing for you,
A great sacrificial meal on the mountains of Israel,
That you may eat flesh and drink blood.
18 You shall eat the flesh of the mighty,
Drink the blood of the princes of the earth,
Of rams and lambs,
Of goats and bulls,
All of them fatlings of Bashan.
19 You shall eat fat till you are full,
And drink blood till you are drunk,
At My sacrificial meal
Which I am sacrificing for you.
20 You shall be filled at My table
With horses and riders,
With mighty men
And with all the men of war,” says the Lord GOD.

Israel Restored to the Land:

EZEKIEL 39:

21 “I will set My glory among the nations; all the nations shall see My judgment which I have executed, and My hand which I have laid on them.
22 So the house of Israel shall know that I *am* the LORD their God from that day forward.
23 The Gentiles shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity; because they were unfaithful to Me, therefore I hid My face from them. I gave them into the hand of their enemies, and they all fell by the sword.
24 According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions I have dealt with them, and hidden My face from them.”
25 “Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Now I will bring back the captives of Jacob, and have mercy on the whole house of Israel; and I will be jealous for My holy name—
26 after they have borne their shame, and all their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, when they dwelt safely in their *own* land and no one made *them* afraid.
27 When I have brought them back from the peoples and gathered them out of their enemies’ lands, and I am hallowed in them in the sight of many nations,
28 then they shall know that I *am* the LORD their God, who sent them into captivity among the nations, but also brought them back to their land, and left none of them captive any longer.
29 And I will not hide My face from them anymore; for I shall have poured out My Spirit on the house of Israel,’ says the Lord GOD.”

REVELATION 20:

1 Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.
2 He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is *the* Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years;
3 and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while.

The word “Then” in verse 1 continues the chain of events. Now Satan is bound and imprisoned for one thousand years. This ushers in the kingdom and begins the one thousand year reign of Jesus Christ as king of kings.

REVELATION 20:

4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received *his* mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years.

This is the resurrection of Jewish dead – Both Old Testament saints, New Testament saints, and including martyred tribulation period saints. This resurrection takes place at the beginning of the one thousand year reign.

5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

This second resurrection is for unbelievers from every age. However it focuses on history is from the Jewish perspective. We know this because verse 6 reveals the first resurrection which is Jewish, identifying them as priests of God that shall reign with Christ. The focus of verse 6 on the second resurrection (also called the second death) is directed toward those Jews who will be denied this ruling power. This resurrection takes place at the end of the one thousand year reign.

6 Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

The Jews in the first resurrection are the people who will rule and reign with Christ for the one thousand year period; not dispensation of grace Body of Christ believers. We will be in the heavenly kingdom.

**7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison
8 and will go out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle, whose number *is* as the sand of the sea.
9 They went up on the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city. And fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.
10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet *are*. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.**

The “Now” of verse 7 brings on the next recorded event – the eternal imprisonment of Satan and the end of the one thousand year reign of Christ.

**11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them.
12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.
13 The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.
14 Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.**

The “Then” of verse 11 continues the chain of events. We have the final judgment from the great white throne of God. All unbelievers are incarcerated in the lake of fire. We have already noted that even though unbelievers of all ages are obviously present at this judgment, the Bible only shows judgment from the Jewish perspective.

JOHN: 5

28 Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

29 and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

REVELATION 21:

1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

The “Now” of verse 1 means immediately after the conclusion of this judgment, John sees a new heaven and new earth which replaces the old ones.

2 Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

The “Then” of verse 2 means the next thing that John sees is the New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven. New Jerusalem is adorned as a bride for her husband.

9 Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, “Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.”

10 And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God,

11 having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

12 Also she had a great and high wall with twelve gates, and twelve angels at the gates, and names written on them, which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel:

13 three gates on the east, three gates on the north, three gates on the south, and three gates on the west.

14 Now the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

The “Then” of verse 2 takes us to the next progression of events. Several things need to be noted here. **First the angel shows John the bride, the Lamb’s wife, the Church, the Body of Christ.** . . . No, that’s not what the Bible says. **He showed John the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.** Remember the rule: Rom 3:4 – “...let God be true, but every man a liar....”

Secondly, note the description of the Bride. She had twelve gates. There were twelve angels at the gates. Names of the gates were the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The wall had twelve foundations and the names of the twelve apostles were written on them.

Doesn’t all of this sound a bit Jewish? Everything is named after some aspect of Israel, right down to the twelve apostles to Israel. There is nothing here, symbolic or named, that would lead you to think of the church, the Body of Christ. Where is the Church? It’s in heaven with its dispensation of grace apostle, Paul. Paul is there in heavenly places. I will be there in heavenly places. And if you are a dispensation of grace believer, you’ll be there too. It’s our home. It’s where our citizenship is. It is our promised destiny. Positionally, we are already there in Jesus Christ, in heavenly places. And yes, Jesus will be there in heavenly places with us. You might say, “How is that possible?” He is said to be with his bride, and with his earthly people, in his eternal earthly kingdom. The answer is: It’s easy for Him. He’s God. He’s omnipresent.

Note: Read the rest of the book of Revelation for yourself. Notice that there is more Jewish symbolism. When you reach Revelation 21:6 understand that you are, at this point, no longer following the steps of

time in chronological order. Verse 6 and following, reverts back to time during the one thousand year reign of Christ.

A Deeper look into the Confession of Known Sins:

The book of 1st John does not state to whom it is addressed, but from the context of the book (it contains nothing but Jewish kingdom doctrine) and John's association with the earthly ministry of Jesus and the church of the New Covenant, it obviously was written to the elect kingdom Jews under the New Covenant. In addition to all this, John made an agreement with Paul that he would go only to the circumcised – the Jews. He certainly did not write a book to the Gentiles.

By comparing 1 John 1 verses 7 and 9 a definite contradiction is obvious. On one hand we are told that cleansing of sin is accomplished by the blood of Christ; then we are told it is accomplished by confession of sin. If you look closely at verse 7 you will discover that in addition to the blood of Christ there is also a condition of walking (having ones life style) in the Light which produces both cleansing and fellowship. Remember the New Covenant doctrine contains a system of both faith and works.

1 JOHN 1:

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Actually, neither of these activities is appropriate for either salvation or fellowship during the dispensation of grace. In the dispensation of grace, cleansing is by faith alone in Jesus Christ alone for salvation, believing He did everything necessary for eternal cleansing while on the cross. His work for salvation is complete. We have eternal salvation; not probation. We can add nothing to the saving work of Christ, nor can we take anything from it. Both of the above scriptures contain human works for forgiveness and cleansing by lifestyle and confession of sins.

Confession was one of the 613 ordinances contained in the Law of Moses. During the dispensation of Law, confession was the means of forgiveness for breaking various laws. Consider the following:

LEVITICUS 5:

5 'And it shall be, when he is guilty in any of these matters, that he shall confess that he has sinned in that thing;

6 and he shall bring his trespass offering to the LORD for his sin which he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a kid of the goats as a sin offering. So the priest shall make atonement for him concerning his sin.

LEVITICUS 26

28 then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.

29 You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.

**30 I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars, and cast your carcasses on the lifeless forms of your idols;
and My soul shall abhor you.**

31 I will lay your cities waste and bring your sanctuaries to desolation, and I will not smell the fragrance of your sweet aromas.

32 I will bring the land to desolation, and your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it.

33 I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.

34 Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths.

35 As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.

36 'And as for those of you who are left, I will send faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; the sound of a shaken leaf shall cause them to flee; they shall flee as though fleeing from a sword, and they shall fall when no one pursues.

37 They shall stumble over one another, as it were before a sword, when no one pursues; and you shall have no power to stand before your enemies.

38 You shall perish among the nations, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up.

39 And those of you who are left shall waste away in their iniquity in your enemies' lands; also in their fathers' iniquities, which are with them, they shall waste away.

40 'But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me,

41 and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt—

42 then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember; I will remember the land.

PSALM 32:

**5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.**

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."

And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah

MARK 1:

5 Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.

Confession of sin is obviously Old Testament doctrine, written of by the prophets. It is not mystery doctrine of grace for the dispensation of grace nor is it appropriate conduct for its church, the Body of Christ.

One More Look at the Judgment Seat of Christ:

Many years ago, a teacher that I studied under had a doctrine that he referred to as the edification complex of the soul. When used correctly, it can be a wonderful way of teaching the doctrines surrounding the judgment seat of Christ.

My version of it goes like this:

To cut through the jargon, the word edification comes from a Greek word meaning to build. The complex is a multistoried building constructed within one's soul. The foundation for this building is the risen Jesus Christ. He delivers to his master builder the secret dispensation of grace blue prints for building this edification complex within the soul. Paul is the only builder to possess these building plans, but he quickly publishes those plans in books that he is writing which provide detailed instructions. Whoever constructs this edification complex within his soul must follow Paul's blueprint. The blocks used for construction are called doctrines of grace. The first floor must be built on the foundation of Jesus Christ and that floor is named "Salvation by grace". The building material used to construct the edification complex of the soul, and the rest of the floors in it, is dispensation of grace mystery doctrine from the epistles of the Apostle Paul. This material is referred to as gold, silver and precious stones. Each new floor is built by learning new dispensation of grace doctrines. When enough grace doctrine is learned and

enough floors are constructed, the believer finally reaches the top floor (the penthouse). At this level the grace believer has reached spiritual maturity. This edification complex of the soul will endure at the judgment seat of Christ and produce reward.

Some start out building an edification complex of the soul on the foundation of the risen Christ. They construct the first floor of salvation by grace but then something happens. Maybe as a result of loss of interest, or lack of study, or lack of proper teaching, who knows why, but they start building on another foundation -- usually the foundation of the earthly ministry of Christ. That is a foundation of law plus works. They are sincere, trying to follow in the footsteps of Jesus; trying to follow His commandments; trying to be obedient, confessing their sins. But their building material for the edification complex of the soul has become wood, hay and straw. At the judgment throne of Christ their work will be burned and they will suffer loss of reward, but not loss of salvation.

Learning Bible doctrine is not difficult, but it does require the ability to rightly divide the word of truth. The doctrines of the kingdom, as wonderful as they are, are not intended for dispensation of grace believers. Those kingdom doctrines must be rightly divided, separated from the grace epistles of Paul. If we try to make the Old Testament books and Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; plus the New Testament / New Covenant epistles of Hebrews, James, Peter, John (including Revelation), Jude and most of Acts contain dispensation of grace material, then we are desperately wrong. We are reading someone else's mail and pretending that it was written to us.

The Bible says:

2 TIMOTHY 3:

**16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**

Yes, we should study all scripture--certainly it does contain those values listed in verses 16 and 17. But this doesn't mean that all scripture contains doctrine applicable to us or pertinent to the dispensation in which we live. When the Bible is not divided correctly, we have contradictory information. With contradictory information, the Bible becomes almost impossible to understand. This lack of understanding results in false doctrine. False doctrine results in more problems than I can possibly list here.

I have a recommendation for you who have read this document:

- 1) Be certain that you have trusted Jesus Christ as your only means for eternal salvation--He who knew no sin was made sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.
- 2) Learn how to rightly divide the word of truth.
- 3) Start studying the Bible and see what it says for yourself.
- 4) After learning Bible doctrine through right division, adopt a simple vocabulary that is understandable and conducive to teaching others rather than confusing. Follow the example of Paul. Use simple words.

First Corinthians 2:

1 And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God.

T.D. Cotten -- May, 2009