

Topic: The Close of the Dispensation of the Grace of God

Date: November 21, 2020

Introduction: What does the Apostle Paul teach concerning the close of the Dispensation of the Grace of God?

The dispensation of the grace of God was revealed directly to the Apostle Paul alone:

Ephesians 3:1-5 - For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit

This dispensation began following the conversion of Saul/Paul and because of its uniqueness, it is the most difficult dispensation to understand. Paul taught it would one day come to an end, and at one point thought it would reach its terminus while he was yet alive:

1 Thessalonians 4:17 - Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Later, Paul knew that he would likely die before the catching away of the Body of Christ:

2 Timothy 4:6 - For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand

Paul had fully given himself to the cause that had been committed to him:

*1 Timothy 1:12 - And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;
2 Timothy 4:7 - I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith*

Thus, the time had come for Paul to prepare others for what they could experience: the close of the dispensation of the grace of God. Paul wrote to Timothy of the close of the dispensation of the grace of God as new information:

2 Timothy 3:1a - This know also...

Paul went on to characterize that which had been revealed to him:

2 Timothy 3:1b - ...that in the last days perilous times shall come.

Paul understood that Timothy, as well as "faithful men" needed to be prepared for that time:

2 Timothy 2:1-2 - Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Paul instructed Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:14 - But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them

What had Paul taught?

Ephesians 1:13-14 - In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

Ephesians 4:30b - ...ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

*Ephesians 2:11-13 - Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands; That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

Ephesians 2:19 - Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Ephesians 5:15-16 - See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Philippians 3:20 - For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ

Philippians 4:6-7 - Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

*Colossians 3:1-4, 15 - If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. ... And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

We close with the words Paul wrote:

Philippians 4:8 - Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.