**Understanding the Grace Alternative**

(Acts 17:11 KJV) These (the Bereans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

This series of studies is to help you understand the Grace Alternative. Understanding the different dispensations does not make one a "grace believer". Understanding the dispensation of grace is to understand the distinctive message of the Apostle Paul. Three times Paul writes, "my gospel" (Romans 2:16, 16:25; 2 Tim 2:8) because the message he had from God was different than what was being spoken of before he was saved by grace through faith. Not only do you need to know the dispensation of grace; you also need to understand the doctrines of grace. Both are necessary, these are the foundation to grace orientation and grace living and functioning as a member of the body of Christ.

A consistent application of the distinctive doctrines of the message of grace as revealed to Paul offers an alternative to the traditional views of the church and Christendom in the walk of a believer and the working of God in the dispensation of grace.

These studies will have two basic premises:

1. The written Word of God is complete and is our absolute authority.
2. The grace of God is sufficient.

**The Word of God is complete**

(2 Timothy 3:16-17 KJV) 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 perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Too often this practice is abandoned. The Word of God is the **only** place that God speaks today; you do not need another outside source. The Word of God is the means whereby the Spirit of God works and empowers your life.

(1 Thessalonians 2:13 KJV) For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it*not *as*the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

**The Grace of God is Sufficient**

The grace of God is sufficient; you have all you need in Christ. The grace of God has given each believer a total and complete identity. You are complete in Him. What you need to do is appropriate by faith what you already have in Christ.

Your worship, Christian life, is to live as already being made perfect in Christ, as already being accepted in the beloved, as already forgiven, as already having the revealed will of God (in the Word), as already to have the Spirit indwelling. You need to appropriate in your life the working of the Word, for it is the Word of God that enables and empowers you. The only thing left is for you to do is to appropriate, in the details of your life, the working of the Word; it is your faith in the truth of God's word that enables the Holy Spirit to take that truth and put it to work in your life.

**Need to "rightly divide" for these two basic premises to be the standard**

It is when you take these two premises as the evaluating standard for your life and standard that you may run into problems because in God's Word there seems to be two sets of instructions. For instance, when you sin, do you seek God's forgiveness so that you can be restored to fellowship? Or do you recognize the inappropriateness of sin in our lives and stop doing it because of who we are as saints of the most High God.

When you seek to know God's will for the course of you life, do you look to circumstances, impressions, and feelings for God's instruction? Or do you seek to apply His Word to your life by making wise decisions based on His already revealed will?

When events transpire for which you simply do not know what caused them, such as illness, calamity or a benefit or protection, do you view that as coming from God based on you conduct, blessedness with gain or protection of some kind because of something you have done that displeased or pleased God? Or do you recognize that you are perfectly acceptable in His beloved Son because God has already equipped you to handle whatever comes your way.

Is prayer a means of you getting something you want or need from God, or is it you trying to convince God to change His mind or to reveal His will, or to try to get God to do something for us that He would not do. Or is prayer something else other than a means of getting something from God, a means of getting to know Him on a more intimate level?

* The Bible is the only source of revelation from God.
* The grace of God is totally sufficient. We are already complete in Christ. We need to live out our true identity in our adult life in God.

Paul's epistles are sufficient to provide all the guidance we need to think through the issues of life in an understanding of what God says.

**Alternatives to the Two Premises**

1. The Word of God is not complete
2. The Grace of God is not sufficient

If you apply these two alternatives then what you are saying is that Israel's program is still in effect. The Word of God was not complete in Israel's program; they needed other things to communicate, also the cross was not complete in Israel's program they still needed to obey the law in order to gain right standing with God.

We need to apply the two premises; we do not need to seek things that have already been provided.

(Romans 5:2 KJV) By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

(1 Thessalonians 2:13 KJV) For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.