

Number 20 (2 - 11)

## Copy of the "GRACE JOURNAL"

"Preaching grace in the Dispensation of grace"  
A Bible Study

Richard Jordan, Editor, President of Grace School of the Bible  
888-535-2300 [GraceImpact.org](http://GraceImpact.org)

---

### INCARNATE DEITY

BY RICHARD JORDAN

"For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col.2:9

This declaration is the heart of a thrilling portion of Scripture in which Paul is pressing the practical nature of the believer's completeness in Christ. The context contains no less than three strong appeals in this regard: Let no man *spoil* you (v.8); Let not man *judge* you (v.16); Let no man *beguile* you (v. 18). The text above is the basis for the first appeal:

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Let's take that apart a little: "Beware lest any man *spoil* you." This, of course, does not refer to souring or decaying as a piece of fruit would, nor is it a reference to the way grandparents might spoil their little grandchild. Rather it is used in the sense of *making spoil of as* in the phrase, "To the victor belong the spoils." It is a military term used to refer to capturing booty. In modern parlance, when referring to people, we might say, "A prisoner of war."

Paul is warning about someone trying to take believers captive, someone trying to take them out of the battle. And just how is this to be done? "*Through philosophy and vain deceit.*"

Philosophy is the love of wisdom; it is the working of the human mind. It is natural for the human mind to philosophize, to try to account for things, to enter into speculations; but Paul says such human view point is merely "*vain deceit*" based on man's traditions and the world's standards-- "*not after Christ*" Clearly, then, the believer should not go by what man thinks but by *what God says in His Word*.

Paul's appeal is clear: *Don't let anyone carry you away from Christ*--whether it be by philosophy vain deceit, tradition or the principles of the world. If it isn't *centered in*

*Christ*, be careful! "Don't let anyone," says Paul, "carry you away from Christ because all you have and all you are, you are and have *in Him!*"

In Col. 1:19 he declares, "For it pleased the Father that *in [Christ] should all fulness dwell.*" In 2: 10 he says that the believer is made "*complete*"—made *full --in Him*. In 2:9 he explains the link that makes this possible:

"FOR IN HIM DWELLETH ALL THE FULNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY."

### THE PARADOX

The simplicity of this statement almost belies the wonder and magnitude of its antinomy: Jesus Christ is the "enfleshing" of the Godhead. The Godhead in its fulness took up permanent residence in humanity, the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the embodiment of the Godhead and therefore God.

Perhaps the seeming matter-of-factness in Paul's pronouncement arises from the fact that he had already developed this thought more fully in 1:15-19, where he sets forth the Savior's deity and Headship in no uncertain terms. There Paul demonstrated this by one argument after another as he declared Christ to be:

*The very substance of the invisible God:* "[Christ] is the image of the invisible God" (v.15; See John 1:18).

*The Head of All Creation:* "The firstborn (Firstborn: a *title* denoting Headship. See Gen. 49:3, Psa 89:27, Isa 14:30, Jer. 31: 9.) of every creature: For by Him were all things created. . .all things were created by him, and for Him" (vs.15,16; See John 1:3, Eph.3:9, Rev.4:11).

*The Head of All Eternity:* "And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (v.17).

*The Head of the Church, His Body :* "And He is the head of the body, the church" (v.18).

*The Head over Resurrection Life:* "who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead" (v.18; See Rev. 1:18, Rom.8:29).

*The Head over All Things:* "That in all things He might have the preeminence" (v.18, See Eph.1:10, 21, 22, Col. 2: 10).

Little wonder, then, that Paul should declare that "it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (v.19).

The Christ Paul preached is the God-man, the unique Person of all history: God *incarnate--the Godhead in human flesh.*

As "*the image of the invisible God*," Jesus Christ is the manifest person of the Godhead. He is not simply a revelation of God, but rather He is *God revealed*. Thus He is expressly declared to be God:

"In the beginning was the Word, and THE WORD WAS WITH THE GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD" (John 1:1).

He "*was with God*"--separate and distinct from the Father; He "*was God*"--*equal* with the Father. Thus Jesus is a *different* person from the Father--One who is *co-equal* in essence and rank.

While Jesus Christ is true God, He is something other than God in that He is humanity:

"AND THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH, AND DWELT AMONG US, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

The Lord Jesus Christ is total humanity and total deity! That is what we call the Hypostatic Union--the mystery of who Jesus Christ is. He is *Lord*--deity; He is *Jesus*--humanity; He is *Christ*--the "Anointed One," God and man in one person.

## THE PERSON

Because of who He is, Jesus Christ is the celebrity of our hearts, yea, of the universe. He is the Fount of every blessing, the Source of all supply. Indeed, *-HE IS LORD*.

Believers find their all in *Him*. And how much God has for us there! How He would enrich our lives and make them worthwhile. Christisnity is *fulness*, not emptiness. It is fulness, not sadness. It is the overflow, not a giving up or taking away. Anything God takes out, He does so only that more of the fulness might come in. Christianity is Jesus Christ--His life, His fulness.

There is nothing worthwhile apart from Him. What do you need? Forgiveness of your sins? Justification? Peace with God? Peace of heart and mind? True joy? Assurance for the future? Heaven? Knowledge of the Word? You cannot have any of these until you have received Christ for yourself as your own personal Savior. As the hymn says,

All that I need He will always be,

All that I need till His face I see;

All that I need through eternity,

Jesus is all I need.

My dear friend, we need *Him*--and *He* is all we need. If you are unsaved, you need Christ. He is God, He is all that He claimed to be--and He gave Himself on Calvary's cross for you, paying for your every sin.

God does not say, "There is a Baptist, there is a Methodist, there is a Presbyterian." Rather He says, "There are three sinners. My Son died for them, what are they doing *with Him*?" That is why we ask: Have *you* trusted Christ as *your* savior? If not, we beg of you, do it now. In Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily and God is waiting to make you complete, to make you full in Him so that you might be blessed with all the fulness of God. Trust Him as your savior today!

And the Christian life is just the same, for its key is Christ. Notice the Apostle's words in Col. 2:6, 7:

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, SO WALK YE IN HIM:

"Rooted and built up IN HIM, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

The answer to our failings, to our low-living is not found by focusing on ourselves, our weaknesses, our inability, by imposing some performance measure to force the desired results. Rather the answer lies *in Christ* in his strength, His perfections, His abilities, by utilizing His provisions for us. God the Holy Spirit will work in us through His Word to conform us to *His* image as we walk *by faith in Him*.

It is because we are in Christ that God finds no fault with us. It is true that we often fail, but *in Christ* we are perfect and God, by grace, sees us ever in Him. "Oh," Paul says, "do not let anyone rob you of this complete, full salvation!" It all centers *in Christ*, in who *He is*, in *His* fulness. Only as we come to appreciate *Him* can we truly appreciate who we are in Him.

### THE PROCLAMATION

One final point should be made concerning all this: The reason such fulness can be ours is that "the fulness of the Godhead" dwelt *bodily* in Christ. Thus it was that he became the "*one mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." This, in a very real way, is the special focus of the message committed to the Apostle Paul:

"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;

"Who gave Himself a ransom for all, TO BE TESTIFIED IN DUE TIME.

"WHEREUNTO I AM ORDAINED A PREACHER, AND AN APOSTLE, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not ;) a TEACHER OF THE GENTILES in faith and verity" (1 Tim. 2:5-7).

Based on this "*due time*" revelation and ministry committed by our Lord to the Apostle Paul (Tit. 1:2,3, II Tim. 1:9, 10, Rom. 3:21-26, Eph. 3:1-9) we know the *fullness* of what He accomplished at Calvary. Today we know Him to be far more than simply Israel's Kinsman- Redeemer, for the full light of revelation has been focused on the cross revealing that "He gave Himself a ransom *for all*.(Cf.Matt.20:28 and 26:28's "*for many*," i.e, Israel (Matt.1:21, John 10:11,15, Heb. 2:14-16).

"BUT NOW THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD WITHOUT THE LAW IS MANIFESTED, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

"Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference:

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:

"WHOM GOD HATH SET FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD, TO DECLARE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS THAT ARE PAST, THROUGH THE FORBEARANCE OF GOD;

"TO DECLARE, I SAY, *AT THIS TIME* HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Rom.3:21-26).

No one can fully proclaim all that God has for us in Christ without recognizing the ministry and message committed to Paul. Thus our commitment to this wonderful message is in reality our commitment to Him. And He is ever able to do all He claims, "*For in Him dwelleth all the fulnes of the Godhad bodily.*"



**WHAT WE TEACH**  
at  
Grace School of the Bible

We believe that Eph. 4:1-6 sets forth the doctrinal basis necessary for fellowship in the dispensation of grace. Since, however, there are many areas of doctrine which are of specific interest to believers, we have a formal, detailed statement concerning what we teach. We are publishing this statement in serial form in the *Journal*. The following is part two:

**THE NATURE OF GOD**

1. We teach the trinity of the Godhead. That is one God eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matt 3:16,17, Eph. 4:4-6, I John 5:7). We further teach that this triune God is the *one and only true* God in the universe, and

that any other so-called gods are merely creations of man's evil imagination (Ex.20:3-5).

2. We teach that God the Father is a Spirit; infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being power, wisdom, justice, righteousness, knowledge, truth and love (MatL 11:25, John 4:23,24, Eph. 4:6, I Pet 1:2). Although He loves all mankind, His salvation is reserved for those who come to Him through faith. His name is Father. He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all those who trust in Him (John 8:41,42, Rom. 8:14-17, II Cor. 1:2,3, Gal. 3:26).

3. We teach the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (Zech.12:10, John 1:1,2,14;10:30), His virgin birth (Isa- 7:14, Matt 1:18,23), His perfect, sinless humanity (i.e., that it was impossible for Christ to sin,( Heb. 4:15), His vicarious death through the shedding of blood for the remission of sin (Col. 1:12-14), His bodily resurrection and ascension (Matt. 28:6-9, Acts 1:9, I Cor. 15:1-5), His glorification at the right hand of the Father (Acts 2:33-36, Phil. 2:5-11), and His present position as the one and only mediator between God and man(I Tim.2:5).

4. We teach the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7,8, Acts 5:3,4) and His convicting (Rom.8:1-4,14), regenerating (Tit. 3:5), baptizing(I Cor. 12:13), sealing (Eph. 1:13), indwelling (I Cor. 3:16), enlightening (Eph. 1:17,18), and empowering (Eph. 3:16) ministries in the world today. We further teach that the ministries of the Holy Spirit today are carried out exclusively through the instrumentality of the Word of God (Eph.6:17).

5. We teach that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe (Gen. 1:1, Psa.33:6; 36:6, Neh.9:6). It is God's power and might that created the universe and it is that same power and might that sustains the natural processes of the universe. We further teach that this creating and sustaining work was and is carried out through Jesus Christ (John 1:1-3, Eph.3:9, Col. 1:15-17, Heb. 1:1-3).

6. We teach that God and all that He has revealed about Himself and His will comprise a body of information known as the truth (Ex.34:5,6, Deut 32:4,II Cor. 1:20, I Tim. 3:15, Rev. 15:3; 16:7). All that pertains to God is truth. This truth has been revealed through the living word, Jesus Christ (John 1:14; 14:6; 18:37, Eph. 4:21), and the written word, the Bible (Psa- 119:43, John 17:17, II Tim.2:15).

---

"If I did not believe in the infallibility of the Book, I would rather be without it. If I am to judge the Book, it is no judge of me. If I am to sift it, like the heap on the threshing-floor, and lay this aside and only accept that, according to my own judgement, then I have no guidance whatever, unless I have conceit enough to trust to my own heart."

Spurgeon

Charles H.

---

## WHAT A DISPENSATION IS and WHAT IT AIN'T

If you don't believe in Bible dispensations, then you don't believe in the Bible! Why do I say this? The word *dispensation* is used four times in the Bible in Paul's epistles (I Cor. 9:17, Eph. 1:10; 3:2, Col. 1:25). God has had different dispensations in the different ages mentioned in the Bible. The statement in Romans 6:14, "...ye are not under the law, but under grace," indicates that God's dispensation of the law was finished and that it was superseded by God's dispensation of grace.

To better help you to understand what the word "dispensation" means, we can think of it as an *administration or a program*. In the Bible it refers to God's program.

If you understand the American political scene over the last 60 years you know that president Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration or program was called the *New Deal*; that president Harry Truman's administration or program was called the *Fair Deal*; that president Ronald Reagan had a program which can be described as *No Deal*. So you know or recollect that the words "administration" and "program" are widely used.

Several months ago, the wife of this writer was conducting a Bible class. At the class there was a confused lady who thought that the word "dispensation" belonged to the Catholic custom of a bishop or archbishop giving permission to disobey the church's previous edicts. The writer recalls that for three weeks--and this was years ago--the Boston fishing fleet could not get out of the harbor to the Grand Banks to catch fish because of North Atlantic storms so that those Catholics in New England could not obtain fish to eat on Friday per Catholic tradition. What happened? The Catholic bishop or archbishop gave a "dispensation" to the Catholics in the area allowing them to forego the eating of fish on Friday until the storms ceased.

What is wrong about that? First, the word "dispensation" does not belong to the Catholic Church. Second, not eating meat on Friday was a *work* (i.e., hardship) imposed by the Catholic Church on its members. The Bible states,

"For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: not of works [e.g., eating fish of Fridays] lest any man should boast"(Eph.2:8,9).

This is written to let you know that you may be confronted with the idea that a dispensation is some-thing "that a church organization gives when the going gets

rough." If the word "dispensation" is upsetting to anyone whom you are conversing with, you could use the word *administration* to explain.

---