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MOSES AND PAUL

The Scriptures clearly teach that to the apostle Paul was committed the doctrine and the program for a new dispensation. A dispensation which was a mystery and only known by God. Perhaps the distinctiveness of Paul's ministry can be understood and appreciated comparing its message with that of Moses:

The law versus grace

First, it should be clearly understood that "*the law was given by Moses*" (John 1:17) while to Paul was committed by the glorified Lord "*the gospel of the grace of God*" (Acts 20:24). This could not be stated more plainly than it is in Ephesians 3:1-4:

*"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,)"

Grace not based on covenants

To Israel the word was: "*Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, ...*" (Deuteronomy 4:23).

To us it is: "*remember ... that at that time ye were ... strangers from the covenants of promise ...*" (see Ephesians 2:11-13). God grants us salvation and blessing wholly by grace.

Canaan and heavenly places

Moses' instructions to Israel had in view Israel's occupation of the land of Canaan and her blessing there.

Paul's instructions to us have in view our occupation of the heavenlies and our enjoyment of all spiritual blessings there (see Ephesians 2:4-6 and Colossians 3:1-3).

We are God's inheritance

As with Israel, so with us, our Lord will come into the full enjoyment of His inheritance in a future day when we are fully transformed into His likeness. But we may begin giving Him the joy of His inheritance now as we enter into these glorious truths by faith and let them control our lives and transform us into His likeness (2 Corinthians 3:18).

God hath spoken

At Sinai He spoke the words of the law; now, from heaven, He speaks of mercy and grace. This happens in silence because He has spoken His last word of mercy and love in Christ. He is beseeching men to be reconciled with Him (2 Corinthians 5:20).

So very near

"For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God is in all things that we call upon him for?" (Deuteronomy 4:7)

This was indeed true, for God was near to the people of Israel. But He still kept Himself at a distance. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies.

It is not so with us. There is no barrier between God and His people today, for in the great Pauline revelation we find that *"he hath made us accepted in the beloved"* (Ephesians 1:6) and that we are before God *"complete in him"* (Colossians 2:10).

A testimony to angels and men

Moses exhorted Israel to bear testimony to the nations as to the wisdom of obeying the law (see Deuteronomy 4:6) and Paul bids us bear testimony to men and angels as to the wisdom of God's purpose in dealing with us on the basis of grace: *"for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men"* (1 Corinthians 4:9)

Provision for spiritual victory

Moses admonished his people to be ready for war against the nations determined to keep them out of their land though, he assured them, it was God's purpose to give them the victory (Deuteronomy 4:38). So Paul, by the Spirit, also admonishes us to be ready for war; not against *"flesh and blood"* but against satan and his hosts, who would keep us from occupying (experientially) our position and appropriating our blessings in the heavenlies (Ephesians 6:12).

But, as with Israel, so with us, it is God's will that we have the victory. God has equipped us (Ephesians 6:13-18) to put Satan and the fallen angels to flight!

Like failing Israel, the Body of Christ has largely failed to put her foes to flight and occupy her rightful inheritance. God will finally have to do it for both Israel and the Body wholly by grace.

But this doesn't mean that individually we must fail now.

(Source: 'Moses and Paul' by C.R. Stam)