

Grace Upon Grace IV

Fred R. Coulter—June 23, 2012

We are going to talk a little bit more about *grace upon grace* and what does it mean to be *under grace*. Exodus 34 says of God that Moses wanted to see God's glory. Moses made two more stones, came back up to have God re-write the ones that he broke. Then God came down in power.

Exodus 34:5: "And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and Truth. Keeping mercy to the thousandth *generation*, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, to the third and to the fourth generation.'" (vs 5-7). Showing:

- the love of God
- the power of God
- the mercy of God

Now we have added something very special to that because God the Father was not revealed in the Old Testament. He is referred to as the Most High. However, when Jesus came, and we know that He divested Himself of His power and glory as God to become a pinpoint of life to be begotten in the womb of the virgin Mary. Now something new was going to happen.

In the Old Testament the One Who became Jesus Christ revealed Himself to Adam and Eve, to all the patriarchs, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all of those that He dealt with He dealt with directly. But none of the people were given the Holy Spirit. Even in the covenant with Israel the people were not given the Holy Spirit. So, now Jesus Who was the Lord God of the Old Covenant came and He was going to do something for those that He would call, not for the world. Still not yet time for the world.

Let's see what Jesus said, Matthew 11:25: "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to babes.'" This is the beginning of what will become the rule of the Kingdom of God through the saints of God. Not the wise, not the mighty, not the noble.

What happens when people get all caught up in their own intelligence and their own goodness and their own vanity and all of this? They reject God and they automatically become fools. But there are those

who want to know about God, who are seeking for God. God has said, 'If you will seek, you will find.'

So Jesus said, v 26: "Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do this*.... [Notice what has been opened to those of us through Christ, through God's grace, which then is more than forgiveness of sin.] ...All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him*" (vs 26-27). That's something.

The Gospel goes out, the calling goes out, the Word of God, Christ likened unto seed. When it falls in the stony places or in the thorns and thistles or alongside the road it doesn't produce. When it falls into the good ground then it produces thirtyfold, sixtyfold, a hundredfold. We have available to us that which was not available to all mankind from creation up to the beginning of the Church, the beginning of Christ's ministry. That is to be put into a relationship with God the Father.

Let's review this a little bit; let's see how that everything that is done by God has to be through His grace, that is everything done to those that He is dealing with. In the world, as we've already noted, they are *under law*. Those who have the Spirit of God are *under grace*. Notice what John writes about this:

John 1:16: "And of His fullness we have all received, and **grace upon grace**." What does that mean? God does the calling. The Word goes out. I've explained about the seven Spirits of God, how that will work, how they will help people who are seeking God to find Him. As long as they are seeking God then they will lead them. Then something else happens. There comes a point then, and that has to be a point of a real desire of seeking Truth and a real desire to overcome your sins and a repentance, an initial repentance. Then what happens? *By the grace of God*:

- He begins to draw
 - ✓ You have to keep coming
 - ✓ You have to keep answering
 - ✓ You have to keep seeking
- God will continue to draw you

He made provision for you through Christ. So we come to John 3 and let's read it there. This is a verse we all know, but let's look at it a little more carefully.

John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in Him **may not** perish...” That’s a very interesting meaning in the Greek. That’s exactly what it means. Doesn’t mean *shall not*. Does not mean *should not*. It means *may not*. Why? *Because it’s also based upon our choices*—correct? God is true, God is Holy, God is righteous; there are no conditions that we place upon God. All conditions are placed upon us.

“...so we may not perish, but may have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (vs 16-17). He provided Christ: His coming, His ministry and His death are all part of the *grace upon grace*.

Hebrews also ties in with the great grace of God. To be under grace is that God has opened the way for each one that He calls and gives the Holy Spirit to, ‘for me to have a direct relationship through prayer and study.’ That is called *fellowship* with God the Father and Jesus Christ in heaven above. In order for that to happen:

- God has to have grace to send Christ—full of grace and Truth.
- He has to call; that’s part of His grace.
- You have to respond; that’s part of grace.
- You have to desire God’s way; that’s part of grace.
- You have to repent; that’s grace.

The *graciousness of God* leads you to repentance. When you have repented of your sins, then the blood of Jesus Christ covers those sins by the grace of God. Now you are justified to God. Justified means you are put *in right standing* with God. That comes through Christ.

Let’s see the operation of this, Hebrews 1:1: “God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His Son*, Whom He has appointed **heir of all things**, by Whom also He made the worlds” (vs 1-2). We are co-heirs with Christ. (Rom. 8:14-16).

Can you earn that by any work? *No! It’s by grace!* So there’s another grace—the *inheritance*. But notice how God’s grace carried through to make it possible and what God did to become a human being and a perfect sacrifice for our sins and the sins of the whole world. He’s not applying it to the whole world at this time because He is calling the firstfruits. That is a special grace.

Let’s see what He did; this also gives a glimpse of the glory that we’re going to receive, which is also grace, v 3: “Who being the brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and

upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high.”

Isn’t that something? You think about that and you get on your knees and you start praying. You have the grace and the blessing and favor of praying directly to the Father. How did Jesus say to pray? ‘Our Father,’ direct to God. Put in your notes there or in your margin, Rev. 4 and 5. That’s where your prayers go, to the throne of God in heaven above. His throne sits on a sea of glass. There are the 24 elders there and there’s the rainbow, the four living creatures, the seven eyes of God, the seven Spirits of God. Christ is there.

Your prayers go up to the golden altar. Our prayers come up to God as incense. God hears our prayers. He answers our prayers. It is His delight that we pray to Him. It is His delight that we confess our sins and repent. All of this is grace upon grace upon grace upon grace. It is in fact your standing before God that is not given to those who are not baptized and who have not received the Holy Spirit of God.

There may be a lot of good Sunday-keeping Protestants out there leading good lives. But do they keep the commandments by the grace of God in the spirit? Do they have that personal one-to-one relationship by grace that God has given? I’m sure there are many Protestants who have one of the seven Spirits of God leading them. But unless they continue to study and come along with the Word of God, sooner or later it will go. God’s dealing with them will be deferred until another time that they begin seeking God in earnest.

But notice how God has provided it. He talks about what man is going to do in chapter two. Jesus had to be the forerunner. He had to come first.

Hebrews 2:9: “But we see Jesus, Who *was* made a little lower than *the* angels, crowned with glory and honor on account of suffering the death...” There can be no greater death than the death of Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh. He carried in His body ‘the law of sin and death’ and never sinned. That’s why ‘He condemned sin in the flesh’ (Rom. 8:3). That’s something!

- God did that because He loves us.
- God did that because He loves the world.
- God did that because He is going to show and prove and demonstrate—through His grace and His power and through Jesus Christ—that He *is* God.

And we know the judgment of Satan is coming soon.

“...on account of **suffering the death**, in order that by *the* grace of God... [another *grace upon grace*] ...He Himself might taste death for everyone”

(v 9). The sacrifice of Christ is individually applied to every repentant sinner. Christ truly died for you and me, and all of those who will truly repent. God has the power to apply that sacrifice individually to forgive your sins, to open the relationship now that you can have directly with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Verse 10: “Because it was fitting for Him... [notice who He was]: ...for Whom all things *were created*, and by Whom all things *exist*, in bringing many sons unto glory...” What a fantastic thing that is going to be! Remember what Paul wrote that He is going to transform our vile bodies to be conformed to His spiritual body in glory. What a fantastic thing that is! That’s by

- the grace of God
- the love of God
- the Word of God
- the Truth of God

That’s why you are here. That’s why God has called you. You have the greatest destiny ahead of you in the first resurrection that will not be repeated in the second resurrection.

- yes, we have many obstacles to overcome
- yes, we have Satan the devil to overcome
- yes, we have personal sin within to overcome

But the grace of God is greater than all of that. As long as we maintain that relationship with God and are close to Him in prayer and in study, then God will continue to:

- deal with us
- bless us
- work with us
- guide us
- help us
- forgive us
- strengthen us
- inspire us
- uplift us

I want you to compare that with the first message.

Now you understand why such condemnation and judgment by God is given. They have taken this great, fantastic plan of God and His grace upon grace, and mercy and love, and kindness and goodness, and have taken it to themselves and have usurped the power right out of Christ’s hands and rule with cruelty over the brethren. *May they repent!*

“...in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Author of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (v 10). At any time God is always perfect, but can He be made more perfect? *Yes!* Was He perfected by having the human experience? *Yes, He was!* So, in order for Him to be the Judge of all,

He became a human being and lived through every aspect of human life. Tempted in every way that we are, yet without sin. *Amazing! Absolutely amazing!*

This is why when you are baptized and you enter in to the covenant of eternal life through Jesus Christ, you are then *under grace*. This is God’s doing. Think about that for a minute. Every once in a while go look in the mirror and think of the people on earth that God is dealing with, what a tremendous blessing, what a wonderful thing that in spite of what you are, because of repentance and yielding to God, God has chosen you. You have answered the call of God. He has given you His Spirit. You are under His grace. That’s an amazing thing.

Let’s read a little bit of this here. Ephesians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace...” (vs 1-2). Remember he opens every epistle with *grace and peace* and closes every epistle with *grace*. So, the whole epistle is encased in grace. That’s part of the meaning of *grace upon grace*.

Verse 3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... [Whom Jesus has revealed to you and to us.] ...Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ.” Are all of the graces that I have mentioned here so far heavenly things or are they earthly things? *They are heavenly things*—aren’t they? They come from God. It’s the love of God, the action of God, directed to us. As I read there in Heb. 2, *to everyone*.

Verse 4: “According as He has personally chosen us for Himself... [I want you to think about that. Is that not a personal relationship? *Yes, it is!*] ...before *the* foundation of *the* world... [that was His plan; those that He would call] ...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love; Having predestinated us for sonship to Himself...” (vs 4-5).

What I want you to do, I want you to take some of these Scriptures we’re covering today, especially right here—for Himself—and I want you to set aside a special time of prayer and you read these verses as you pray and thank God—*the Father Himself!* I want you to grasp as best we can, because this is so fantastic, we are still looking through a glass darkly with it—correct?

That the Father Himself, “...through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will, to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace, wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved *Son*; In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace.... [*grace upon grace*] ...Which

He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence” (vs 5-8).

How many people understand the Bible? Do you understand it? *That’s all part of the grace of God.* Let’s see what God is doing with His Spirit, which is also the action of His grace. Then we will see our standing.

1-Corinthians 2:9: “But according as it is written, ‘*The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*’” We are to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and being—correct? We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. We are to love the brethren as Christ loved us—right?

We’re even to love our enemies. We love them by praying that they will be led to repentance, if possible, that they will cease doing things against us, that if they don’t repent God’s judgment may be upon them; or that God may move them far away from us. But who knows, God may convert an enemy and he may become more converted than we are. Look at the Apostle Paul.

Verse 10: “But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit...” Having God’s Spirit—

- the Spirit of grace
- the Spirit of love
- the Spirit of Truth

—reveals these things to us that you can read the Bible and understand it. Someone else reads it and says, “That doesn’t make any sense. By the way we have to make it Muslim-friendly.

“...for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God” (v 10). How many times in the history of the world have we had it where we could all have the whole Bible and sit down and study together? We can go through and turn from epistle to epistle, from book to book; we can read the Words of God together, God’s Spirit being among us and in us. His Words are Spirit and life and we read these and we’re inspired when we do. That’s all the grace of God working together, all of us together. That’s a fantastic thing that God is doing.

Let’s see how Paul expresses it in another way, Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith...”

- You believe in God!
- You believe in Christ!
- You believe in His shed blood!
 - God has granted you repentance!
 - God has granted you forgiveness!
 - He’s applied the death of Christ to you personally!

That is available as a continuous propitiation for you!

“...we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.... [Isn’t that amazing? *Peace with God the Father!*] ...Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace... [grace upon grace upon grace] ...in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in the hope of *the* glory of God.... [Now then we come to the reality of the truth of the battle that’s in the world between the forces of evil and the forces of God]: ...And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations...” (vs 1-3).

Some tribulations come along that are really hard to take, but never forget there is no temptation come upon you that is not common to men. There is no temptation or trial that God will not deliver you from. **Everything** works together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose.’

Some trials are hard to understand, but by faith grow and overcome through the difficulties in them. Some trials may be very hard to bear, but Christ is there to help you. Yea, we will see *He is in you*. The Father is likewise *in you*. They will see you through the trouble. They will see you through the difficulties. Then when you come out at the other end of the tunnel—so to speak—you will see, yes, work together for good.

“...realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance... [We have to endure to the end—correct? *Yes!*] ...And endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope of *God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us” (vs 3-5).

Let’s see how close that relationship is. This can only be by grace because no man is going to command to God. This is really a key here, after saying you have to build on the foundation of Christ: gold/silver; wood, hay or stubble, 1-Corinthians 3:16: “Don’t you understand that **you are God’s temple...**” Think of that! Think of all the great cathedrals, all the great things that were done, even the temple that Solomon built. Those were all made by what God created. But now *He dwells in you*.

“...you are God’s temple, and *that* the Spirit of God is **dwelling in you**” (v 16). That’s by grace. The Spirit of Christ, the begetting of the Father: the two parts of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments and keep My Word and My Father will love you and **We** will make our abode with you.’ Dwelling in you. Isn’t that a fantastic grace?

- So that we can have a relationship with God.
- So that God can do His spiritual work in our lives.

Yes, brethren, living in this world today we need to stay close to God.

He gives a little warning, v 17: “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are.” Amazing—isn’t it?

Let’s see how John describes this. He’s the one who wrote about *grace upon grace*. I know when I read that verse recently I thought—DING! That ever happen to you? You read along, study along, all of a sudden a light goes on. I said to myself, ‘What does it mean about grace upon grace?’ Then I began to understand what it means to be *under law* and that the whole world and everybody is. So, grace upon grace and to be under grace is a fantastic relationship with God.

- This helps us in our prayers
- This helps us in our thinking
- This helps us in our understanding
- This helps us to grow in grace and knowledge when we understand this relationship with God

Notice how John wrote of it, 1-John 1:1: “That which was from *the* beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes, that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of life; (And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us); that which we have seen and have heard...” (vs 1-3). All the words of God and then all that they wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

“...we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for **the fellowship...**” (v 3). That’s what it is in the Greek—*the fellowship*. That’s what God wants to have with each one of us. You have fellowship when you come together? *Yes, you do!* Fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ must come first.

“...indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ” (v 3). That’s a tremendous thing, brethren. When you go pray and you get on your knees and you say, ‘Our Father in heaven,’ then you can add

- praise
- thanksgiving
- honor
- blessing
- praise for glory
- praise for God’s intervention

All of those things then will flow from that because you have the fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

Notice what else He has done. When you are under grace there is an absolute dividing line between you and the world. All the world is under law and under sin to God. Yes, there are those who keep some of the laws of God. There are some of those who believe in a form of Jesus.

They were the ones that Jesus said when James and John saw someone casting out demons in Jesus’ name, they said, ‘We forbid them. Do you want us to call fire down from heaven?’ He said, ‘No, you don’t know what spirit you are of. If they are not against us, they are on our part.’ **But they didn’t receive salvation!** That’s not to denigrate the Protestants. That’s to put them in the proper perspective before God. They have a different perspective of what they think, which is not what the Bible teaches. It’s very, very hard for all of the ‘goody-two shoes’ to handle that, but they need to know.

Notice what God has done. That’s why you’re standing in grace; you are under grace. You receive grace upon grace through the love of God, through Christ. Think about how God has given us the understanding in this time that is greater grace beyond that.

Ephesians 1:9: “Having made known to us the mystery of His own will...” You could run to and fro through this city of Tulsa and you could go up and down the street, like you know they do for news survey. You can stick the microphone up in someone’s face and say, ‘What do you know about the will of God?’ *Blah, blah, blah!* Someone else, ‘What do you know about the will of God?’ *Blither, blither, blither!* ‘What do you know about the will of God?’ *Well, I think.* Really? What does God say? Notice what you know God has made known.

“...to us the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself... [notice how close that fellowship with the Father and Jesus Christ is] ...That in *the Divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth” (vs 9-10).

You are part of the greatest plan, the greatest scheme, the greatest thing that men cannot conceive of, that governments know nothing about, that religions under Satan the devil have twisted and turned and tried to create their own righteousness and their own eternal life. *God has made known to you the Truth.*

Now you understand if we hold that in contempt and we become lukewarm and we become

lackadaisical, now you know why God threatens to spew you out of His mouth, but He gives counsel to repent because He loves you and wants you. Yes, isn't that right? *Yes!* He wants you to know.

Verse 12: “That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (vs 12-13). Think about the promises of God. Think about this. All the Word of God is promises, every word. If He said it, it's true. If it is for a blessing and you are in right standing with God, you can receive it. If you are not in right standing with God, you can repent, which is grace.

Like one rabbi told the Jews in the Christian Jew magazine that I have a copy of that's now about two decades old, he said, ‘Brother Jews, you all want to trust in the promises of God. Remember half of them are curses.’ He said, ‘That's why we are where we are today and why we need Christ.’ Isn't that something? ‘That we might be the praise of His glory.’

Verse 13: “In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... [God dwelling in you, not near you, not with you, but *in you*.] ...which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, **to the praise of His glory**” (vs 13-14).

Here is what God wants for us. I want you to read all the rest of the book of Ephesians, especially chapter three where it says that ‘God wants us to be filled with all the fullness of God and to know the love of God which surpasses all human knowledge. And to know and understand the height and depth and breadth and to be filled with the fullness of God.’ That's what it means *grace upon grace*.

Let's read Paul's prayer for the brethren in Ephesus recorded for us, v 15: “For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints, Do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. *And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of **His calling**... [which is grace] ...and what *is* the riches of the glory of **His inheritance** in the saints... [which is grace] ...and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of **His mighty power**... [which is the grace] ...which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and

set Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.” (vs 15-20). The special relationship that you are in with God the Father and Jesus Christ, there is nothing greater that can happen to you in this life, on this earth. Do you grasp that? This is something.

Verse 21: “Far above every principality and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come.... [Christ is sitting at the right hand of God] ..For He [the Father] has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the church, Which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all” (vs 21-23). That brings us right back to where we started. ‘And of His fullness we have all received and *grace upon grace*’. Brethren, this is a tremendous thing that God has done. I hope that this helps bring us

- closer to God
- closer to each other
- closer to the Truth

to be able to see and understand the things that are coming on in this world, and to have the strength, the fortitude, the patience, the endurance—to know that God is not only with us He is in us.

God not only knows what we are going through, He loves us and will help us that we will receive *grace upon grace* in everything in our lives because **God has called us to be His sons and daughters!**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 34:5-7
- 2) Matthew 11:25-27
- 3) John 1:16
- 4) John 3:16-17
- 5) Hebrews 1:1-3
- 6) Hebrews 2:9-10
- 7) Ephesians 1:1-8
- 8) 1-Corinthians 2:9-10
- 9) Romans 5:1-5
- 10) 1-Corinthians 3:16
- 11) 1-John 1:1-3
- 12) Ephesians 1:9-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Romans 8:14-16
- Revelation 4; 5
- Romans 8:3

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