

# Grace Upon Grace VI

Fred R. Coulter—June 30, 2012

We need to focus in on *grace upon grace*. That's why Christ came to give us *grace upon grace*. We will see that the whole operation of the New Covenant is *grace upon grace*.

Let's just review again. I know this is repetitious, but I also need you to understand this. Too many people still come to the Bible with the thoughts of the Protestant doctrines in mind. We understand very clearly what Paul is writing about. Mistranslations and misinterpretations and direct rejection of the Word of God are the hallmarks of Protestantism. The way that the Church of God has destroyed itself is they've gone to the Protestants to say:

- How do you understand grace?
- How do you understand law?
- How shall we evangelize?

—when they fail to realize that the hand of God's correction is upon them and they need to repent.

Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, but under grace." The way it's interpreted of being under law is that you are keeping the commandments of God. *Not true!* Some may be keeping some of them. Some may have a wonderful exterior of pleasantness and obedience, being very nice people, but devout idol-worshippers, devout Sunday-keepers, devout holiday-keepers. They think they're under grace.

The next thing they read, not under law but under grace, meaning God has done away with His laws and commandments and you don't need to keep anything. We covered last time what happens when you judge the Lawgiver and you reject His laws. But what they are actually saying here, the way that they interpret *under grace*, is you are *above* law.

Romans 7:1: "...that the law rules over a man for as long a time as he may live." Everyone in the world is under law. They are under sin and they are under judgment.

Let's look and see what that leads to, just like this last week we had this Supreme Court decision. I'm speechless as to what to call it, so I'll leave it for a later analysis. But what it does, it breeds lawlessness. Jesus said in the end-time that 'the love of many will grow cold because lawlessness shall multiply.' The whole system of the world is called the *mystery of lawlessness*. Why is it called the mystery of lawlessness? *Because they take part of God's laws and then add their own traditions and their own ways to it!* They cast the rest of God's laws behind their backs. All religions do it: Jews, Protestants, Catholics, Hindus, Muslims,

Animists. Occasionally they may stumble across some of God's laws, but nevertheless, it's called the *mystery of lawlessness*.

Why does God give people over to the mystery of lawlessness? I'm not going to go through the prophetic part of it, but let's come to 2-Thess. 2. We will see a simple explanation as to why people are turned over to the *mystery of lawlessness*. When they are turned over to the *mystery of lawlessness*, they don't hear the Word of God, they can see the Word of God but they won't obey the Word of God, so they are blinded.

We know there is one who is coming. The antichrist is coming. People still ask, 'I wonder if our current President is the antichrist.' He may or may not be, but one thing for sure, he's devoid of truth. So, if he is later selected to be the antichrist, because he's pretty young, he meets the first qualification.

2-Thessalonians 2:9: "*Even* the one whose coming is according to *the* inner working of Satan... [Working within the mind and body and heart of this individual. Totally yielded to Satan if not Satan-possessed.] ...with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness..." (vs 9-10).

It was said when they were doing the healthcare law, 'Pass it so you can read it, then you'll know what's in it.' It's kind of like the same thing when they start reading it, there are a lot of things in there they don't like. That's analogous to what they do with the Bible. Keep all of these traditions and then you read the Bible and nothing makes sense because they are getting rid of Truth. They are supplanting God's way with men's way; God's interpretation with men's interpretation. Guess who is right there with a lot of spiritual power to say, 'Oh, yes, God didn't mean what he said.' And who is the god of this world? You put all of that together here.

"...in those who are perishing... [here is why]: ...because they did not receive the love of the Truth..." (v 10). Let's think of some Scriptures. Jesus said what of Himself? *I am the Way* (know the way) *the Truth* (nor the truth). It's not like our current attorney general says, 'Oh, truth on this problem is evolving.' In other words, don't disturb me until I make up the paperwork and make it look good. That's what a lot of people do with the Bible.

- Your Law is Truth
- Your Word is Truth
- All Your precepts are true from the beginning

- The Law of God is perfect
- God is perfect
- God cannot lie
- God inspired the Bible to be
- All Scripture is given by inspiration of God or God-breathed
- Holy men of God wrote it who were moved of the Holy Spirit

Yet, they condemn the Word of God and lie and say, 'It wasn't written down till 200-300 years later.' Really? Internal evidence shows the other way. That's why we have the commentaries. That's why we have the appendices in the Bible.

"...they did not receive the love of the Truth, so that they might be saved" (v 10)—*God's way!* People want to be saved by what they want to hear, rather than be saved by repentance and hear what God wants them to know.

Verse 11: "And for this cause... [There's a cause. There are *causes* that God brings upon people.] ...God will send upon them a powerful deception... [That's what we're seeing going on right now.] ..that will cause them to believe *the* lie, so that all may be judged who did not believe the Truth, but who took pleasure in unrighteousness" (vs 11-12).

Those in the Church are entirely different. Those who have the Spirit of God are entirely different. We have seen God does not give His Spirit without repentance and covenant baptism to receive the Holy Spirit of God with the laying on of hands. That is the dividing line. Only at that point do you come under grace. God's grace will lead you, will draw you, but you're not yet under grace. God has to, in His grace, apply the death of Jesus Christ as penalty for your sins and by the grace of God He tasted death for everyone. 'God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whoever believes on Him *may* not perish but *may* have everlasting life.' Men assume the infallible position and put the *if* on God. God is perfect and is infallible and men assume the fallible position as sinners.

Verse 13: "Now we are duty-bound to give thanks to God always concerning you brethren, who are beloved by *the* Lord..." If you are under grace you have the Spirit of God within you, which consists of the Spirit from the Father of begettal and Christ in you for the mind of Christ. God's purpose and goal is strictly grace.

- you can't buy it
- you can't earn it
- you can't obey 'jillions' of laws to make God give it to you

You have to repent and agree absolutely with God, absolutely with Jesus Christ, absolutely with the Word of God. Yes, there are translations out there that are not reliable. But the good part of it is all the

changes they have made, guess what they did? *They documented them!* So if you search it out, you can find out right from wrong. But some cases you really have to search. God has given His Word. We're all sitting here with our Bibles open reading the same thing. These are unique occasions in the history of mankind, even from the time that they had enough printed Bibles that it could be done this way compared to all the history of mankind.

God has given a lot to us and 'to whom a lot is given, much is expected.' So, we have a lot that we need to do to be faithful to God in our personal lives and in preaching the Gospel to the world as well. So we are beloved of God.

"...beloved by *the* Lord, because God from *the* beginning has called you until salvation through sanctification of *the* Spirit and belief of *the* Truth" (v 13). To be under grace means *you have received the Holy Spirit, you are sanctified with that Holy Spirit.* That sets you apart from the world. We live in the world, but we're not a part of the world. ***God has called us to an eternal inheritance!***

I know just the other night they were showing some of the things of the Hershel Telescope. I never heard of the Hershel Telescope. And they have a Hubbell 2 Telescope. They are astonished at the creation of God in the universe. I think God has caused that technology and let it be spread abroad so every man, woman, and child will be without excuse who assume there is no God

Every time I see that, every time I see that great creation of God, it's hard to keep the eyes dry that God has made that for His saints. Not a matter of belonging to a church. It's not a matter of being on the church roles.

- It's a matter is your name written in the book of Life.
- It's a matter that God has called you by His grace and He's going to establish certain things in your life by that grace which cannot be done any other way.

### ***You can't do it without the Spirit of God!***

Verse 14: "Unto which He called you by our gospel to *the* obtaining of *the* glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." What does it say that Jesus looks like there in Rev. 1?

- His face shines like the sun.
- He is clothed in radiant garments from the head to His feet.
- His feet are so glorious it's like brass burning in a furnace.

That's just part of the glory that He revealed to John when He began giving him the book of Revelation.

What is it going to be like? I want you to *think* ahead. We're not dealing with a church against a church.

- we're dealing with Truth against untruth
- we're dealing with pure Truth against mixture of Truth
- we're dealing of true interpretation of the Scriptures *vs* misinterpretation of the Scriptures
- we're dealing with the teachings of Christ vs the traditions of men

That's what it's all about. The ultimate reality of it is this. No one will ever fulfill their ultimate destiny unless they wholly, absolutely agree with and function *under the power of God the Father*. That's what it means to *become one in the Father and Christ*. God wants us to

- learn to *think* like Him
- *act* like Him
- *reason* like Him
- *perceive things* like He does

That's why we're here. This is all of the grace of God. This is why we have the fellowship with God.

- Our fellowship is with God the Father and Jesus Christ—*that's grace*
- The Spirit of God within us—*that's grace*
- The Word of Truth and understanding—*that's grace*
- The preaching of the Gospel to the world—*that's grace*
- The serving of the brethren in the Church—*that's grace*
- Our love toward each other—*that's from the grace of God*

Let's see what else it does and why. In part 5 we saw concerning the Lawgiver. Christ is the Lawgiver—Old Testament and New Testament. We're going to look at a statement, and we're going to see what grace does. Grace establishes the laws of God and our relationship with God that cannot be obtained any other way.

Romans 3:24: "*But* are being justified freely by **His** grace..."

- God's gift
- God's blessing
- encompassing God's mercy
- God's love
- God's Truth

It's *grace upon grace upon grace*. Being justified means to be put in right standing with God the Father and Jesus Christ in heaven above—freely. Not like the Catholic Church: come and pay for a mass and you get indulgences. *No!* Come with a

broken heart and a contrite spirit and repentance and God will receive you and He will change you.

"...being justified freely by His grace through redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus" (v 24). The death of Christ—and I'm going to bring this out on Church at Home—is the greatest thing that God could do; to be manifested in the flesh as a full human being, preach the Gospel to the world, die for the sins of all mankind. The greatest thing He could do to redeem us. God being just took that penalty upon Himself because He gave us as punishment through Adam and Eve a sinful nature.

So therefore, only God's effort and grace and Spirit can change that. Without that, we can discipline ourselves, we can be nice people in the society, but we can't convert ourselves and we can't live forever by God's grace. Also, Jesus is the propitiation for our sins because if you are under grace then you have access to God the Father and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for the continuous remission of your sins. That's grace. As we see in the daily prayer: 'Forgive us our sins as we sin against others—daily.' God wants us to repent daily.

With God's Spirit in us, guess what He does? *He reveals the inner depths of the deception and human nature and the evil associated with it that is lodged in our minds!* In going through the sermons, *The Washing of the Water by the Word*—which ties in together with this—God cleanses our minds. That is the grace of God, as well.

Verse 25: "Whom God has openly manifested to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.... [v 26]: ...Through the forbearance of God.... [v 28]:...Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified... [Put in right standing with God because of repentance and baptism and the Holy Spirit, all through the shed blood of Christ. You *must believe* in that.] ...separate from works of law" (v 28). Works of law has nothing to do with the commandments of God whatsoever, but the traditional works of 'religions.'

Verse 29: "*Is He* the God of the Jews only?... [the Jews still think so today] ...*Is He* not also *the* God of *the* Gentiles? YES! *He is* also God of *the* Gentiles, Since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision by faith, and *the* uncircumcision through faith.... [meaning exactly the same kind of operation] ...Are we, then, abolishing law... [Protestants say yes. **God says no!**] ...through faith?..." (vs 29-31). Those who believe they are under grace have perverted the grace of God and exalted themselves above the law as judges of the law. So they say:

- You don't need to read this.
- This part of the New Testament was meant for the Jews.

- You don't have to worry about anything that is in the Old Testament. It has all been fulfilled.

They never understand, as the sermons I gave: *How Would Your Preach Christ from the Old Testament?* That's what they did! The Bereans checked the Scriptures of the Old Testament in the Jewish synagogue in Berea and proved these things whether they were so or not.

Verse 31: "Are we, then abolishing law through faith?..." **No!** Everything under grace, because God is dealing in your life, is on a higher spiritual standard.

- You're not reducing obedience, *you're increasing it.*
- You're not reducing responsibility, *you are increasing it.*
- You are not placating human nature, you are exposing it.

Verse 31: "Are we, then abolishing law through faith? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, we are establishing law." How does God establish law? Keep that in mind. We're going to learn something about the New Covenant. Everyone likes to say, 'We're under the New Covenant of grace.' Yes, **if** you have the Holy Spirit of God you are.

- by proclamation and declaration does not make it so.
- by misinterpreting of Scriptures
- by bad translations
- by teachers who do not hunger and thirst after the Word of God but are more concerned with money and political power

—they'll never understand the Word of God. But they've got to have a false grace to get people in because people want to have their conscience clean. **God wants you converted!**

Hebrews 8:6: "But on the other hand, He has obtained[Christ] a *supremely* more excellent ministry..." That is compared to Aaron and the temple and the animal sacrifices under the Old Covenant. If the Jews would have read the Old Testament—Jeremiah and Ezekiel—would they not see where God said He's going to make a new covenant with Israel and Judah.

If the Old Covenant were good enough, why make a new one? It's absurd to say that those in the Old Testament received salvation through law and then come to the New Testament and say, 'If you try and keep the law, you're trying to earn your salvation.' If they did under the Old Covenant, why can't we under the New Covenant? Because the answer is they never did under the Old Covenant. Only certain of the patriarchs and prophets and the

kings received salvation to the first resurrection. You read it. God was *among* them. God was *near* them. But God was **never** *within* them. That's what's necessary for true conversion and New Covenant.

"...a *supremely* more excellent ministry, as much greater as the superior covenant... [Are not eternal promises of glory and an eternal inheritance through grace, is that not greater than a piece of land on the earth? *Yes, it is.*] ...which He is also Mediator, which was established upon superior promises.... [that's why it's by faith] ...For if the first covenant had been faultless, then no provision for a second covenant would have been made.... [But God prophesied of it.] ...But since He found fault with them..." (vs 6-8).

- Why did He find fault with them?

You read the whole Old Covenant with this question in mind.

- How many repented?
- How many believed God?

Even when they were on the Exodus coming out of Egypt.

- How many believed the miracles that God did?
- How long did it last?

Until they were running out of water and running out of food and then they were rioting, running to Moses accusing him, forgetting what God did to make Pharaoh let them go.

Not one place in all of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers or Deuteronomy do you find that the whole congregation of Israel got on their knees and all faced the tabernacle of the congregation and all prayed to God, 'God, we're thirsty, please send water. God, You have sent us meat one time with all the quail. Please be merciful and send us some more. God, we love You and trust You.' **Not once!**

When they sent the spies to go check out the land, they sent one from each tribe. Only two came back with a good report. The rest moaned and groaned and bellyached and rejected God and didn't believe Him. He said, 'That's it! I've put up with you these ten times—another 38-1/2 years. Everyone over 20 is going to die because My presence was right here in the pillar of fire and the cloud. I put My presence in the tabernacle of the congregation. I fed you with manna and I fed you with quail. I gave you water out of the rock. When I said you go into the land and I'll fight the battle for you, you didn't believe Me.'

Then you go through all the judges, what happened? *Same thing happened when Moses was on the mount, right back to Baal sun worship—right? Yes, indeed!* The fault was with them.

That's why He said: "...Behold, the days are coming,' says the Lord, 'when I will establish a

new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in *the* day that I took hold of their hand to lead them out of *the* land of Egypt because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them,' says *the* Lord" (vs 8-9).

Again, read the Old Testament. How many times were they obedient to the covenant? *Only when the king virtually got them by their knap of the neck and said, 'You will obey.'* God doesn't want that. Do you establish law that way? *No, you don't establish law that way!* You establish law with a willing heart and repentant mind, that you desire to keep it. That comes with the New Covenant.

Verse 10: "For this *is* the covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after those days,' says *the* Lord. 'I will give My laws into their minds... [That's how you establish law, because it comes from the *inside* out. It is part of your being. It is part of your thinking.] ...and I will inscribe them upon their hearts... [It's part of your emotions and your feelings.] ...and I will be their God, and they will be My people.'" That's something! That is the grace that God has called us to.

Let's see how else this grace of God works for us. Not only do we have the Spirit of God within us, the two parts, because Jesus said that 'the Father will love us and *We* will come—that is the Father and Christ—and make *Our* abode with you.' That's something!

That's why, brethren, you look at what's going on in the world and you look what's going on in too many people in the Churches of God. You've got to ask: With everything God has given to us, this is what they are doing? *Men rising up as false prophets!* Churches wouldn't correct him, the brethren wouldn't correct him, so God did using the federal government. Now he's going to spend some time in jail. He's going to sit there and learn he was not one of the two witnesses. He's either going to repent or he's going to be staring at a very much worse punishment when he's standing at the edge of the Lake of Fire trying to explain to God that 'I did this because I wanted to be someone great.'

Hebrews 10:16, almost a repeat of it, but now read it and you find it's not just to the house of Israel and Judah, but *to all* including the Gentiles. "This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,' says *the* Lord. 'I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again'" (vs 16-17). That's why God sends His Spirit to be in your mind, to help clean out your mind.

Verse 18: "Now where remission of these *is*, *it is* no longer *necessary* to offer sacrifices for sin.

Brethren, I'm going to tell you right here one the greatest graces of *grace upon grace* that God gives us. This has to do with our prayers to God. This has to do with our relationship with God. Right here:

Verse 19: "Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* Holiest by the blood of Jesus." Your prayers go right to God. We find in Rev. 5 that our prayers come up like incense upon the golden altar of God. It is the Holy Spirit that carries them there. It is the Holy Spirit that leaves off all the nonsense that flits around in our minds if we get distracted when we are praying. It's like an automatic get rid of the fluff. "...into the *true* Holiest by the blood of Jesus..."

He's comparing the high priest, the most important man in Israel. He was over the king. Guess what his privilege was? Once a year on the Day of Atonement, go into the Holy of Holies and it was pitch black in there. The Jews later had a custom because of fear that they would put a rope around him when he went in there just in case he did something wrong and God would zap him dead they could pull him out. All right, that is the law.

Now let's look at grace. You can enter into the true Holiest by the blood of Jesus. How often? *Any time of the day or night!* Any time you say, 'Our Father. Father, help me, give me understanding, forgive me.' You need to be on your knees every day, that's true. But the rest of the day you can pray like Paul says, pray without ceasing. That means continuously be in prayer to ask God to help you. He will. God's Spirit will guide you—everyday!

Now he calls it, v 20: "By a new and living way... [which is grace] ...which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh)." Because when Jesus died the veil that hung over the face of the temple was ripped in two from top to the bottom. The way I vision is that there was this great lintel stone that was up seven stories high at the top of the temple. Here hung this great woven linen veil, which was as thick as a hands breath.

There were the twelve signatures of it for all the twelve tribes of Israel. The way I view what happened, because you read it and it said there was an earthquake and the veil of the temple was rent, now that's not the one inside the Holy of Holies. This is the one outside the temple door. It was torn in two from top to bottom. Yes, the earthquake I'm sure had a part of it. Yes, the great stone falling down I'm sure added weight to help tear it. But I think there was a mighty angel standing there and he gave a great karate chop and that thing went tumbling down to signal *the end of the temple service*. God gave them another 40 years to repent, but they didn't do it. That's why He says 'it's a new living way which He consecrated for us through the veil, that is His flesh.'

Verse 21: “And *having* a great High Priest over the house of God.” *That’s grace!* Who is the Head of the Church? *Christ! That’s grace!* Did He give ministers and elders and teachers and prophets and evangelists and apostles? *Yes! That’s grace so that we’re all taught!* We all come into the unity of the faith. We all grow and develop in the mind of Christ. *That’s grace!* Now you see how all of these graces are stacked one upon another.

Now notice what this is to do for us, v 22: “Let us approach *God* with a true heart, with full conviction of faith, our hearts having been purified from a wicked conscience, and our bodies having been washed with pure water. Let us hold fast without wavering *to* the hope *that* we profess, for He Who promised *is* faithful” (vs 22-23).

***That’s how you establish law, that’s how it’s done!***

(go to the next track)

This is the kind of relationship that we have with God. We have many series and Jim is anxious for me to announce as many as I can because he doesn’t have enough work to do. He’s only three weeks behind. But we have the series, *The Keys to Answered Prayer*. The whole foundation that we build on Christ in our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is *prayer and study*.

- Study—God talks to us
- Prayer—we talk to God

This tells us what we can pray to Him concerning. If you don’t have the series, *The Keys to Answered Prayer*, there are 21 sermons on that. We go through the whole Bible and we spend especially a lot of time in the book of Psalms. If you’re not used to praying, the book of Psalms tells us how to pray. If you’re not used to praying, then what’s going to happen, you’re going to come across some difficulties you cannot solve on your own. You take them to God in prayer.

Here’s the promise, Hebrews 4:14: “Having therefore a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession *of our faith*. For we do not have a high priest who cannot empathize with our weaknesses... [We all have weaknesses. We all have temptations. We all have sins that come along. We don’t intend to. You ever go along and do something and said, ‘Why did I do that?’ *Yes!*] ...but *One Who* was tempted in all things...” (vs 14-15). That’s why He came in the flesh. That’s why God made us after His image, after His likeness, a little lower than God because the ultimate purpose is to be in the Kingdom of God as a spirit-glorified son or daughter of God.

What we are as we start in the flesh, that little pinprick of life, what it’s going to be at the resurrection and the glory that we will receive, the comparison between the two is like standing here on the earth and looking up at the sky and seeing as many stars as we can, compared to looking at the universe through the eyes of these great telescopes, which show us the greatness and beauty and power of God. That’s the vast difference that it’s going to be.

That’s why God doesn’t want us to play church. That’s why God doesn’t want us to merchandize the brethren. That’s why God wants us first of all to have an individual relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ through prayer and study. Then when we come together on the Sabbath and God puts His presence here, then the Sabbath becomes a real great spiritual fulfillment of God’s will and desire and teaching for us.

“...was tempted in all things according to *the* likeness of *our own temptations*; yet He was without sin. Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace... [Think of all the graces that God has given to us—*grace upon grace upon grace*.] ...so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (vs 15-16).

Now let’s look at something else. We’ve seen how God has established law. Now we’re ready to examine another phrase, which is almost like an opposite that sits in a conundrum to each other.

Romans 3:27: “Therefore, where *is* boasting? It is excluded. Through what law? *The law* of works? By no means! Rather, *it is* through a law of faith.” Here, law and faith are together when in the normal explanation of things in Protestantville law and faith are opposites. But this means the *operation of faith*. We have faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. God has set the law that if you repent and you turn from your sins and you turn to God by faith in the sacrifice of Christ He will blot out your sins and remove them just like we saw there in the book of Hebrews.

Also the law of faith means that we *follow God*. Hebrews 11 is called *the faith chapter*. Notice what faith does. The law of faith gives us hope and belief, and grants us obedience all the way through here. Here’s the law of faith explained:

Hebrews 11:1: “Now faith is *the* substance...” Not just confidence, because this is ‘hupostasis’ and that means substance, which then is spiritual substance from God because we have the faith of Christ given to us. Not just our faith to God, that’s part of it, but *the faith of Christ given to us through the power of the Holy Spirit*. That’s the substance we receive. What does this cause us to do?

“...of things hoped for...” We

- **stand in grace**
- **walk in faith**
- **believe in hope**
- **live in love**

“...and the conviction of things not seen... [from the Spirit of God] ...For by this *kind of faith* the **elders...**” (vs 1-2)—those who were the patriarchs. The patriarchs all had an individual relationship with the one Who became Jesus Christ, directly in their lives. Abraham saw God, Isaac saw God, Jacob wrestled with God. David brought the Ark and put it in a special tabernacle in his house. When he was praising God with his Psalms, he saw the outline of God under the curtains where the Ark of the Covenant was. **A relationship with God!** That’s why they are all listed here.

Verse 3: “By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God... [You can read in the Scriptures. When you see the universe, as I have said, it’s magnificent.] ...so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible.” That is absolutely true today. They don’t know the ultimate source of the power and energy of life or even the energy in the smallest particle that is so small it passes through everything on earth as if it doesn’t exist. *That’s something!*

Verse 4: “By faith Abel... [Notice what the law of faith does. The law of faith does not have us ignore the laws of God or the commands of God, the *law of faith impels us to obey God!*] ...offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died, *he is yet speaking.*”

Here’s something to learn. The Word of God as recorded in the Bible is the living Word of God, inspired by God through His Spirit. Since these are the words of God, that’s why Jesus said to the scribes and Pharisees who didn’t believe Moses, ‘There is one who accuses you, even Moses whom you say you believe, but don’t.’ He used the present tense: Moses is accusing you, because all of God’s Word continues on. He is yet speaking.

Verse 5: “By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found... [that is by those who sought to kill him] ...because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him that he pleased God.”

- he saw God
- he walked with God
- he talked with God

So did Noah, which is the next one we come to.

Here’s also part of the law of God and the faith of God combined, v 6: “Now without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*. For it is mandatory... [No guessing, no opinions, no half-hearted beliefs, no ‘maybes,’ no ‘yeah-buts.’] ...*for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists... [That exists means everything that He is, everything that He claims He is, that He reveals that He is.] ...and *that* He is a rewarded of those who diligently seek Him.” So this is part of the law of faith.

Verse 7: “By faith, Noah, after being divinely instructed by God about the things *he could* not yet see, was moved with fear *and* prepared an ark *for the* salvation of his house; through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.”

You think back to what they were doing there and I think it’s really interesting. God does some special things on occasions. Remember God sent all the animals, they all got in the Ark. God sealed the Ark and it sat there for seven more days. I imagine all of those who didn’t believe him were out there chanting and yelling, just like the occupy movement. On the seventh day they’re all gathered out there and all of a sudden—drip, drip, drip. Then BANG! The windows of heaven opened and the fountains of the deep break open and here comes water that is unbelievable.

Recently northern Florida had just a wee little sample of it: 20 inches of rain in a day and a half. That was nothing; that was like an eyedropper.

Then it comes down to Abraham, v 8: “By faith Abraham, being called of God to go out into a place which he would later receive for an inheritance... [How late is later? *Yes, the Kingdom!* Abraham has not yet received it.] ...obeyed and went, not knowing where he was going.” That’s also part of the law of faith—you believe God and obey God in spite of the circumstances that you see because God is capable of changing any circumstances.

Verse 9: “By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, like a foreigner, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the joint heirs of the same promise; for he was waiting for the city with *the* foundations of which God is the Architect and Builder” (vs 9-10). What city is that? *New Jerusalem!* How far down the road does God look? *He’s got all eternity to plan!* A couple thousand years to God is kind of like a sip of tea.

Verse 11: “By faith also Sarah herself... [Even though she laughed. The Lord said, ‘You laughed.’ She said, ‘No, I didn’t laugh.’ He said, ‘Yes, you did laugh.’ At 90-years-old what woman wouldn’t laugh.] ...received power to conceive seed,

and gave birth *when* she was *well* beyond the childbearing age because she esteemed Him faithful Who had personally promised *her a son.*” He told her directly.

This is interesting in the Greek. Wherever you see in the *Faithful Version* ‘personally’, this is a special verb that is called a middle voice verb. The middle voice verb is used in two things:

1. It is something that cannot be expressed in English in the same way because in the Greek it’s expressed in a single word. The subject, the verb, the mood, the tense, the case are all contained in one word.
2. The middle voice verb when it is something that you do, it is you are the subject of the action and you receive the action back to yourself, so you become the object of the action.

We don’t have any such verb in English like that. But when it’s used in relationship to people it means that God Himself *personally* did this and also for His own benefit.

Verse 12: “Because of this *faith*, there came into being from one man—and moreover, *one* who was *reproductively* dead—*descendants* as numerous as the stars in the heavens, and as countless as the sand on the seashore.” That’s what it’s going to be.

I’ve often thought what it’s going to be when Abraham is resurrected and he’s on the Sea of Glass and I think one of the things God is going to do, He’s going to say, ‘Abraham, come here with Me. I want you to view down on the earth. You see all of those down there. Turn around and look at everybody on the Sea of Glass. These are all your descendants, your seed, as the stars of heaven. The ones down on the earth are the other half that I have yet to deal with. Unfortunately, I’ve got to correct Ishmael and Amalek and Esau. There’s going to be a great slaughter. But let me tell you what My plan is. They will have an opportunity for salvation because at the end of the first thousand years of the reign of the Kingdom of God earth, I’m going to resurrect them all and they will be all yours. Just like I promised you.’

Isn’t that going to be something? That’s how God thinks. He thinks greater and beyond what we do. For a lot of us it’s a great effort to plan out a whole day. God plans out the whole universe—doesn’t He? *Yes!*

Verse 13: “All these died in faith... [Where did Enoch go? *To the grave.*] ...not having received the promises, but having seen them from afar... [Paul talks there in 1-Cor. 13 like looking through a glass darkly.] ...and having been persuaded of *them*, and having embraced *them*, and having confessed that

they were strangers and sojourners on the earth. For those who say such things make it manifest that they seek *their* own country, *as promised by God*” (vs 13-14). I said they had opportunity to go back but they chose not to, likewise with us.

Let’s see the grace that God wants us to have. The book of Ephesians you could call *the grace epistle of God to His children*. Paul talks an awful lot about grace in it and I’ve covered that in a couple of sermons. I want to pick up on some of the things that I didn’t do before.

Ephesians 4:22: “That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man... [That’s part of the law of faith—overcoming, believing what God says.] ...which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind... [that’s where God’s Spirit is; that’s what conversion is all about] ...and that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth” (vs 22-24).

In this relationship with God and *grace upon grace upon grace*, each one of us is a special creation of God. God is creating us in His spiritual image. We’re already created physically in His image. But first He wants the character because the eternal life that God is going to give us and the inheritance that we are going to receive requires the righteous character of God free from sin. That’s what we need to work at.

Verse 25: “Therefore, let each one put away lies and speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another. *When* you become angry, do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger; neither give place to the devil. Let the one who stole, steal no more... [v 29]: ...Do not let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth... [In this day and age that’s a real challenge.] ...but that which is good and needful for edification.... [v 30]: ...And grieve not... [do not vex]...the Holy Spirit of God...” (vs 25-30). That is to frustrate. In other words, don’t try and go out and fulfill the will of the flesh and then come back and try and have God sanctify that bad choice. That works against the Holy Spirit. That frustrates the Holy Spirit.

By the way we have a series that I did quite a few years ago entitled, *How to Use God’s Holy Spirit*. Jim and Betty were listening to it for Bible study here some time ago and Jim said we ought to get this ready so we can send it out. *How to Use God’s Holy Spirit*, so it’s ready, three sermons on a CD and transcripts, brand new. I’ll announce a few other things because Jim and Betty don’t have enough to do. The fourth one is *How the Holy Spirit Works*.



Verse 31: “Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice; and be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you” (vs 31-32). Now what do you do? You build on all of that grace.

Ephesians 5:1—perhaps one of the most important verses in the Bible: “Therefore, be imitators of God... [Think of that. The *King James* says ‘followers,’ but this means imitators. How are you to live? The way God wants you to live.] ...as beloved children.... [Loved of God the Father; loved of Jesus Christ] ...and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us... [Notice the high level of using the grace of God to live by.] ...and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, do not permit it even to be named among you... [I think about some of the behavior that was justified. Completely different—right?] ...as is fitting for saints; nor filthiness, nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming; but instead, thanksgiving. For this you know... [here’s a warning]: ...that no fornicator, or unclean person, or covetous *person*, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God” (vs 1-5).

Now then he says this is the way you used to behave, v 8: “For you were once darkness; but now *you are* light in *the* Lord. Walk as children of light, (Because the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and Truth); proving what is well pleasing to the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose *them*” (vs 8-11).

Let’s see how we do this. This is the whole goal of the greater grace of what God is doing right here. Paul says imitate God. Peter says think like God.

1-Peter 1:3: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again... [With the Spirit of begetting from the Father in the spirit of our mind.] ...unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead; unto an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and unfading, **reserved in heaven for us**” (vs 3-4). What did Jesus say? ‘*If I go, I’ll come again, but I’m going to prepare a place for you.*’ Individual place in New Jerusalem for each of us.

Verse 5: “Who *are* being safeguarded by *the* power of God through faith... [That’s grace in action.] ...for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in the last time.”

2-Peter 1:2: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you...” How’s that for grace upon grace?

*Multiplied!* Do your multiplier, double a penny every day for a month and you come out with more than a million dollars at the end.

“...in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. According as His Divine power... [This can only come through grace. There is no law that is going to bring this.] ...all things that *pertain* to life and Godliness, through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; through which He has given to us the greatest... [Not just ordinary promises, not goody-two-shoe promises, not vain and empty hollow thoughts, but the greatest] ...and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in *the* world through lust” (vs 2-4).

Isn’t that something? We are going to partake fully in the Divine nature. We are going to be the sons and daughters of God, meaning we will be *as God is*. Paul wrote that when we are resurrected He is going to transform our vile bodies to be made *like His glorious body*.

Now then he tells us what we need to do. These are the things we need to do in faith. I’ll let you read all of those. If we do, then we have a guarantee of entering into the Kingdom of God. Paul wrote of this in a little different way. Ephesians 3 is one of those chapters in the Bible that is so profound that you need to go back and read it and study it many, many times. As you do, and you go back there, you will see that it means so much more for you.

This tells us what He is going to do in giving us the divine nature. That is not only the divine mind, but the nature. That means character and personality. In order to have that you need to have a body of spirit—correct? Isn’t that what it says there in 1-Cor. 15 that we are going to receive a spiritual body; physical first, then a spiritual body? *Yes!* Notice, this understanding of our purpose and destiny, of *grace upon grace*, Paul also calls grace. So we’re going to finish grace upon grace by going through Ephesians 3.

Ephesians 3:1: “For this cause I, Paul, *am* the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles.” Remember, it doesn’t matter what your circumstances are. God knows them. He’s going to change them all anyway—isn’t He? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 2: “..If indeed you have heard of the ministry of grace of God that was given to me for you.... [that is contained in all the epistles] ...how He made known to me by revelation the mystery... [the secret of God] ...(even as I wrote briefly before, So that when you read *this*, you will be able to comprehend my understanding in the mystery of

Christ). Which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men..." (vs 2-5).

God didn't make this known until Christ came, till the apostles preached. He didn't even reveal it to the apostles until way later in their ministry. He let them

- grow in grace and knowledge
- grow in understanding
- be inspired to write the epistles
- serve the brethren
- pray for them
- travel
- experience

"...as it has now been revealed to His Holy apostles and prophets by *the Spirit*" (v 5). So, God revealed it to *all* the apostles. Peter wrote of it, John wrote of it, Paul wrote of it, Luke wrote of it, Matthew, Mark. Then we have following up on that we have even the Apostle Jude. All the apostles and the prophets. So this would be preached to the whole Church.

It's interesting that this knowledge was given to the whole Church a few years before the destruction of Jerusalem so they could have this hope before then. The world was going to become disintegrated, that is the society they were living in was going to be turned upside down. We're going to be facing that same kind of situation here somewhere down the road sooner or later. This is why we need to have it in our minds.

Verse 6: "That the Gentiles might be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of His promise in Christ through the Gospel, of which I became a servant according to the gift of the grace of God, *which was given to me through the inner working of His power*" (vs 6-7).

Even the preaching and teaching is to be an operation of grace. Notice how he felt after receiving this fantastic revelation, v 8 "To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, was this grace given, that I might preach the gospel among the Gentiles—*even* the unsearchable riches of Christ; and that I might enlighten all... [it is recorded for us that we can be enlightened] *...as to what is the fellowship...* [The fellowship with God the Father, which is a secret.] *...of the mystery that has been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things by Jesus Christ; so that the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known through the Church to the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places, according to His eternal purpose... [it is laid bare as much as could be for us to understand] ...which He has wrought in Christ Jesus our Lord, in Whom we have boldness and *direct* access with confidence through His *very* own faith. So then, I beseech you not to faint at my tribulations for you, which are *working for your glory....* [Count all the difficulties*

you go through in this same way. They are eventually going to work out for the glory of God.] *...For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*" (vs 8-15).

Verse 16: "That He may grant you... [through the grace of God] *...according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man... [that which no one can take from you] ...That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; and that being rooted and grounded in love, you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height, and to know...*" (vs 16-19) the plan of God. *That is the greatest grace!*

Brethren, though it's written here in the book of Ephesians and this book now is nearly 2,000 years old, the understanding of it is for us today. They understood it to the degree that they could then, but now we can understand it to a greater degree.

"...the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge... [here is the end result of *grace upon grace*]: *...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God*" (v 19). This brings us right back to where we started. Of His fullness we have all received and *grace upon grace*.

Now notice this promise. Never get down and discouraged that you forget this promise, v 20: "Now to Him Who is able... [The Greek there is 'dunamis'—*has the power.*] *...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us.*"

Have you ever just thought of something and lo and behold somewhere down the road God answered that thought? Wasn't even a prayer, wasn't even, 'Oh, Lord, this, that or the other.' It was, 'Oh, that would really be nice.' And God answered that! I've had a good number of them. I'm not going to tell you what they are. I'll let you have your own.

Verse 21: "To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generation, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen."

That's what it means *grace upon grace*. I'm sure that there are many other things we could add to it as well, but this is what we need right now. We need to understand what God is doing in our lives. Then we can look at prophecy and see what is happening and have the strength to be able to go through what is coming down. When it comes down, Jesus said it is going to be a time such as not has been since the beginning of the creation of the world.

***We're going to need grace upon grace to see us through that. God will do that for us!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 6:14
- 2) Romans 7:1
- 3) 2-Thessalonians 2:9-14
- 4) Romans 3:24-26, 28-31
- 5) Hebrews 8:6-10
- 6) Hebrews 10:16-23
- 7) Hebrews 4:14-16
- 8) Romans 3:27
- 9) Hebrews 11:1-14
- 10) Ephesians 4:22-32
- 11) Ephesians 5:1-5, 8-11
- 12) 1-Peter 1:3-5
- 13) 2-Peter 1:2-4
- 14) Ephesians 3:1-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 1; 5
- 1-Corinthians 13; 15

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *The Washing of the Water by the Word*
- *How Would You Preach Christ From the Old Testament?*
- *The Keys to Answered Prayer*
- *How to Use the Spirit of God*
- *How the Holy Spirit Works*

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