

Grace Upon Grace II

Fred R. Coulter—June 2, 2012

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services! Before we can go any further we need to find out *who is under grace* and what that means. The first thing we need to find out is: Who is *under law*?

I don't think that we have understood it as well as we ought to. I don't think we understand why it's necessary for it to be grace, under the New Covenant, and why *under law* is the opposite of being *under grace*. Let's let the Bible define what it is to be *under law*.

Romans 7:1: "Are you ignorant, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know law)..." Let's understand something: this right here is law in general. Everything that God does is by law. Everything on earth operates by laws subject to the earth and what God has created here. All the animals, all the birds, all the fish, the water—even the water He gave the decree. 'The ocean will go this far and no further.' All men are judged by law.

Let's see the first definition of what it is to be *under law*. "...that the Law... [This means all of God's Law in relationship to human beings.] ...rules over a man for as long a time as he may live?" (v 1). If the Law rules over you, that means you are *under law*—every human being.

Romans 6:14: "For sin shall not rule over you because **you are not under law, but under grace**.... [What does it mean to be *under law*?] ...What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!**" (vs 14-15). That is one of the most confusing things for those who believe in grace only and no law-keeping. Because it's clearly understood that 'sin is *the transgression of the Law*.' It never dawned on them that God has two categories of law:

1. for His people in the spirit
2. for everyone else

Romans 7:6: "But now we have been released from the Law..." I've got a footnote explaining what this means. In Rom. 7 the word *law* from the Greek 'nomos' is used 23 times. It shows the various kinds of law:

- law in general
- the Law of God
- the law of marriage
- the law of sin and death

All of those are there.

But this 'being released from the Law' doesn't mean that you're no longer obligated to keep the commandments. This means because Christ died

the Jews who want to be converted and God through the body of Christ have been released from the Old Covenant marriage between God and Israel.

Another misnomer is that Protestants believe that the Jews—which is everything going clear back to Adam—which is also not true—is that they receive salvation through law. If they received salvation through law, why can't we today receive salvation through law? The answer is: *they never did receive salvation*, with the exception of the few patriarchs and some of the righteous kings and then all of the prophets of God. None of the rest were given the Holy Spirit.

They were only promised blessings of life if they would obey; curses if they disobeyed. God set before them life and death, blessing and cursing. He commanded them to choose life. *But nowhere does it ever say that they were to receive the Holy Spirit.*

Verse 6: "...because we have died *to that* in which we were held..." In other words, when you are baptized you die to your sins.

- you were held in sins
- you were under law
- you were under judgment

Likewise, Christ died and then that ended the Old Covenant. When He rose from the dead then He was free to begin the New Covenant—not until. God kept His own laws. Marriage is supposed to be between man and woman—husband and wife—till death do you part. So, Christ died! That freed all of the Israelites and the Jews, wherever they are, from the terms of the Old Covenant.

"...*to that* in which we were held so that we might serve in **newness of the spirit**... [a different standard, a higher level] ...and not in *the oldness of the letter*" (v 6).

What does it mean to be *under law*? We're going to see this: *every human being is under law to God* whether they know it or not because God created them.

Romans 3:9: "What then? Are we of ourselves better?... [To this day the Jews haven't understood that, yet.] ...Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—**ALL**—*with* being under sin." Why are all under sin? *Because all have 'the law of sin and death' within them!*

Let's see what human nature really, really is. There are varying degrees of evil. Here is what is in every man and woman from Adam and Eve. It's part of your inheritance. Years ago we were told that if

you would train up your children just right they would be next to perfect and all you had to do was beat the blankity-blank out of them. Did that change their nature? How many kids grew up perfect? *Not one!* Here's why. You see this even in little children. You see it in men and women, young and old.

Mark 7:21: "For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts..." Remember the series I did on *Who Controls Your Mind?* Who comes along and augments those evil thoughts? *The prince of the power of the air!*

Notice the first two: "...adulteries, fornications..." What's the biggest problem of human beings all through history? *Sex problems!* You can read of it in the Old Testament; you can read of it in the New Testament. You can read it in the newspaper, you can see it on television with the reports.

"...murders..." (v 21). Of course, the more that there are adulteries and fornications and all of the crimes that go along with that, the more murders you have.

Verse 22: "Thefts, covetousness..." If you have cable TV and if you have CNBC you watch the programs that they have on *American Greed*. It is amazing what people do. Everybody remembers Bernie Madoff. I think that he pled guilty so no one would kill him, because he really took the money. And if you do it to your fellow Jew... Then there's another one that they have on there where they find out the pedophiles going online to find underage children to have sex with. That's also an eye opener.

"...wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth from within, and *these* defile a man" (vs 22-23). That means they are judged.

Because of sin Paul asked this question: Romans 3:5: "...Is God unrighteous to inflict His wrath? (I am speaking according to man's view.) MAY IT NEVER BE! Otherwise, how shall God judge the world?" (vs 5-6). God judges the world. 'All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.'

How is the world ruled today, spiritually speaking? First of all, Satan the devil is the 'god of this world.' He has his angels that fell with him and they are called demons. Then we have the righteous angels of God who administer the will of God on earth. That's why Paul wrote that the world to come has not been subjected to the angels, but given to the children of God.

Let's look at a couple Scriptures to see how God judges. First of all let's see what kind of men are placed into high positions. You might think about this if you think that elections are going to

change anything. God raises up a nation and puts a nation down; we'll see that. In putting down Judah and sending them into captivity, who did He raise up? *Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonian Kingdom*—correct? This becomes part of the judgment of God, because God is going to judge the world. They are all under sin and they are all under law so God does everything on earth according to His laws, except those who are under grace. Let's get this defined first.

When Nebuchadnezzar had this dream where he was going to lose his sanity for seven years, Daniel came and told him the vision: Daniel 4:17: "This matter is by the decree of the watchers... [the angels of God] ...and the demand by the word of the Holy ones... [The Holy ones are also angels. Remember what happened to the father of John the Baptist, Zacharias, when he didn't believe Gabriel? It says in Heb. 2 that those who disobeyed what the angels were commanded to enforce received stern punishment.] (Here's the reason for this): ...so that the living may know that **the Most High rules in the kingdom of men...**"

He does it through angels; He does it through demons. Notice who you are going to elect. He may be more righteous than the current one, but look at the world leaders. "**...and sets up over it the basest of men**" (v 17).

Let's see another thing concerning God and how He rules the nations. We find that God is continually judging the world, judging the nations, and He does it based upon His laws.

Jeremiah 18:7: "If at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck it up and to pull it down, and to destroy *it*; if that nation, against whom I have spoken, will turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do to them" (vs 7-8). Where do we have an account that that happened? *In the book of Jonah!* Jonah was sent to go to the people of Nineveh and to tell them to repent. Jonah had an argument with God. He said, 'If I go there, they'll repent, so why send me?' And He sent him anyway.

What happened? *They repented!* Even the king on the throne said, 'I decree a fast, sackcloth and ashes, everyone humble themselves, don't even feed and water the animals. Turn from your wickedness and maybe God will turn from His judgment.' Sure enough, what happened? *God withheld His judgment!* Then Jonah complained. So, Jonah sat down under this plant that grew up and had some shade. God was going to teach Jonah a lesson; so here's judgment on Jonah. He woke up and behold a worm had eaten the plant, the leaves had fallen off and there he was in the heat. He virtually said, 'God, why did You do this?' God said, '**To teach you that I'm going to do what I'm**

going to do. So, if they repent, they'll turn. We know in Jer. 5 it talks about where God told Jeremiah, 'You run to and fro in the streets of Jerusalem and see if you can find a man, just one man who is just. If you can find one man, I'll call off the whole captivity.' But he couldn't do it. Sometimes it gets down to one man, as affecting many people.

Remember what happened with God and Abraham when God and the two angels told Abraham, 'We're going down to Sodom and Gomorrah to destroy those cities.' Abraham said, 'Oh, my nephew Lot is down there. Lord, will You destroy it for the sake of fifty who are righteous?' *No!* 'Forty-five?' *No!* He got clear down to ten. Remember when it came to ten, after asking Him all the way down he said, 'Lord, don't be angry. Will you destroy them for ten?' He said *no!* So, God is righteous and just in what He does. But nevertheless if they do evil, then He will judge them.

Verse 9: "And if at any time I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build it and to plant *it*.... [I think that's exactly what we're seeing with China today.] ...If it does evil in My sight... [which they will end up doing] ...that it not obey My voice, then I will repent of the good with which I said I would do them good.... [the warning comes]: ...Now therefore, speak to the men of Judah, and to the people of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the LORD, "Behold, I am forming evil against you, and devising a plan against you. Return now, each one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good"' (vs 9-11). God gave them a chance. God judges nations; He judges individuals.

Let's come back to Romans 3 and we will get a clearer definition of what it means to be *under law*. Everyone is *under sin* because everyone has 'the law of sin and death' in them. That's why it says:

Romans 3:9: "What then? Are we of ourselves better? Not at all! For we have already charged both Jews and Gentiles—**ALL—with being under sin**, Exactly as it is written: 'For there is not a righteous one—not even one!.... [Righteous by what standard? *By the Laws of God!*] ...There is not one who understands... [That's why when you watch the news you get so furious.] ...there is not one who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; together they have *all* become depraved. There is not *even* one who is practicing kindness. No, there is not so much as one! Their throats *are* like an open grave; with their tongues they have used deceit; *the* venom of asps is under their lips, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness; their feet *are* swift to shed blood; destruction and misery *are* in their way; And *the* way of peace they have not known'" (vs 9-17).

Doesn't that describe most of the world? Look at what's happening in America. It's not as bad as other places in the world, but how do you think it's going to get any better? Comparatively saying, 'It's not as bad as,' that's really not the question. The question is: is anything being done to keep it from being worse? *No!*

Verse 18: "'There is no fear of God before their eyes.' Now then, we know that whatever the Law says... [because everyone is *under the Law*] ...it speaks to those who are under law..." (vs 18-19). This can also mean *within law*. Why do I say that? *Because there are people who in the society are considered upstanding, law-abiding citizens*, but do they know about the Sabbath? *No, they are blinded!* They fall into the category in Rom. 2 that they keep part of the Laws of God. They're basically honest; they don't steal. I don't say they won't lie, they may lie a great deal.

You can go into some neighborhoods that are like that and they are quite good neighborhoods. You go into other neighborhoods and if they see that you have anything worthwhile, you become a target. What about those who are *under law*, but are not dedicated sinners. All are *under sin*, but all are not dedicated sinners.

Romans 2:13: "Because the hearers of the Law *are* not just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified." That's why when God is calling someone they come to the conviction of what sin is and they understand what the Law is saying. They see they have been transgressing the Law and they begin to repent and begin to want to do what is right. That must happen before baptism because no one is justified until they are baptized.

Verse 14: "For when *the* Gentiles, which do not have *the Law*... [they were never given the Law] ...practice by nature the things contained in the Law, these who do not have *the Law* are a law unto themselves; who show the work of the Law written in their own hearts, their consciences bearing witness, and their reasonings also, as they accuse or defend one another" (vs 14-15). Is God going to take that into account? *Yes, indeed!* That's why with the Holy Day plans of God we understand about the Last Great Day and the second resurrection.

Paul speaks of it right here in v 16: "In a day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."

That's what it says here, speaks to those who are *under law*. Romans 3:19: "...so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." This guiltiness is by judgment, because the root word is here 'krinos'—which is *to judge*.

So, the whole world is *under law*, **everyone!** This is where grace begins to enter in. What about those who are searching for God? As brought out here a couple of weeks ago, very interesting. When God slew the firstborn, man and beast in Egypt, He knew where everyone was—right? He didn't make a mistake. He didn't kill half firstborn and half second born. You could say that would be unfair. God doesn't make mistakes. How do we come out from under these things?

We're going to see something very important because God is involved in the world with the angels and with the demons and Satan the devil. We also know this concerning Satan the devil and the demons: ***Satan cannot do anything unless he has God's permission; neither can the demons!***

Remember when Jesus was going to cast out the legion of demons out of this man. It's recorded that He talked with the demons and He said, 'What is your name?' They said, 'Legions because we are many.' He was going to cast them out and they said, 'Can you cast out into the herd of swine?' He gave them permission and cast them out into the herd of swine. You might ask, 'Why were there swine in the area of the Holy Land?' Not supposed to eat pork. But who occupied the Holy Land? *The Romans!* They were raising them for the Roman soldiers. So, they lost 2,000 of their hogs and were short on pig meat for a while.

Let's see something else on how God keeps track of the world. What about someone out there who knows absolutely nothing about God, especially in today's world when we have so many Bibles, but knows absolutely nothing about God? One day something real terrible happens to them and they say, 'Oh, God, help me out here. I don't know what to do.'

- Does God know that individual?
- How's God going to find out where he is?
- Is God going to answer that prayer?

Let's see the vehicle that God has that He uses to also keep tabs on the earth and who is seeking Him. Remember, all are under sin and under the Law until a certain point. Let's see where God begins to intervene while they are still under law and still under sin, but wanting to get out from sin and wanting to change their lives.

Revelation 4:5, this is at the throne of God: "And proceeding from the throne were lightnings and thunders and voices, and seven lamps of fire, which are the seven Spirits of God, were burning before the throne." That means God has full control of them.

Revelation 5:6: "Then I saw, and behold, before the throne and the four living creatures, and

before the elders, was standing a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes... [this shows Christ is in control of it] ...which are the seven Spirits of God... [seven eyes are the seven Spirits] ...that are sent into all the earth."

Let's see how this works in relationship to God dealing with the individual. All of us had a moment in our lives—didn't we? You can probably look back and remember the moment that you really got serious with God. Where you said, 'Oh, God.' I don't know what the problem was in your life or how it may have been, but you cried out to Him and God heard you.

Granted this was under the Old Covenant. God answered prayers under the Old Covenant. Can God answer prayers of anyone even though they are not in the Church of God, are not baptized? **Yes!** How would anybody ever get in contact with God if he didn't.

2-Chronicles 15:1: "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa, and said to him, 'Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you while you are with Him. And if you seek Him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you.... [that is an absolutely true statement to this day] ...And for a long time Israel *had been* without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law. And when they turned in their trouble to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them. And in those times *there was* no peace to him who went out, nor to him who came in, but great tumult *was* upon all the inhabitants of the lands. And nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity. But you be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded'" (vs 1-7).

The long and short of it is that they repented, they started keeping the commandments of God, the blessings of God came upon the king, came upon the people, but it didn't last very long. Soon Asa was out there trying to get an alliance with the king of Syria so he could go fight against Israel. Imagine that—Jews against Israelites. He didn't obey God. ***If you are going to trust in God, you've got to rely on God!*** That's the whole lesson here. It doesn't mean there aren't things you can't do to help yourself as well, but don't go out and sin. What was one of the first things that God told the children of Israel when they were coming into the land? ***Don't make an alliance with them!*** How can God bless you when you go to your enemy and seek an alliance with him so you can come against your blood brothers? ***Won't work!***

2-Chronicles 16:7: “And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, ‘Because you have relied on the king of Syria and have not relied on the LORD your God, therefore the army of the king of Syria has escaped out of your hand. Were not the Ethiopians and the Libyans a huge army with many chariots and horsemen?... [It doesn’t matter what the enemy is, if God is with you He can take care of you.] ...Yet, because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand” (vs 7-8).

Here is the key: verse 9 shows what the eyes of God that come right from the throne of God directed by Jesus Christ. Remember, the way the world is run is with God and His angels, Christ also in charge of the angels and God knows what’s going on in all the earth. There are also Satan and the demons.

Verse 9: “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro in all the whole earth...” We can understand that today better than perhaps any other generation because we know the remote things that we have. We even have these pilot-less planes, drones, and they’re going to and fro back across Pakistan and back and forth across Afghanistan looking for targets. We can liken this to God’s *spiritual drones* that see what’s going on, on the earth.

Verse 9: “For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro in all the whole earth to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart *is* perfect toward Him.... [Otherwise, when they see you’re not doing right, then judgment comes.] ...In this you have done foolishly; therefore, from now on you shall have wars.... [Asa fell on his knees, tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes and repented—*NO!*] ...And Asa was angry with the seer and put him in a prison house, for *he was* in a rage against him because of this. And Asa oppressed some of the people at that time” (vs 9-10). Mixed in all of this is free choice.

Let’s see how God answers when people seek Him.

(go to the next track)

Let’s see how God finds those who are seeking Him; He has the means to do so, Matthew 7:7: “**Ask**, and it shall be given to you. **Seek**, and you shall find. **Knock**, and it shall be opened to you.” Remember, these words are all promises. It tells us what to do.

- *Ask*—it shall be given to you
- *Seek*—you shall find
- *Knock*—it shall be opened to you

We will see how God does this. He does it with the seven eyes! Let’s see what else He commands them to do.

But here’s a promise, v 8: “For everyone who asks **receives**, and the one who seeks **finds**, and to the one who knocks **it shall be opened.**” Let’s see how this also agrees with what we have in the book of Isaiah. Here’s another promise of God. Then we will see that not only do they have to seek, but they have to *keep on seeking*. Not only do you have to ask, but you have to *keep on asking*. Not only do you have to knock, you have to *keep on knocking*.

Isaiah 55:1. This talks about receiving the saving knowledge of the Gospel. “Ho, everyone who thirsts... [you have to hunger and thirst after righteousness] ...come to the waters... [waters are likened to the Holy Spirit; the righteous man is like a tree planted by rivers of water (Psa. 1)] ...and he who *has* no money... [you can’t buy it] ...come, buy and eat... [How do you buy? *You give your life!*] ...Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” These are all things concerning the Word. Milk is the milk of the Word. The wine then represents the stronger doctrines.

Verse 2: “Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread? And your labor for *what* never satisfies? Harken diligently to Me, and eat *what is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Bow down your ear, and come to Me; **hear...**” (vs 2-3).

- You have to come and listen to the Word of God
- You have to be willing to let the Word of God correct you
- You have to be willing to believe the Word of God

It says the one who comes to God must believe that He exists, meaning that He is. Whatever it says that He is you must believe that.

“...and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David” (v 3). This covenant then has to be a prophecy of the New Covenant. I’m sure the apostles read this section of Isaiah over and over again when they were preaching the Gospel.

Verse 4: “Behold, I have given Him... [Who is the son of David? *Jesus!*] ...for a witness to the people, a Prince and Commander of people.... [this is also a prophecy of Christ] ...Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know; a nation that did not know you shall run to you because of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you.... [this is talking about calling the Gentiles] ...Seek the LORD while He may be found...” (vs 4-6)—our part. Remember, God told Jeremiah that when these people got so bad in sinning against God and wouldn’t listen He said, ‘Don’t even pray for them for I will not hear.’ So there are times God cannot be found.

“...call upon Him while He is near.... [God is not far away. There are conditions for the calling. Not many people really like the conditions.] ...Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [this is conversion interior, not just exterior] ...and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. ‘For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,’ says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’” (vs 6-9). That’s how He is able to know who is seeking Him. God knows. What does He say about a sparrow when it falls? *He knows it!* What does He say about the hair on your head? *He knows every one!*

Let’s see how the call goes out or the speaking or the preaching of the Gospel. The disciples were told, ‘Go into all the earth and preach the Gospel.’ This is when He spoke to them in parables. He told them that they would understand but most of the people wouldn’t understand.

Matthew 13:14: “And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, ‘In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand; and *in* seeing you shall see, and in no way perceive; for the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them’” (vs 14-15).

It’s not a matter of numbers. It’s a matter of the response to God. Unless you seek God the blinders remain. Unless you are willing to listen to the Word of God you will have no comprehension of it.

Verse 16: “But blessed *are* your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. For truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see what you see, and have not seen; and to hear what you hear, and have not heard. Therefore, hear the parable of the sower... [The parable of sower is about the preaching of the Gospel.] ...When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart. This is the one who was sown by the way” (vs 16-19). The Word of God goes out there and there are those that hear it and doesn’t really mean anything. ‘Oh, well, that’s just another preacher.’

Verse 20: “Now the one who was sown upon the rocky places is the one who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; but *because* he has no root in himself, *he* does not endure; for when

tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, he is quickly offended” (vs 20-21).

That’s the one who comes home and says, ‘I learned this of the Word of God. I found out that our religion is wrong.’ Really? Being whatever it is, Protestant, Catholic, Lutheran, Pentecostal, whatever it is, and they all persecute him and say, ‘If you do not keep Christmas with us, you are disowning us and we will disown you.’ So, he caves in, forgets about what he hears. That’s one example of it.

Verse 22: “And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful.... [Can’t get over needing to get all the money.] (Notice these are categories of people): ...But the one who was sown on good ground, this is the one who hears the Word and understands, who indeed brings forth fruit and produces—one a hundredfold, another sixtyfold *and* another thirtyfold” (vs 22-23).

Let’s see again how this works. The call goes out and then God is looking to who answers the call. If they start seeking God, then something will begin to happen and we will see what that is in just a minute. This is the parable of the wedding feast. Those who were called didn’t pay any attention to it.

Matthew 22:5: “But they paid no attention and went away, one to his farm, and another to his business. And the rest, after seizing his servants, insulted and killed *them*. Now, when the king heard *it*, he became angry; and he sent his armies *and* destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.... [Notice the judgment of God. They’re all under law.] ...Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding feast indeed is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy; therefore, go into the well-traveled highways, and invite all that you find to the wedding feast.’.... [the invitation goes out] ...And after going out into the highways, those servants brought together everyone that they found, both good and evil; and the wedding feast was filled with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, *he* noticed a man there who was not dressed in *proper* attire for *the* wedding feast” (vs 5-11).

What are the wedding garments for the wedding feast and the garments of the saints? *The white, bright linen is the righteousness of the saints!* This shows we’ve got to change. This shows we’ve got to be prepared.

Verse 12: “And he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you enter here without a garment *fit* for *the* wedding feast?’ But he had no answer. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind his hands and feet, *and* take him away, and cast *him* into the outer darkness,’ There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.... [cut off from God] ...For many are called,

but few *are* chosen” (vs 12-14). Why? *Because few repent*, that’s why!

As you are seeking God, learning of His Word and you begin seeing where you need to change, then you really desire more. Something happens that God does because remember those seven eyes going through the whole earth seeking who is trying to seek after God. What happens then? When a person really puts himself or herself to really want to know, then God begins to intervene in their life. This the beginning of the grace of God *with you*. You’re not under the grace of God yet, but this is the beginning of the grace of God *with you*. Why is this by grace? *Because God is acting directly in your life!* Remember, this is the grace of God acting in your life, but you are not yet *under* grace.

This helps answer the question as to why God lets them all be blinded, because their day of salvation will come later. Here’s another thing that’s grace, too. *You can’t do it on your own!* If you seek God and you really don’t mean it, don’t you think that the seven eyes of God will also know that? *Yes, indeed*, because God knows the thoughts of men—doesn’t He? Knows your heart.

John 6:44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him...” God must begin to draw you. How does He begin to draw you? Christ is also involved in this. You can’t come to Christ unless the Father draws you and that is an act of grace to you. Does anyone deserve of their own merit, because they’ve been good, that God has to be involved in their lives? *No!* So, this is the beginning of grace.

Jesus backed it up and said, John 14:6: “I am the **Way**, and the **Truth**, and the **Life**; no one comes to the Father except through Me.” The seven spirits make the first contact with someone. Let’s put that back together with another verse—all three of them together. This is how you study line upon line, precept upon precept, and you add the Scriptures together.

Verse 15: “If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments.... [I still don’t know how the Protestants get around that.] ...And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it; but you know it because it **dwells with you**...” (vs 15-17).

Notice the progression of what we have. You seek God. God responds because the seven eyes are finding out who is seeking Him. Then you’re sincere in it and you want to know more and you really start seeing what you need to do, changing your life. You want the Truth.

Maybe in today’s world you have the Bible and you check out every preacher you can find and begin eliminating those who are telling lies. All of that is part of the process. But the key is here after you seek God and one of the seven spirits come and deal with you. Then you reach a point that God says, ‘All right, I’m am going to have the Holy Spirit be *with* them.’ That’s quite a bit of an increase in God’s involvement—right? The Holy Spirit, being the power of God, is with you.

Here’s what He told the disciples: “...and shall be **within you**” (v 17). That only comes with repentance and baptism. It is the Holy Spirit that comes, and what does it do now? *It continues working!* The Holy Spirit, when it comes to be with you, will be with you and continue to lead you as long *as you keep seeking God and as long as you obey what you learn!* Here it talks about the calling, because the calling then is you answer the call. God is selecting those that the world thinks are the least. When we become spirit beings we are not going to be like we are now.

1-Corinthians 1:26: “For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are wise according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world...” (vs 26-27).

When God chooses you, because you have answered the call, then by the grace of God you have been selected. Now what do you do? We find in Acts 2—now there’s one verse back there where we talk about repent and be baptized. Let’s go back and read the verse after that. Let’s see what He said.

Acts 2:38, Peter said: “Repent and be baptized each one of you... [That’s a key important thing. That’s when you receive the Holy Spirit *within* you instead of just being with you.] ...For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off **as many as the Lord our God may call**” (vs 38-39). You see your calling; you have to answer the call.

When you are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit then this is *the* act that puts you under grace. Let’s come to Romans 6 because this is the covenant between you and God. Once that happens, once you are baptized and once you receive the Spirit of God then God deals with you as His son or daughter and you are under grace.

Under grace has many, many different meanings and facets to it. Let’s see the process here. You are led to repentance because the Spirit of God is with you. There are people who reject it and the Spirit of God is withdrawn. But if you do repent and are baptized you have answered the call and this is the whole demarcation in Rom. 6. That’s why it

talks about *under law* or *under grace*. **You are now in a different category before God!** Doesn't mean you don't have to keep the commandments of God. It means that now you are in a personal relationship with God.

Romans 6:1: "What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** We who died to sin... [That's what happened. You died to sin, a sinful way of life. You died to living in sin.] ...how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we... [he includes himself] ...as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?" (vs 1-3).

You have pledged your life by a symbolic death. That death is joined to the death of Christ. That is the covenant relationship beginning between you and God the Father and Jesus Christ. At that point now, when you receive the Holy Spirit, God is now going to give you the strength and the power through His Spirit to begin to overcome that you could not do while you were in the world. *That's under grace!* There's much more to it.

Verse 4: "Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life." Your life is going to be changed. Instead of wondering what you are going to do, you are going to be wondering:

- How do I live my life the way God wants me to live?
- How then am I going to maintain the relationship that God has put me in?
 - ✓ I was seeking God—*He responded to me*
 - ✓ I answered the call—*He granted me repentance*
 - ✓ I was baptized—*I have received the Holy Spirit*
 - ✓ I am under grace
 - ✓ I am a begotten son or daughter of God

Now your whole category of life is entirely different. Here's the first thing that the Spirit of God does for you:

Verse 4: "Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For is we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection" (vs 4-5). The promise of eternal life is the greatest grace that God can give. He gives it. It is the gift of God—***eternal life, the greatest grace of God!***

Verse 6: "Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of

sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin." For the first time in your life:

- through the power of the Holy Spirit of God within you *which is by God's grace*
- repentance is *by God's grace*
- receiving the blessing of God because He has called you and you answered the call, *is by grace*

Now He gives you the power to do something you did not have before: ***the body of sin, 'the law of sin and death' within you, now can be overcome through the power of the Spirit of God!*** The sin that dwells within is not going to enslave you that you obey it in the lust anymore. You can overcome it; you can put it away. You can quit lying; you can quit stealing; you can quit committing idolatry; you can quit committing adultery; you can quit all the sins and live a righteous way with the Holy Spirit of God, which you could not do before. Christ died to sin; you died with Him.

Verse 11: "In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore... [We have choices to make. God doesn't remove the law of sin and death, He gives the power through His Holy Spirit to overcome it.] ...do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof" (vs 11-12). Which is what you did. Things change by the grace of God. We're going to see how tremendous that this really is. What it really represents.

Verse 13: "Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, **yield...**" All of this is by choice.

- you choose the right
- you choose the good
- you choose to put away sin

"...**yield yourselves** to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. **For sin shall not rule over you...** [as it was in the past] ...because you are not **under law...**" (vs 13-14). When you were baptized you were placed *under grace*. Everything that God requires you to do now is on a higher level, a spiritual level, not doing away with the Laws of God.

"...you are not under law, but under grace.... [then the question comes up]: ...What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!**" (vs 14-15). Now he begins to explain the lifelong battle of overcoming sin. That's why we have the sermon series:

- *The Washing of the Water by the Word*
- *God's Grace and Commandment-Keeping*
- *Grace of God*

We're going to update the booklets that we have on grace so that it's going to reflect the greatest grace of all: ***God's personal involvement in your life, directly!*** Directly from God the Father and Jesus Christ. That's something!

You can never buy it; you can never earn it. It's by God's mercy and grace which is God's kindness and goodness to you. That's why he says, v 16: "Don't you realize that to whom you yield yourselves *as* servants to obey, you are servants of the one you obey, whether *it is* of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." You can't have righteousness without obedience.

Verse 17: "But thanks *be* to God, that you were *the* servants of sin, but you have obeyed from *the* heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you." What does this do? This changes your whole perspective. This changes your whole way of thinking, your whole way of living.

Verse 18: "And having been delivered from sin, you became *the* servants of righteousness." That means you are seeking:

- the *will* of God
- the *Truth of God*
- the *commandments* of God
- the *love* of God
- the *character* of God

—all of these things!

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith... [because you believe God, were baptized, received the Holy Spirit] ...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith in this grace..." (vs 1-2). What is this access that you did not have before?

"...this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in the hope of *the* glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance. 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 2-5). ***That is the grace of God!***

What does this mean? We know it's only the earnest, only the down payment. This gives us direct access to God the Father and Jesus Christ in heaven above. Here is what has been given and then we will see our relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. We are now the begotten sons and daughters of God the Father. He called us and gave us His Spirit because He loves us. We return that love to God in fellowship. We stand in the grace and then God gives the greater grace to us as we go along. We have our part, but God has His part.

Here is God's desire, 2-Peter 1:3: "According as His Divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and Godliness..." Think about that a minute!

- understanding about life: where we are going, what we're doing
- understanding about God
- understanding about His Holy Spirit
- understanding His Word

—all of this is *grace*.

"...through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of *the* Divine nature... [become as God is] ...having escaped the corruption *that is in the* world through lust" (vs 3-4).

This the goal; this is where we're going. 1-Peter 1 gives us more of what we need to do, but let's see what it is with the Spirit being within us. Think of that! God has sent the earnest of the promise of eternal life through the Holy Spirit ***to be in our minds!*** That is what helps us overcome human nature. Let's see what it is. This shows part of the work we are to do, but I want to focus on what comes after that.

1-Corinthians 3:11 "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble" (vs 11-12). You have good works, consistent works, spiritual works, or you are lackadaisical.

Here is the thing that's important where he says here, v 16: "Don't you understand that you are God's temple... [What a fantastic grace and blessing that is, directly from God. ***You are God's temple!***] ...and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling ***in you?***" What does that give us?

This gives us something that the world cannot have. You cannot have this without the Spirit of God and you cannot have this without grace. Unfortunately too many of even the Churches of God believe that grace is only the forgiveness of sin. That is a part of grace, but that's like saying, 'Look at this house,' and you're holding in your hand a brick, and the person says, 'That's a brick.' *This is a house.* He says, 'It's a brick!'

To understand the grace of God puts us in a fantastic relationship, just as the brick is not the house. Having the Spirit of God and access to God the Father through prayer, through study, through crying out to God, notice what it does.

1-John 1:3: “That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship...” Everything changes. Christ is *in* you; the Father is *in* you through the power of the Holy Spirit. ‘**We** will come and dwell **in you**’ (John 14). The Father through the begetting and the Son through the mind of Christ.

“...indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son, Jesus Christ” (v 3). That is tremendous grace—fellowship with God. You can pray to God at any time. Your prayers go right up to the throne room of God. You can study the Word of God. This tells you how to live. This tells you how to think. This tells you how you can have that relationship with God. This is the fellowship and it’s all based on the love of God.

This is all a part of grace. There are many facets of it and in the booklets that we have concerning grace it explains all of it and gets into more detail. But what I want to bring to you is that *every aspect of your relationship with God is grace upon grace upon grace*:

- love
- mercy
- forgiveness
- fellowship
- prayer
- understanding the Word of God
- protection of God
- the ability to develop the mind of Christ
- the ability to escape the carnal nature and to be imbued with the Divine nature

All of that is the greatest grace of God in this life. And the greatest one is going to be at the resurrection. Can you imagine what a glorious thing that is going to be!

1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be’ but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is” (vs 1-2).

This is not the full meaning of the grace of God. There are many other aspects to it:

- We’re *called* by grace
- We’re *sanctified* by grace
- We’re *forgiven* by grace
- We *stand* in the grace of God

All of these are because God is directly intervening in our lives and has given us His Holy Spirit that He and Christ are dwelling *in* us. We are *the temple of God!*

Couple that with the love of God and put that all together and that shows you what God is doing in your life. *This helps us understand more about grace upon grace!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 7:1
- 2) Romans 6:14-15
- 3) Romans 7:6
- 4) Romans 3:9
- 5) Mark 7:21-23
- 6) Romans 3:5-6
- 7) Daniel 4:17
- 8) Jeremiah 18:7-11
- 9) Romans 3:9-19
- 10) Romans 2:13-16
- 11) Romans 3:19
- 12) Revelation 4:5
- 13) Revelation 5:6
- 14) 2-Chronicles 15:1-7
- 15) 2-Chronicles 16:7-10
- 16) Matthew 7:7-8
- 17) Isaiah 55:1-9
- 18) Matthew 13:14-23
- 19) Matthew 22:5-14
- 20) John 6:44
- 21) John 14:6, 15-17
- 22) 1-Corinthians 1:26-27
- 23) Acts 2:38-39
- 24) Romans 6:1-6, 11-18
- 25) Romans 5:1-5
- 26) 2-Peter 1:3-4
- 27) 1-Corinthians 3:11-12, 16
- 28) 1-John 1:3
- 29) 1-John 3:1-2

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Hebrews 2
- Jeremiah 5
- Psalm 1

Also referenced: Sermon Series:

- *Who Controls Your Mind?*
- *The Washing of the Water by the Word*
- *God’s Grace and Commandment-Keeping*
- *Grace of God*

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