

Favor or Grace

Fred R. Coulter—August 15, 2015

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services! With so many things going wrong, I like to try and keep us focused on God and His way so that we can see the bigger picture all the way around. There are a lot of things happening, a lot of difficulties coming around.

Remember when Jesus said in Matt. 24 that if He didn't return, things would get so bad that there would be 'no flesh saved alive.' That's human flesh, animal flesh, fish flesh, the whole thing. In other words, the destruction of the earth. So, I'm going to give a sermon on that because men now are right at the verge of that. That will make atomic and hydrogen bombs look like artillery shells of WWI. I'm going to take my time to get it all together, because it's going to be quite a thing.

Today we're going to talk about the grace of God again. I've been having a little e-mail communication a couple of times with a man who says that the Greek word 'charis' only means *favor* and that the word *grace* was not in the English language until about 600 years ago. When did they really start getting into the Bible in English? *About 600 years ago!* Why did they not translate it *favor* everywhere the word 'charis' or 'charitos,' when you find it in the Greek? *We will see!*

Favor, in the English language today, does not convey the overall meaning of 'charis,' in relationship to what God is doing. If I say, 'Jonathan, I'll do you a favor.' *Oh, what is that?* 'I'll pick up your mail while you're gone on vacation.' That's a favor.

However, *grace* covers a whole lot more. ***Grace is the whole umbrella of our relationship with God and His with us!*** It can also, between men, mean good will or a favor. Let's look at a couple of those first.

Grace, as applied to what God is doing with us, covers so much more. It will be:

- a state of grace
- a store of grace
- a work of grace
- a deed of grace
- all grace

Acts 24:27: "But at the end of two years, Felix was succeeded *as governor* by Porcius Festus; and desiring to gain **favor** for himself with the Jews..." To put *grace* there would overload it. *Favor* is exactly what it means here, but to say that through God's grace we have our sins forgiven, that's a favor from God. See how weak that is,

because grace encompasses the action of God in many spiritual levels.

Acts 25:9: "But Festus, desiring to obtain favor with the Jews, asked Paul *and* said, 'Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem to be judged before me there concerning these things?'" He said no because he knew that he would be ambushed and killed.

Let's see how Paul uses this in a way of something having to do with Paul's coming to them:

1-Corinthians 1:15: "And with this confidence I had previously planned to come to you so that you might have a second benefit"—the benefit of his teaching and preaching. It can be benefit or good will, those things in relationship to men. That's why you can have those different translations from the same word.

1-Timothy 1:12: "And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, Who has empowered me, that He counted me faithful, putting *me* into the ministry, who was previously **a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person**; but I obtained mercy because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with *the* faith and love that *is* in Christ Jesus" (vs 12-14).

We have to analyze this whole thing here. Look at what God's grace accomplished: covered his sin as a "...**blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent person**; but **I obtained mercy**..." That comes from God's grace, "...because I did *it* ignorantly.... But the grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly..." So grace works:

- with love
- with faith
- with mercy

It is the grace of God is like a great umbrella under which we stand and live.

So, the difference with just a favor that someone will do for you, or even a gift, because 'charisma' means a spiritual gift.

2-Timothy 1:3: "I am grateful to God—Whom I have been serving from *the days of my* forefathers with a pure conscience—because I never fail to remember you in my supplications night and day. *As* I recall your tears, *I am* longing to see you, so that I may be filled with joy... [in this case it is *joy*] ...when I remember the unfeigned faith *that is* in you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice—and I am convinced that *it dwells* in you also" (vs 3-5).

All of those things put together help us understand about *grace*. Let's look at the birth of John the Baptist and we will notice what Gabriel said to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist. It's very interesting here when you understand this.

This is why, and we have Appendix, E (*The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*) *When Was Jesus Christ Born?* You can go through and prove that. By the way, Jonathan Cahn is incorrect in saying that Jesus was born in the spring. If He were born in the spring He could not have begun His ministry on the Day of Atonement.

Sidebar on the beginning and ending of Jesus' ministry: In 26_{A.D.} the Day of Atonement was the first day of the Jubilee. It also was on a Wednesday. He fasted and was tempted by the devil forty days and forty nights.

When Christ died, what day of the week was it on? *A Wednesday!* So, Jesus in the flesh began His ministry on a Wednesday, and He finished His ministry in the flesh on a Wednesday. Then He was in the grave three days and three nights. How many days was He with His apostles after that? *Forty days!* He started out with forty days and He ended up with forty days.

You see a lot of these parallels that go along with these things. There are some other things from the Old Testament, which if you don't read the Old Testament you don't know what it's saying.

Luke 1:5: "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest of the course of Abijah..." What does that mean? If you know nothing about how David set up the temple and set up the priest courses... David set it up with 24 courses of priests to work through the year. The first course began the first full week in Nisan. Then every feast—like with the Passover and Pentecost, and so forth—all the priests would be there. They would begin serving at noon on the Sabbath and end at noon the next Sabbath.

That's interesting because they couldn't perform a whole day's work on the Sabbath. So God split it between the ending of the old course and the beginning of the new course. The eighth course then, turned out to be weeks 9-10. The middle day of that course was Pentecost.

You don't know any of this unless you have the Calculated Hebrew Calendar and you know how David divided up the priesthood. He also divided up the army in twenty-four courses. They would come in and they would work. All of this was designed by God; these were all instructions by God.

What do you see in Rev. 4? 13 elders? *No, 24!* Interesting, that followed all the way through.

This had to be during the time when Pentecost was there. Of course, then we'll bypass some of the Scriptures. They were old. Isn't it interesting? In this case, God uses an old man and an old woman to produce a physical child. They were barren and couldn't have any children. That harkens back to Abraham and Sarah and Isaac.

So, Zacharias was in the priestly service and he was to burn incense; it was at the hour of prayer (v 10).

Verse 11: "Then an angel of *the* Lord appeared..." We're going to find out that's Gabriel. Who gave Daniel the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah and the rebuilding of the temple? *Gabriel!* We will see with the pattern of things here that Gabriel was probably in charge of all of the things pertaining to the coming of Christ. He began to fulfill the prophecy that 'I will send My messenger before Me and the Lord shall suddenly come to His temple.' That happened!

When did He suddenly come to His temple? *John 2!* What did He do? He went in there and drove out the animals, drove out the money changers, turned the tables over and strew their money all over the place.

Verse 11: "Then an angel of *the* Lord appeared to him, standing at *the* right side of the altar of incense. And when he saw *the* angel, Zacharias was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, 'Fear not, Zacharias, because your supplication has been heard; and your wife Elizabeth shall bear a son to you, and you shall call his name John. And he shall be a joy and exultation to you; and many shall rejoice at his birth'" (vs 11-14).

Why did God do it the way He did it? *People that old don't have children!* The community of the priests all knew this. They didn't have telephones, but they had wagging tongues and a lot of birds, a little bird flying around.

Verse 15: "For he shall be great before the Lord. And he shall never drink wine or strong drink in any form, but he shall be filled with *the* Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to *the* Lord their God. And he shall go before Him [Christ] in *the* spirit and power of Elijah..." (vs 15-17).

Sidebar on Elijah: There was the prophet Elijah. Jesus said that John was the second Elijah (Matt. 17) and there is a third Elijah coming (Mal. 4)

Instead of saying, 'Thank you, Lord, yes, I'm thrilled at the message that you have given me,' because remember, whatever God says is true, it will happen. So he didn't do it.

Verse 18: “Then Zacharias said to the angel, ‘By what *means* shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife *is* advanced in years.’ And the angel answered *and* said to him, ‘I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God; and I was sent to speak to you, and to announce this good news to you. But behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day in which these things shall take place, because you did not believe my words, which shall be fulfilled in their time’” (vs 18-20).

You know the rest of the story. If it’s really an angel of God, you better believe what he says.

I want you to see the difference between what was spoken to Zacharias and what was spoken to Mary. The word ‘charis,’ was not used in the message given to Zacharias. But the word ‘charis’ *or* *grace* is used here. The *King James* translates that *favor*, but the Greek is ‘charis’ and that means more than just favor, because this is an astonishing, one-time miracle. The Greek word for *something one time* is ‘hapax legomenon’—never used again.

Verse 26: “And in the sixth month *of her pregnancy...*”—of Elizabeth. This tells us about the time when the impregnation from the Father occurred then. If we know the weeks that Zacharias worked at the priest duties at the temple, we know when he left, then we can get a two-week period when his wife probably got pregnant. From that we can put everything into a timeframe, as I have in the appendix *When Was Jesus Christ Born?*

“...the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name *was* Joseph, of the lineage of David’; and the name of the virgin *was* Mary. And after coming to her, the angel said, ‘Hail, you who are **highly favored!**....’” (vs 26-28) We will see *grace* is used here. This comes from ‘charis,’ too.

“...The Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women.’.... [among all other women] ...But when she saw *him*, she was *greatly* perplexed at his message, and was considering what kind of salutation this might be. Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found **grace**... [‘charis’] ...with God’” (vs 28-30).

Something that has never happened before and will never happen again. That’s more than just a favor, wouldn’t you say?

Verse 31: “And behold, you shall conceive in *your* womb and give birth to a son; and you shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called *the* Son of *the* Highest [God the Father] and *the* Lord God shall give Him the throne of David, His forefather; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob into the ages, and of His kingdom there shall

be no end.’.... [Isa. 9] ...But Mary said to the angel, ‘How shall this be... [notice she was not rebuked] ...since I have not had sexual relations with a man?’ And the angel answered *and* said to her, ‘*The* Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and *the* power of *the* Highest... [the One of Elohim Who became Jesus Christ had to be reduced to a pinprick of life] ...and for this reason, the Holy One being begotten in you...’” (vs 31-35).

This is interesting in the Greek because it is present-tense passive, which means it was being accomplished while he was speaking:

“...the Holy One being begotten in you shall be called *the* Son of God” (v 35). Then he mentions your kinswoman. Elizabeth was old, Mary was young. Elizabeth had to be Mary’s aunt.

John brings out many different things. Jesus probably did not reveal this to the disciples. I don’t know if He revealed it during the forty days and forty nights He was with them after He was raised from the dead, but you don’t find this until later in Paul’s writings. Why is that?

John 16:12: “I have yet many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear them now. However, when that one has come, *even* the Spirit of the Truth, it will lead you into all Truth... [necessary for salvation] ...because it shall not speak from itself, but whatever it shall hear, it shall speak. And it shall disclose to you the things to come” (vs 12-13).

As I’m about ready to write in the book *Why Were You Born?* they did not have the revelation that we would become the children of God with the same existence as God, until it was revealed in about the early 60s_{A.D.} If you analyze it carefully, you can probably figure that this was added a little later after he had written the first account.

John 1 tells us a lot about the grace of God and why ‘charis’—because you go through here and read it—*grace* is a better word than *favor*.

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word... [Greek for that is ‘ho Logos’] ...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” You can’t get anything more plain than that.

Verse 2: “He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him” (vs 2-3). If you believe in God, then you have to believe that there can’t be any such thing as theistic evolution.

That’s like they do on Fox News. It gets very exasperating sometimes, ‘fair and balanced.’ They have someone bring something that is good and rational. Then they have some idiot give their

opinion of it and it's just terrible. What they should do is seek for truth, but people can't handle that.

Verse 4: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men."

Verse 14: "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacle among us... [dwelt temporarily] ...(and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and Truth."

What sense would it make with 'full of favor'? *Full of grace* because every attribute about Jesus Christ:

- everything that He became
- everything that He stood for
- everything that He did

—that all was an act of grace of God.

"...full of grace and Truth. John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, 'This was He of Whom I said, 'He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace." (vs 14-16)—not favor, but "...grace upon grace..." because it covers so much.

Verse 17: "For the Law was given through Moses, *and* the grace and the Truth came through Jesus Christ."

We'll look at some of these things, because this really becomes very important for us to understand. Let's look at *standing under grace*. Paul did more teaching concerning the grace of God than any of the others. Notice all the things that grace encompasses:

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith... [we are justified by grace and faith] ...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which **we stand**..." (vs 1-2).

So, we're *standing in this grace* and the blessing of God is over us. We'll see in Rom 6 we are *under grace*, so we are *standing in grace*, but *under 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).

All of these things that are being talked about here are covered in the terms 'standing in,' or 'under grace.' I hope we can all learn to be rejoicing or

boasting—maybe not rejoicing, but boasting—in tribulation. That's hard to do and you need the grace of God and the Spirit of God to do that.

Let's see how the grace of God works, Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the **riches of His kindness** and **forbearance** and **longsuffering**, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" That is an action of grace. Notice what is involved:

- the *riches of His kindness*, which comes from grace
- *forbearance*, giving us time to come to repentance
- *longsuffering*

How long did He put up with the ten tribes of Israel before He sent them off into captivity? *232 years!* How long with Judah? *Another 120 years!*

"...not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?" (v 4). In other words, if you are not yielding to God, or you forget what the grace of God is all about and you go along judging everybody harshly, look out! You're forgetting about the repentance that God led you to. So that's all included in grace.

After you're led to repentance, Romans 3:21: "But now, *the* righteousness of God..."—which then is the justification God gives to make us righteous. The word is spelled almost identical to 'diatheke,' which then is *justification*.

"...*that is separate from law* has been revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets; even *the* righteousness of God *that is* through *the* faith of Jesus Christ, toward all and upon all those who believe; for there is no difference" (vs 21-22).

This was a tremendous change in God dealing with other nations. All from the time of Abraham, all the way down through to the coming of Christ, God never dealt with any other people except the children of Abraham, the children of Israel, the twelve tribes. Why? Even though He forgave the sins of Nineveh—remember that, the book of Jonah—He never dealt with another nation. Why? *Because He was married to Israel in the covenant that He made with them!*

Look at it this way. If He had dealt with another nation in the same way and made a covenant with another nation in the same way He did with Israel, He would be committing adultery. God is the One Who gave the commandment, 'You shall not commit adultery,' and God lives by His own laws.

Sidebar: This is why Acts 10-11 Cornelius and all of those who were listening received the Holy Spirit before they were baptized? Why did God

do that? *Because He had to break the Law of Judaism*, which says, ‘You’re not even to keep company with one of another nation or go into their house, even eat with them. Don’t even be with them.’ God had to perform a miracle to show Peter, ‘You don’t do that.’ And that God was going to give the Holy Spirit to them. Now the New Covenant reached out to *all* people, whereas the Old Covenant was only to Israel and Judah.

Verse 23: “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” What are the wages of sin? *Death!* What did Christ take upon Himself? *The sins of the whole world!* Why? *Because He was the One Who created Adam and Eve!* He was the one Who judged them and because of the sin of Adam, death passed into all mankind.

What Christ did was judge Himself with the same judgment as a human being that He judged Adam and Eve. Since He did not sin, even though He still had ‘the law of sin and death’ within Him, His death would cover the sins of all who would repent. Is not the physical life of the Creator God worth more than all the physical lives of all human beings? *Yes, indeed!* That’s why it’s Christ. Can’t be any other way.

‘And after you have paid \$10,000, your first set of sins will be forgiven and after you have offered so many sacrifices, your second set of sins will be forgiven. We’ve got them all layered out, chapter, verse and book. Your whole life.’ (said facetiously)

Verse 24: “**But are being justified freely...** [Christ paid the penalty] **...by His grace...**” That’s why the word *grace* has to be here. You can’t say ‘by His favor.’ That’s too weak.

...through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; Whom God has openly manifested... [everybody knew about the death of Christ] *...to be a propitiation through faith...*” (vs 24-25). Propitiation means *continuous source of forgiveness and atonement*. It’s continual, because it comes from God, Who is eternal. But you have to have the belief in God.

“...through faith in His blood, order to demonstrate His righteousness... [justification] ...in respect to the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; *yes*, to publicly declare His righteousness in the present time, that He might be just, and the one Who justifies the one who is of *the* faith of Jesus” (vs 25-26).

All comes from God! The graciousness of God draws us, leads us to repentance, and *the greatest grace of all is having the Holy Spirit*. Think about that! Would you just call that a favor? ‘Oh, I’d like to do you a favor.’ That kind of puts it like in, ‘Here’s a \$1,000 for you.’

Verse 27: “Therefore, where *is* boasting?... [gone] ...It is excluded. Through what law? *The law of works?* By no means! Rather, *it is* through a law of faith.” Law, here, means there is a set way of faith to work in having your sins forgiven:

- you believe in Jesus Christ
- you repent of your sins
- God’s Spirit is there leading you

That’s the law that God set. No one can come any other way. Jesus said He was *the* Door. Anybody else has it any other way is a thief and a robber.

Verse 28: “Consequently, we reckon that a man is justified by faith, separate from works of law.” This does not mean there is no law-keeping involved. Rather, the law-keeping that God has given us is higher. We’re not just to watch out outward behavior. Yes, we need to do that, as well, but we need to watch the motivation and thoughts *within*. That’s what God is developing within us—the mind of Christ. Now if that’s not the grace of God...

Verse 29: “*Is He* the God of the Jews only?... [the Jews think so] ...*Is He* not also *the* God of *the* Gentiles?... [A Jew would say, ‘How could that be?’] ...YES! *He is* also God of *the* Gentiles since *it is* indeed one God Who will justify *the* circumcision... [the Jews] ...by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. Are we, then, abolishing Law through faith? MAY IT NEVER BE! Rather, we are establishing Law” (vs 29-31).

Why? *Because you put it on a spiritual standard through grace!* That’s why!

(go to the next track)

The word *favor* today, in English, does not carry the substance in meaning of the word *grace*. William Tyndale was the first one to translate directly from the Greek into English. The word *grace* is the word that he used and he is called the father of the English language. So, it is more likely that *grace* is a transliteration of the word ‘charis.’

When we are baptized, we are conjoined to the death of Christ.

- Is that not an act of grace?
- Profound grace?
- To be joined to the death of Christ for the forgiveness of your sins?

That is something! That’s why receiving the Holy Spirit, coming up out of the watery grave, and so forth, is so important.

Romans 6:11: “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, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by

obeying it in the lusts thereof” (vs 11-12). That tells us a lot. You think about that verse. What ruled our lives before repentance and forgiveness? *Sin, deceit!* That’s why we have to have our minds cleaned up and that’s a process.

Verse 13: “Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.” That’s quite a transformation—isn’t it? That’s why it takes the Spirit of God. That is because of:

- God’s grace
- God’s mercy
- God’s love

All of this combined together *under the grace of God!*

Verse 14: “For sin shall not rule over you...” because of the Spirit of God, because of being able to bring every thought into captivity. You put down the temptations as they come, rather than going through and sinning. We do sin, because of the weakness of the flesh. That is true, but we need to exercise the Spirit of God to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Christ’s obedience produced true righteousness without sin. In order to do this, *this is part of the grace of God.*

Verse 14: “For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law, **but under grace**.... [you can’t receive the Spirit of God unless you’re under grace] ...What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? **MAY IT NEVER BE!**” (vs 14-15).

Now then, the whole thing of growing and changing and overcoming becomes really, really important. Yielding to God becomes all that much more profound. That’s why, you look out at this world, and I look at all of these candidates and politically you can say, ‘Yeah, that’s right. Yeah, that’s right.’ However, unless there is a change in people to quit breaking the laws of God...

How do you think it would go over if you had one of these important people ask you, could ask anyone who knows the Truth: How would you solve the problems of America? *I’d begin with the Ten Commandments!*

Since the first four are pretty hard to take, we’ll come back to those later, but let’s start with the last five. ***Should not murder!*** If black lives matter, why not enforce that? If white lives matter, why not enforce that? ***By choice!*** Don’t kill; don’t murder. How about getting rid of abortion? You can solve that by the next commandment: ***You shall not commit adultery!*** Because all abortions are the result of adultery.

Then what’s the next one? ***You shall not steal!*** Let’s start this enforced right on Wall Street. ***No stealing,*** coupled with the next one:

Don’t lie! No false advertising. No hidden clauses. God says just weights and just balance. Which ties into the next one: ***You shall not covet!***

First operation would be, everybody get lined up with these in the letter of the law. That would put a lot of police out of business. Put a lot of locksmiths out of business.

Then you can say, ‘All right, after everyone has learned this and the majority of people are keeping it, now, we’ll go back to commandment #1, ***the True God!*** Commandment #2 requires action. ***Destroy every idol in every church and every meeting place and every religion!*** There will be no other religions but the true worship of God—period! ***No more false teachings in the name of God, because that’s taking God’s name in vain!***

Everybody’s going to ***keep the Sabbath!*** No more Friday night games, no more Saturday games. Everything is going to be on a different day.

- everybody will go to church
- everybody will study the Word of God
- everybody will have a Bible.
- everybody will read it so that they can keep their practice of doing God’s way.

Now how do you think that would go?

Then all the teenagers, you’re going to ***honor your father and mother!*** That’s why ***political solutions can never solve spiritual problems!*** That’s why Christ must return and destroy it. That’s why we’re under grace. ***God has called us to be trained to put an end to it under Christ!*** That’s something to always keep in mind.

Think you can vote for this guy? this woman? whatever it is? ***No!*** The whole system is completely out of whack.

Let’s see some more about the grace of God. Being under grace means ***your whole relationship with God!*** Every benefit that you get from God is grace upon grace upon grace upon grace. Just like understanding the Bible:

- How do you understand the Bible? ***Line upon line, line upon line, etc.!***
- How do you grow in grace and knowledge as Peter said? ***With grace upon grace and knowledge upon knowledge, growing in it!***

We’re preparing for eternal life, because it’s only going to take eternal beings to solve the problems of the world.

It would help a great deal just to have a decent society, if everyone would live in the letter of the Law. How long do you think that would work? You couldn't even get them to start it. It's hard enough to get a whole family keeping the laws of God, let alone, say, a whole block in a city and a community within a city, then the whole city. Think of what that would be. They would have to go back and repent first. So that's why we've been called.

Let's see how Peter talks about this. He talks about the grace of God. This is why we have the introductions here, the way that they are. I think if you read all the way through 1st & 2nd Peter, you're going to find it agrees 100% with what Paul wrote.

1-Peter 1:1: "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to *the elect* strangers..." That means selected. It talks about those who return with Christ as *called, chosen, and faithful*. 'Being chosen' is *selected*. The word 'elect' means *selected*. This had to be written after the Apostle Paul was out of the scene, because this is in Asia Minor.

"...scattered in Pontus, Galatia... [Who wrote the book to Galatia? *Paul!*] ...Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia" (v 1). That's all of what is modern-day Turkey today.

Verse 2: "*Who have been chosen* according to *the* predetermined knowledge of God *the* Father, by sanctification... [part of grace] ...through *the* Spirit... [you're made Holy with the Holy Spirit of God within you] ...unto... [Doing away with the law? *No!*] ...unto obedience... [in the Spirit] ...and sprinkling of *the* blood of Jesus Christ: **Grace and peace** be multiplied to you."

Favor, in my opinion, would fall totally flat. Grace and peace be multiplied to you. Grace upon grace, that's what John wrote of, didn't he? *Yes!* That's a continuous operation, grace upon grace. Multiplied to you. This is explaining it in just a little different way.

Verse 3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who, according to His abundant mercy, has begotten us again..." The Greek there is 'ano gennesas,' which means *begotten again*. You were born in the flesh, because you were begotten in the flesh. That's your first begettal. When you receive the Holy Spirit, you're begotten again by the Spirit from the Father, so begotten again. Just like you were born in the flesh, you will be born again at the resurrection. Parallel is exactly perfect. Flesh/spirit.

- God made us to need Him
- God made us to need His laws
- God made us to need His Spirit

Since the world doesn't want it, God reaches down and chooses us, the weak of the world.

- we answer the call
- we receive the Spirit of God
- we are begotten again

"...has begotten us again unto a living hope through *the* resurrection of Jesus Christ from *the* dead" (v 3). That's something! Only one to live from the dead. That's why in Rev. 1 He says, 'I was dead, yet, I'm alive evermore.' And Christ says, 'I have the keys of the grave and of death.' Only He can undo it.

Where are all the spirits of men kept? *Somewhere close to the altar of God!* I'm sure there are three sections to it:

1. for the first resurrection
2. for the second resurrection
3. for the third resurrection

It says all will be made alive, not just some, but *all*; each one in his own order. If you belong to Christ, you are of the order of the first resurrection. If you've lived a life and haven't committed the unpardonable sin, but were never converted, never heard about the Word of God—what if you were some native a thousand years ago, living in the jungles of the Amazon Basin, knowing nothing about God. God cut you off. God let you go. You haven't committed the unpardonable sin. That spirit, along with the spirits of all others in that category, and I fully believe those of who have been aborted; all you need is the genes and once they're brought together, God can create from that.

Verse 4: "Unto an inheritance incorruptible... [won't rot, won't get old] ...and undefiled and unfading, reserved in heaven for us... [when we're resurrected, we'll receive it] ...who *are* being **safeguarded by the power of God**..." (vs 4-5).

We have to have our choices. Yes, there are choices we have to make. Isn't that something? "...**safeguarded by the power of God**..." Is that not part of the grace of God? *Yes, indeed!* Through faith we have to believe.

"...for salvation *that is* ready to be revealed in *the* last time" (v 5). Unless you know the things in the book of Revelation, especially Rev. 20, about the resurrection and then the rest of the dead living again after the thousand years are over, you wouldn't know what the time table would be here. That wasn't revealed until it was given to John and that was just before he died.

But what I want you to understand here is how he is teaching. What he is saying has to do with the overall ***standing in the grace of God!*** All of these blessings come from the grace of God.

Verse 6: “In this you yourselves greatly rejoice; though for the present, if it is necessary, you are in distress for a little while by various trials”—some longer, some shorter; some more severe, some not so severe.

Verse 7: “In order that the proving of your faith...” God wants to know by our own free choice:

- Do we really believe in Him?
- Do we really trust Him?
- Are we going to rely upon Him?

“...which is much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is being tested by fire... [sometimes you have really difficult trials] ...may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ” (v 7).

It’s going to be like you wake up from a sound sleep. BANG! All of sudden you’re conscious again. Here you are, angel carrying you up to the Sea of Glass. You have a little conversation going up. ‘How long have I been in the ground?’ *Let’s see now, about 500 years!* ‘Really, has it been that long?’ *Yes, and I was your guardian angel and I protected you. Remember when this happened? ‘Yeah.’ Well, I kept you from being smashed!*

Then we get up on the Sea of Glass and there are all of them, from Abel, all the way down to the last two witnesses; all of us there. That’s going to be something! But we have to have our faith proved. Why? *Because God is not going to have any more rebellion!* He is not going to have anymore Satan the devils.

Notice the faith we need to have, v 8: “Whom [Christ] not having seen...” Peter saw Christ, but the rest of them didn’t. All of the apostles and 500 brethren after He was resurrected, etc. But I mean virtually from the time of the destruction of the temple and especially after the death of John, they didn’t see.

“...you love...” because you know what He’s done for you. He’s your High Priest; He’s your Intercessor; He’s your Mediator right now.

“...in Whom, *though* at the present time you do not see Him, you believe, *and* rejoice with **unspeakable joy**... [another word very akin to ‘charis’; it is ‘chara’] ...and filled with glory, *and* are receiving the end of your faith—*even* the salvation of *your* souls’; concerning which salvation the prophets who prophesied of the grace *that would come* to you have diligently searched out and intently inquired” (vs 8-10). They weren’t told what it’s going to be.

Always remember Daniel. He was given all these tremendous prophecies about everything leading to the end of the world. Then he said, “When

is it going to be?’ *He was told, ‘Go your way, Daniel, for its sealed until the time of the end! You’re not going to know.’* Lord, I gave all of them; how about a clue? *No!* ‘Just a little hint?’ *No, I’ll give you one. The wise shall understand, but none of the wicked will. How’s that?*

Verse 11: “Searching into what way and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ *which was* in them was indicating, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and these glories that would follow.”

I imagine that David, many times, would think about that: ‘Pierce My hands; pierce My feet; look down, count all My bones’ (Psa. 22). I guess he wondered what that is going to be. Maybe God did tell him it would have to do with the coming of the Messiah. But for him to go through and give all those painful words that must have been something!

Verse 12: “To whom it was revealed that, not for themselves, but to us they were ministering these things, which now have been announced to you by those who have preached the Gospel to you by *the* Holy Spirit, sent from heaven—into which things the angels desire to look.”

How much more so for us? We understand things that they didn’t understand even a hundred years ago. A hundred and fifty years ago it was still horse and buggy. We had the train and going at 35 mph they thought you would die, until they found you wouldn’t. Now we send people up in space and we’re still looking at it. We can see more things, but we still don’t understand everything. Notice what he says; it was the Spirit of God that gave it to them.

Verse 13: “For this reason, be prepared in your minds... [always, all the time] ...be self-controlled... [with the Holy Spirit of God] ...*and* be fully hoping in the grace that will be brought to you at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ.”

So the resurrection is *grace*. Look at how much grace covers. Can you say the resurrection is a favor? *That’s really weak!*

“...hoping in the grace that will be brought to you at *the* revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not conform yourselves to the former lusts, *as you did* in your ignorance” (vs 13-14).

Notice, this is the same teaching, identical, different words, maybe not as much detail, but it is identical to what Paul preached, John preached, Peter preached—which we’re reading here—James preached, Jude preached. Yes, indeed, all one integrated whole.

Verse 15: “But according as He Who has called you *is* Holy, you yourselves also be Holy in all *your* conduct.”

- Are the commandments Holy? *Yes!*
- Was Jesus Holy? *Yes!*
- Did He keep the Holy commandments? *Yes!*

If we're going to be Holy in all of our conduct that means all the instructions of Christ, all the commandments of God. How are you going to be Holy apart from God and His Spirit? God's Spirit is a Spirit of Truth and that's how you get rid of all the error in your mind.

Verse 16: "For it is written, 'You be Holy because I am Holy.'" God wants us to be like Him! This is quite a thing! This whole chapter is something. We won't go through any more of it here.

In Greek you have these sentences that are long. If you wrote like this in English, you'd flunk English.

1-Peter 2:3: "If you yourselves have indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious.... [that's tasting the graciousness of God] ...To Whom coming, *as to* a living Stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God, *and* precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up *as* a spiritual house—a Holy priesthood—..." (vs 3-5). Think of what we're going to be doing, brethren:

- some of us will be priests
- some of us will be governors
- some of us will be rulers
- some of us will be mayors of cities

Remember the parable about over the cities, five cities, ten cities, etc. *Yes!*

"...to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (v 5).

- that's our prayer
- that's our study
- that's our service
- that's our giving
- that's everything that we do

Verse 6: "For this reason it says in the Scripture, 'Behold, I place in Zion *the* Cornerstone, chosen *and* precious; and the one who believes in Him shall never be put to shame.' The preciousness *is* to you..." (vs 6-7).

- the precious sacrifice of Christ
- the precious blood of Christ
- the precious Holy Spirit of God

He doesn't give it to just anybody.

"...therefore, who believe; but to those who disobey, *the* Stone that the builders rejected has become *the* Head of *the* corner, and a Stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense; *especially* to those who stumble at the Word..." (vs 7-8). Even to the

Protestants, you tell them anything about the Old Testament, they get offended. You tell them anything about the holidays they keep, they get offended.

I think of Bill O'Reilly on that all the time. 'I am a Christian Catholic. I'm an advocate for Christmas. We're going to make sure that no Christmas tree is taken down anyplace.' How would he react if you went up and said, 'Dear Bill, I know you're zealous for the truth. Are you?' *Yes, I want the truth.* 'I have something to say to you, which is true, but I do believe you're going to get mad. Did you know that Christmas is pagan and you shouldn't keep it?' If I were that person, I'd make sure I was about ten feet away and nothing handy he could throw. You could do the same thing with everything else.

What's the first thing we're going to be confronted with after the Feast of Tabernacles? *Halloween!* So Christ would be a Stone of stumbling.

"...being disobedient, unto which *unbelief* they also were appointed. But you *are* a chosen stock, a royal priesthood, a Holy nation..." (vs 8-9). Not yet formed and organized. That doesn't take place until the resurrection.

"...a people for a possession *of* God, that you might proclaim His *excellent* virtues, Who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (v 9). Just think of that living in this dark, dark world. It's going to get a whole lot more dark.

1-Peter 5:5: "In the same manner, *you* younger men be subject to *the* older men; and all *of* you be subject to one another... [to cooperate and get along] ...being clothed with humility because God sets Himself against *the* proud, but He gives grace to *the* humble. Be humbled therefore under the mighty hand of God so that He may exalt you in *due* time... [which then is an operation of grace] ...casting all your cares upon Him, because He cares for you. Be sober! Be vigilant! For your adversary *the* devil is prowling about as a roaring lion, seeking anyone he may devour. Whom resist, steadfast in the faith..." (vs 5-9).

You can't fight against sin unless you are steadfast in the faith. Let's put it this way. You can't be victorious over sin unless you are steadfast in the faith.

"...knowing *that* the same afflictions are being fulfilled among your brethren who *are* in *the* world. Now may the God of **all** grace... [each and every one, which then includes grace upon grace] ...Who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus... [we don't have a clue what that is going to be like, eternal glory] ...after *you* have suffered a

little while, Himself **perfect you**... [that's what it's doing; it's perfecting us] ...**establish, strengthen, and settle you**" (vs 9-10). *That's what God will do!*

This is why we need to keep this in mind as we're heading into darker days ahead. There are going to be some that are going to be incredible.

Eph. 1 & 3 is one of the greatest chapters in the Bible. Both those chapters are absolutely astounding. This brings everything of what God is doing with His grace to a very high level and shows us what God is doing with us and to us and through us, so that we can have strength in the times that we really need it.

Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus." That is a prophecy reaching out to all faithful, at all times down through history.

Verse 2: "Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father..." Directly from God the Father. Our relationship is with the Father. Jesus said you pray to the Father, because the Father Himself loves you.

"...and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *things* with Christ" (vs 2-3).

We haven't received all of them, yet. We have a down-payment of it, but all of those things are there, as Peter says, reserved in heaven for us, so that when we're resurrected and heaven comes down just above the earth, and we're resurrected to the Sea of Glass, we will receive it. **All "...spiritual blessing in the heavenly things with Christ."** You can't say that this is favor. This is far greater than favor.

Verse 4: "According as He has personally chosen us for Himself before the foundation of *the* world..." In other words, God had this plan before the foundation of the world to call. Those who respond and answer the call would be chosen. God hasn't chosen anyone before the foundation of the earth.

Jeremiah 1:4: "And it came to pass, the Word of the LORD came to me, saying, '**Before I formed you in the belly** I knew you...' " (vs 4-5). At what point was that? He *didn't* say before the foundation of the world. The plan was before the foundation of the world. At what point in the existence of Jeremiah did this take place? *The instant of conception!* Then he was formed after he was conceived. That's the operation. "...Before I formed you in the belly I knew you..." At the instant of conception, we could say today.

"...and before you came forth out of the womb I consecrated you, *and* I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (v 5). If anybody should have been chosen from before the foundation of the world, it should have been Jeremiah. But that's the plan of God.

Ephesians 1:4: "...in order that we might be Holy and blameless before Him in love." That's why the love of God is so important and is perhaps the first expression of God's love is His grace.

Verse 5: "Having predestinated us for sonship..." That sonship means *the very children of God*. All of those in the first resurrection will be the children of the Father. All of those through the Millennium will be the children of Christ. Because it says of Christ that He is the Everlasting Father (Isa. 9). The question is when does He become a father? *When He returns to the earth and all the saints who are the sons of God the Father, they will rule with Him. Sonship; not adoption!*

Why is it sonship and not adoption? *Because we receive the Holy Spirit of God for eternal life from the Father!* When we receive it we are begotten again, so we are His very own children.

"...sonship to Himself through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of His own will... [That is something!] ...to *the* praise of *the* glory of His grace... [because all of this is accomplished by His grace] ...wherein He has made us objects of *His* grace in the Beloved Son" (v 5-6).

That shows that grace is like that umbrella that we talked about.

- we stand under
- we stand in
- we receive
- we have grace upon grace given to us

Verse 7: "In Whom we have redemption through His blood, *even* the remission of sins, according to the riches of His grace." So, His grace accomplishes many, many things.

Verse 8: "Which He has made to abound toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known to us the mystery of His own will..." (vs 8-9).

Think about it, especially in this age. We have more knowledge about the will and plan of God for mankind than any other generation in the history of the Church of God.

- having the Word of God
- having the Spirit of God
- having all the things we need to know

Isn't that something? He has made us *know* His secret. You don't share your secrets with strangers.

“...**the mystery of His own will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself**” (v 9). This is mind-blowing, when you really think about it, what God has called us to. This is absolutely fantastic.

Verse 10: “That in *the Divine* plan for the fulfilling of *the* times, He might bring all things together in Christ, both the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth; *yes*, in Him, in Whom we also have obtained an inheritance... [already there] ...having been predestinated according to His purpose... [because His purpose was laid out first] ...Who is working out all things according to the counsel of His own will” (vs 10-11). That’s quite a thing that God is working at—isn’t it?

Verse 12: “That we might be to *the* praise of His glory, who first trusted in the Christ; In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise” (vs 12-13). That’s something! Having the Holy Spirit of God, which is in two parts:

1. the begetting from the Father
2. the mind of Christ

called

- the Spirit of Christ
- the Spirit of the Father

together

Jesus said that the Father and He—We—‘will make Our abode with you.’ That is the most fantastic thing that there is. Think of that. The only two who are God—the Father and Christ. The Father has dealt with us, called us. Christ has dealt with us, worked with us, and we receive the Spirit directly from Them. That’s why God hates the works of the Nicolaitans with the hierarchy. And the epitome of it is the Roman Catholic Church.

“...you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is *the* earnest of our inheritance... [that’s the down payment; that is the guarantee that God has given] ...until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory. For this cause, I also, after hearing of the faith in the Lord Jesus that is among you, and the love toward all the saints, do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers” (vs 13-16).

That’s why every day we pray for the brethren. We pray for all the Churches of God, because we hope and pray that they will all come into the unity of the faith. The unity of the faith does not mean one organization. God has caused many, many different Churches of God to be there, because you can’t stamp it out in one fell swoop. I think there are now 1500 Churches of God, different

organizations, preaching the Truth in varying degrees as they know it.

Notice what this prayer is. This prayer, remember, is to the faithful in Christ Jesus (v 1). This prayer goes down through all time, just like the prayer of Jesus (John 17): ‘I pray for those that will believe on their word.’ That prayer goes down in all time for all of us. Likewise, with this one.

Verse 17: “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you *the* spirit of wisdom and revelation in *the* knowledge of Him.”

To learn more and more about Christ, the mind of Christ, the Word of God, and all of those things combined, over and over again. This is why, even though we have a lot of material, there could be a whole lot more. Even John wrote that if everything that Christ did would be written in books, he said there wouldn’t be room in the world to hold those books.

Verse 18: “*And* may the eyes of your mind be enlightened...”—with the Spirit of God, with the Word of God, that as you study the Word of God, you understand more.

“...in order that you may comprehend what is the hope of His calling...” (v 18). This gives you strength ***against every trial, every trouble, every difficulty, and strength against the time when there’s going to be persecution!*** And strength against the time when there will be martyrdom.

There are plenty of martyrs for Jesus today in the Middle East and Africa. God won’t forget them, but ***the martyrdom of the saints, that’s coming right soon!*** If we have this in mind, there is ***nothing, nothing*** that can keep us from loving and serving God.

Verse 19: “And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from *the* dead, and set *Him* at His right hand in the heavenly *places*... [notice where we will be]: ...far above every principality and authority... [they will all be extinguished] ...and power and lordship, and every name that is named—not only in this age, but also in the *age* to come; for He has subordinated all things under His feet, and has given Him *to be* head over all things to the church, Which is His body—the fullness of Him Who fills all things in all” (vs 19-23).

This is why the word should be grace and not favor!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Acts 24:27
- 2) Acts 25:9
- 3) 2-Corinthians 1:15
- 4) 1-Timothy 1:12-14
- 5) 2-Timothy 1:3-5
- 6) Luke 1:5, 11-20, 26-35
- 7) John 16:12-13
- 8) John 1:1-4, 14-17
- 9) Romans 5:1-5
- 10) Romans 2:4
- 11) Romans 3:21-31
- 12) Romans 6:11-15
- 13) 1-Peter 1:1-16
- 14) 1-Peter 2:3-9
- 15) 1-Peter 5:5-10
- 16) Ephesians 1:1-4
- 17) Jeremiah 1:4-5
- 18) Ephesians 1:4-23

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 24
- Revelation 4
- Luke 1:10
- John 2
- Matthew 17
- Malachi 4
- Isaiah 9
- Revelation 1; 20
- Psalm 22
- Ephesians 3
- John 17

Also referenced:

- Book: *Why Were You Born?* (coming soon)
- From *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*:
Appendix E: *When Was Jesus Christ Born?*

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