

A Judgment of Grace

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All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.

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INTRODUCTION

The thought of standing before Jesus Christ face to face is awe-inspiring. One day, every believer will be brought before the Bema Seat and the record of his life will be there for evaluation. How does that make you feel? Are you fearful? You shouldn't be, provided you are operating in the power of His grace with His love being shed abroad in your heart.

God is the God of all grace and His "all grace" extends to the Bema Seat as well. Every reward we receive will correlate to the demonstration and experience of His grace in our lives. It will not be the work of *our* righteousness that matters at the Bema Seat. Those things we produced through self-effort will be burned up as wood, hay, and stubble, leaving no eternal results. But what was rendered through grace will remain forever as gold, silver, and precious stones.

Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, will sit as our

judge. He will judge as the Lamb, the One who laid down His life as a ransom for us. Keep this in mind as you read this booklet and discover the truth about God's judgment of grace.

Chapter One
THE RECORD OF GRACE

In His fullness, Jesus Christ as a human being satisfied the justice of God the Father by living a perfect life on earth (Psalm 85:10-12). Pure and spotless because He never sinned, Jesus became the sacrificial Lamb, accepted by the Father. He went to heaven where He entered into His royal session at the throne of grace. Seated as God and accepted as a Man, Christ made it possible for all men to go to heaven freely through grace and mercy, and all of us can have help any time we need it.

The moment he is saved, because of perfect redemption, forty-six irrevocable things happen to a believer by grace. We are under grace, not under law. Even if our wrong choices cause Him to take us home to heaven early, He takes us home because of grace.

When we do get to heaven, Christ will examine the record of our lives to determine our

eternal rewards. Everything said in the judgment for believers will be relative to grace. When we come before Christ at the Bema Seat, the question He will ask is, How did you build? Out of His fullness we are to receive grace for grace, and we are to build on a foundation not laid by man. That foundation is Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-11).

The apostle Paul was a wise masterbuilder who established the foundation for the Church by receiving the grace of God. But what happens when I am part of a local assembly for years and never grow? Even if I don't commit overt sins, the Bible says that I'm supposed to have a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7). I will be saved because of grace, but when the production of my life is tested by fire at the Bema Seat, all the rewards I might have earned will be lost (1 Corinthians 3:15).

Edifying Communication

When I open my mouth, do I edify and minister grace to the hearers? Or do my words manipulate people to give *me* grace and pay attention to my needs? I am to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, operating according to the honor code of the royal family, esteem-

ing others as better than myself and honoring their individual freedom (Philippians 2:3).

I am to owe no man anything but love (Romans 13:8). Called to be a good steward, I am to love others as God loves me through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Whatever I do, I do not need special attention. I have no approbation lust, so I don't need to hear someone say, "Good job" for everything I do.* I don't need the praise of men, although some people may express their love because of honor. There is no power lust driving me to usurp authority or to control people through manipulation. I am hid in the Body of Christ, participating as a member in particular. I am a steward of the grace that is coming toward me on every side (1 Peter 4:10).

Turned by Grace to Deliverance

If I cannot receive grace to give up overt sins, then I am receiving grace in vain. Grace is a relationship with a Person, Jesus Christ, and "the effectual working of his power in me" (Ephesians 3:7). The whole purpose of grace is not that it would be only a provision for salvation; it is also a provision to be exactly like Christ in the details of life. For the areas in my life where I have a hard time, I receive grace for

recovery, and I rebound. Of course, grace will continue to come toward me until I die. Yet God's purpose is that I would not only receive grace but grow in His grace all the time.

We need to say to God, "You turn me, Lord, and I will be turned; turn me and I will repent" (see Jeremiah 31:18-19). There are people who play little emotional games of manipulating everyone around them. They continue in sin that grace may abound, but in these cases, sin reigns unto death (Romans 6:2; 6:15). In other words, sin keeps reigning because they have not died to self, therefore grace cannot abound through righteousness by one, Jesus Christ (Romans 5:21).

Stewards of a Mystery

"And to make all men see what is *the fellowship of the mystery*, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 3:9).

God will give me a process of grace for victory to meet me where I am, in any area of weakness. As far as salvation goes, sin is never an issue. But sin *is* an issue that can adversely affect my fellowship with this mystery. My sin will keep others from seeing Christ in me, the

fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning was hid in God. We carry this mystery—we are stewards of it—and we must be very careful with it. We do not bring the mystery of Christ's life in us into legalism, but instead we bring it into the journey of grace.

The point is this: either I'm graced out or I'm stressed out. Being graced out doesn't mean that I never fail. It means that I am honest. I don't live in denial. I use rebound and never accept failure as an excuse for not having God's power effectively working in me. I receive beyond what I ask or think, according to the power that works in me (Ephesians 3:20).

Power toward You, Power in You

Everyone likes the power that works *toward* himself. In Luke 15:13, the prodigal son went out into a far country. God's grace couldn't work *in* him any more because of his rebellion, so grace worked *toward* him, waiting until he got right. God always waits that He may be gracious to people (Isaiah 30:18). This doesn't mean that He ever withholds grace. Instead, He is waiting for His grace to work effectively in me.

If I have received the fullness of God, and grace for grace, then there are certain times

when I must keep on receiving grace through rebound. As an adopted child of God, I grow, and I can say, “Abba, Father,” (Galatians 4:6; Romans 8:15). When I can say, “My Father,” we have a very intimate, personal relationship—the effectual working of God is in me. Now God doesn’t have to keep working *toward* me, He can work *in* and *through* me (Galatians 1:16). Paul, the apostle of grace, said that Jesus Christ was revealed in him through the “manifold” grace of God—grace on every side (1 Peter 4:10).

By the time grace works through me, I have entered into stewardship and I have also begun to experience 2 Corinthians 4:10-12: “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. So then death worketh in us, but life in you.”

Bema Seat Rewards

Things that rub me the wrong way serve to reveal grace being worked through me. That’s where I begin to build up rewards. First, grace must be revealed *in* me (Galatians 1:16), but I

will never receive rewards at the Bema Seat unless I become a good steward of the manifold grace of God for every relationship in my life: as a husband to my wife, as a pastor to God's people, as a friend to my neighbor, as a soul winner to the lost. That's the key.

By our fruit, we are known (see Matthew 7:16-20). At the Bema Seat, the judgment will be this: Did I bring forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit because of God's righteousness? (Romans 6:17-22). My eternal rewards will be based on whether I had love, joy, and peace on the inside (toward myself); longsuffering, gentleness, and goodness on the outside (toward others); and faith, meekness, and temperance upward (toward God).

The test of my life will show whether I glorified God to the maximum of divine production in grace (1 Corinthians 10:31). For that to happen, I must not receive grace in vain—but I must express the grace I receive.

The maiden in Song of Solomon didn't want the bridegroom to go anywhere without her. She wanted to possess him, to have Him only for herself. But a possessive person will not get a single reward at the Bema Seat of Christ unless he says, "Turn me, God, and I will be turned."

The minute we repent, *God* brings a change

in our mind. He will work in us and through us in many areas. People around us will be happily surprised at the change. It comes because of 2 Corinthians 4:15: "For all things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace [of God] might through the thanksgiving of many [be multiplied] to the glory of God." A changed life makes everyone thankful for the grace that is being revealed.

God may work into my life things that are not good so I can give grace to everyone I meet in the process. When that is the case, as I grow I respond to God without reacting to people.

**For more about the six lust patterns common to men, read chapter one in Dealing Precisely with Demons by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

Chapter Two

TO DO OF HIS GOOD PLEASURE

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all” (Philippians 2:12-17).

Our lives are to be a demonstration of God’s work in us: an offering to God for people (1 John 3:16), a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). In 2 Corinthians 6, God desires that we would

cross over from mere knowledge of theology into the revelation of its meaning—from knowledge to wisdom, from theology to application, and from knowing to revealing. God's plan is for us to work out what He has worked within. But if that doesn't happen and we begin to murmur when God sends a trial, we will go to heaven, but we will suffer loss of rewards.

By God's design, each of us has an intellect, disposition, temperament, personality, complexion, and character. Through the *intellect*, information is processed in our minds. When it is a godly intellect, the information we perceive is transferred to the soul by way of the human spirit. That information is locked into our new frame of reference with a point of reference in the memory center, taking over the soul through the conscience.*

My *disposition* is who I am by experience. It is a changeable manifestation of my essence. My *temperament* is determined by the mixture of my past and present circumstances, genetics, and the decisions I have made in my life. Temperament is revealed by tendencies in response patterns. Some people tend to be happy, others tend to be passive, and so on.

Complexion is a more subtle view of the ways

a person thinks or feels. It is reflected through impressions toward other people—my mental attitude in response to people. Personality is who I have become as a person in the sum of my human attributes, both emotional and behavioral. I will present either my individuality in Adam or the individuality of God in me.

Character speaks of the inward qualities and traits that may or may not be reflected in the more obvious qualities of personality, disposition, temperament, and complexion. Godly character is the spiritual production of morality because of God. It is being patient and living in divine essence, cooperating with God through human faculties and a positive volition. God and I coexist and I give Him lordship. This is how it should be. Still, it is possible to exhibit a “good” disposition, a wonderful temperament, and a pleasing personality and yet be motivated by seemingly “good” character that is actually self-righteous and immoral (Luke 18:10-14).

The Process of Grace Multiplication

For some people, thinking about the Bema Seat Judgment produces “religious anxiety.” You say to yourself, “I know I am not living in the maximum manifestation of the application of

God's principles of grace." So, how do you get plugged into this process and correct your attitude toward yourself?

As humans and sinners, experience has everything to do with *how* we hear. When I hear a message about the journey of grace, am I willing to *grow* in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ? Growth speaks of a process. In 1 John 2:12-13, "little children," "young men," and "fathers" are references to positions in the process of grace living. Still, there are people who tend to condemn themselves when they hear a revelation like that, because they are *not* living in grace. Don't fall into that trap. Grace depends upon the Giver, never the receiver. We have already received the fullness of His grace in positional truth. Now we just need to adjust to grace and be established in it in the experiential impartation of truth.

"Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory [reflecting His character] and virtue [the divine essence of his supreme love]" (2 Peter 1:2-3).

God provides all the things that we will ever need through the knowledge of His glory. How do we receive the knowledge of God's glory? By having grace multiplied toward us with peace. It is not an *addition* of grace, it is a *multiplication* of what has already been imparted to us. We enter into this journey, a pursuit with God, faith-resting with Him as we grow.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (2 Peter 1:4).

How do we receive God's nature? By letting His righteousness be revealed *in* us from faith to faith (Romans 1:17). We escape the contamination of the world and its lust patterns automatically. We don't *do* anything to escape; we escape by *receiving*. Receiving the multiplication of His grace leads to the multiplication of peace. Faith becomes substance to us and brings evidence of God's effective work within.

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kind-

ness charity” (2 Peter 1:5-7).

Faith pleases God; God rewards faith. And to that faith, we add virtue. Virtue is *not* mental excellence. It is the supernatural, unfathomable, perfect love of God. It is perfect because it is not *our* love, but love that is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5).

To virtue, we add knowledge, or doctrine. To doctrine, we add temperance, which is divine control. To divine control, we add patience. To patience, godliness. To “add godliness” is to receive spirituality. Then, add brotherly kindness, which speaks of love communicated through the Holy Spirit, fellowship that appreciates others. It is by that Spirit, which sheds God’s love through us, that we add charity.

Victors, Not Victims

“For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins” (2 Peter 1:8-9).

When grace is multiplied toward you, you are not barren. Neither are you a victim. You are

a victor, fruitful in the Lord Jesus Christ. Otherwise, you are blind and cannot see afar off to what awaits you at the Bema Seat. The problem? Spiritual vision becomes dim when you are not fellowshiping with God on the inside. You have forgotten that you were purged from old sins. Though you are saved, you don't have any joy in being saved. You have forgotten what grace did for you because you are not growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The moment we turn inward to analyze our condition, we only compound the problem. As we have said in so many different ways, we need to see our provision. We need to gaze upon the Lamb of God.

**For more about this process, read The Hearing Heart, by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1996.*

Chapter Three

BEHOLD THE LAMB

Twenty-seven times in the book of Revelation, we see the Lord Jesus Christ depicted as the glorified Lamb. In Revelation 17:14 and Revelation 19:16, He is called the King of kings and Lord of lords. But He says, “I want you to see that I am still the Lamb.” He is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world—the wounds in His hands, His feet, His side, and His brow, visible for all of eternity.

In Revelation 5:1-5, the Father was there with the title deed to earth, and the angel came out and said, “Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” Where is there a man who is worthy to take back the title deed to the earth and that held Adam’s soul?

And John “wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe

of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book.” This is the only time in the book of Revelation Jesus is called a “lion.” The Lamb is called the Lion because of His victory over the demons, shaming them publicly when He ascended into heaven (Colossians 2:15-16).

One day, there will come the battle of Armageddon. Jesus Christ will simply speak the Word to end the most devastating war the world has ever seen. That will mark the end of every religious battle and the reign of Antichrist and his system.

After all of this, the Word of God tells us that in heaven there will be a new song sung to the Lamb that was slain. Jesus wants us to know that in heaven, He is the Lamb that was slain but is now glorified.

We will have no problem recognizing the Lamb. Four six-winged seraphim, four and twenty elders, and hosts of angels will surround Him and worship Him who is worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, blessing, and glory. Thousands upon thousands will worship Him who is worthy. Who are they honoring? The Lamb that was slain.

In Revelation 21:14, there are the twelve foundations of the New Jerusalem, representing

the twelve apostles. Who was the Head of the apostles? The Lamb.

In Revelation 21:9, as the born-again members of His Church, we are the Lamb's wife, His bride for eternity. But at a certain event called the White Throne Judgment, He opens the Lamb's Book of Life, and those whose names are not recorded in it will be cast into hell.

But for those who are saved by the blood of the Lamb, there will be eternal rejoicing in a city with streets of gold. There will be no temple in the city called the New Jerusalem, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof" (Revelation 21:23).

The Lamb that was slain—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world (Isaiah 53:7, John 1:29)—is the same Lamb glorified in heaven. And who will we face at the Bema Seat? The Lamb. It will be the Lamb who passes judgment upon us and determines our rewards.

All Things End Up in Grace

"And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to

the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse" (Malachi 4:6).

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen" (Revelation 22:21).

Malachi, the final book of the Old Testament, ends with the threat of a curse. But God's final word in Revelation is "grace...be with you all." He is the God of all grace (1 Peter 5:10). His grace teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts (Titus 2:12). We are not bound by a system of works or a program of condemnation where we try to work our way up to God's approval. If that were the case, we would all go to hell. But grace is at work in me and it teaches me to put the Lord Jesus Christ first and to make no provision for the flesh (Romans 13:14). This is the work of grace.

Grace to Break Sin Cycles

When I walk in the Spirit (Galatians 5:16), I do not fulfill the lust of the flesh. I don't deal with my flesh first. I don't deal with *anything* first. Instead, I make a decision to put on Jesus Christ; I *choose* to walk in the Spirit. That takes care of every other thing that I might otherwise be tempted to do.

There's no need for me to become worldly periodically. I don't need to have lustful thoughts. First, it wouldn't do any good. Secondly, I'm never going to fulfill such a thought. And, thirdly, it would only bring guilt. Grace has taught me to hate lustful thoughts and suggestive comments. Why? Because 1 Timothy 5:22 says "keep thyself pure."

In 1 Corinthians 3, regarding the Bema Seat, we are told this: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (verse 16). By grace, we have been made temples of God. We are joined to Him by the one Spirit. "What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh" (1 Corinthians 6:16). What Paul meant is this: Fornication is a sin inside the body, and that is why people who do it have such difficulty getting out of it. Sins outside of the body are bad enough, but fornication affects the libido, which is part of the central nervous system. Actual physical response patterns are established in the chemistry of the human body and sent through the bloodstream—stimulated because of choices. Just as liquor and drugs go into the bloodstream and affect the whole body, so do the effects of lust,

anger, and fornication.

Fornication destroys souls and can ruin compatibility in marriage, either by making one cold and unresponsive or by causing the other to be insatiable in their sex drive, because of response patterns established through a history of pre-marital sex.

Thankfully, God can break this cycle in an instant when we simply confess to Him, “I can have *anything* from You. You died for me. You were buried. And now You live inside of me. Whatever I have done in my past has been done away with. I accept my place with you, and I’m not going to leave You alone on that cross. It was *my* cross. With You, I am crucified and buried, and the life I now live, I live in the Resurrection (Romans 6:13). Now I accept that there is no condemnation, despite all of my problems in the past. I will not live in guilt because the blood of the Lamb has taken care of it (Leviticus 5:7).”

That’s it.

In Leviticus 23:17-18, the loaves of bread that were baked for an offering had leaven in them, yet they were first fruits unto the Lord. God knows there is leaven in us, referring to the old sin nature, but He will still use us. All He asks is that we take up our cross daily (Luke 9:23).

Taking up my cross simply means that I accept what is mine. I receive God's provision right now, realizing that I am dead and buried with Christ. It is not just a theological concept to get familiar with; it is a fact of my life with Him. I died with Him (1 Corinthians 15:1-31), and I take up my Cross today. It's a moment-by-moment walk with Him (Isaiah 27:3). The Truth has made me free (John 8:32), and the Son has made me free indeed (John 8:36). This is not only for my past but for today.

"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Jesus said, "Now." Then He said that unfruitful branches are cast into the fire, which speaks of my works being burned up and being walked over by men when we fail to produce fruit by God's living power of grace.

I Am What I Am by Grace

I can have whatever I want from God because all things are mine, I am Christ's, and Christ is God's (1 Corinthians 3:23). He is able to do exceedingly above all I ask or think (Ephesians 3:20). He supplies all my needs (Philippians 4:19). He is able to make grace abound toward me so that I will have all that I need for

everything that I face (2 Corinthians 9:8). Wrapped in this package is the possibility of spirituality, stability, and maturity (1 Peter 5:12; Isaiah 33:6). I am to maintain certain disciplines in my walk with Christ, but the Holy Spirit brings the spiritual provision for the process of grace. Nothing there can cause intimidation. There are no indictments—no weapon formed against me can prosper.

My thought life is an area that God wants me to keep in check. I need to be aware of projections and make sure that they don't become my feelings through processing vain imaginations. My part is to recognize temptation because of the things I experienced in Adam. I must discern impressions that come from the satanic kingdom. Also, I must understand that receiving wrong impressions can lead to oppression which can lead to depression, causing me to condemn myself in negative reactions. But whenever negativity or lustful projections come, I can boldly say, "I am what I am by the grace of God" (1 Corinthians 15:10). At the Bema Seat, my life will be evaluated by that revelation.*

Our lives should reveal God's nature, whether by our words or by our actions. Rebellious, self-righteous, arrogant people have for-

gotten 1 Corinthians 15:10. Their problems started when they began living by the letter of the law instead of by the Spirit of truth. We do not live under law; but by the living Word and the grace of Almighty God, we become living epistles. Our lives write things on the hearts of men even when we cannot speak the Word to them. And though the law strengthens sin in a soul, the Spirit of life strengthens grace in us.

We can be testimonies of God's grace. When we go through the valley of weeping, in Psalm 84:6-7, we can leave behind fresh pools of water. That way, the next person who goes through such a valley has fresh water to drink because we have been through it. We go from strength to strength and appear before God in Zion. Where is our strength made perfect? In weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9). The grace of God is sufficient in our weakness; and God's weakness is stronger than the strength of men (1 Corinthians 1:25). Thank God for a judgment of grace!

**Read Imaginations of the Heart, by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

CONCLUSION

“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

“For by grace are ye saved through faith;

and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained *that we should walk in them*" (Ephesians 2:1-10).

I wanted to conclude with this passage: "that we should walk in them." This is a unique grammar structure in the Greek that means that my walk is not expected to be a straight line, rather it is better represented by a dotted line. In other words, God's grace has provided a covering for my failures. A straight line would indicate no space for failure. But when I fall, I rebound by grace. Yes, there is leaven in me, but I can come to my heavenly Father in any situation and find grace to help in my times of need.

When I accept that God's judgment for every believer is a perfect judgment of grace, then I will be motivated to live purely. The Bema Seat experience can be an unbelievably joyous one. We have been called to be stewards of His amazing grace, and by that grace we will bear much fruit. His grace will add to our account immeasurable rewards and blessing for us to enjoy for all eternity.