

Title: **FOUR STAGES OF GRACE**

Text: Isaiah 14:1-27

Subject: *The Believer's Experience of Grace*

Date: Tuesday Evening — June 15, 2010

Tape # Z-89a

Readings: *Darin Duff and Joe Blakely*
 Psalm 71:1-24

Introduction:

Our text will be the 14th chapter of Isaiah. The title of my message is **FOUR STAGES OF GRACE**. This 14th chapter of Isaiah prophesied that the Jews would be delivered by the hand of God from Babylon; but it speaks of much more than the restoration of a people held in captivity. Isaiah, speaking by God the Holy Spirit, declared that...

- Babylon's king would fall by the hand of divine judgment.
- That he and those who held God's chosen people in captivity for so long would become servants to God's chosen. — That the oppressed would rule over their oppressors!
- That as Moses taught Israel to sing over Pharaoh's destruction in the Red Sea, so God's chosen nation would sing over the destruction of the king of Babylon and of the Assyrian empire that so long oppressed them with bondage.

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

Let's read verses 1-27 together. — Isaiah 14:1-27.

1. For the LORD will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and **set them in their own land**: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.
2. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and **they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.**
3. And it shall come to pass in the day that **the LORD shall give thee rest** from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,
4. **That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!**
5. The LORD hath broken the staff of the wicked, *and* the sceptre of the rulers.
6. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, *and* none hindereth.
7. The whole earth is at rest, *and* is quiet: they break forth into singing.

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

8. Yea, the fir trees rejoice at thee, *and* the cedars of Lebanon, *saying*, **Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.**
9. Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet *thee* at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, *even* all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones all the kings of the nations.
10. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us?
11. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, *and* the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.
12. **How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!**
13. For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:
14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.
15. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.
16. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, *and* consider thee, *saying*, **Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms;**

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

17. *That* made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; *that* opened not the house of his prisoners?
18. All the kings of the nations, *even* all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house.
19. But thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch, *and as* the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.
20. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, *and* slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.
21. Prepare slaughter for his children for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.
22. For I will rise up against them, saith the LORD of hosts, and cut off from Babylon the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the LORD.
23. I will also make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the LORD of hosts.
24. **The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:**
25. That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot: then shall his yoke

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

26. **This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.**

27. **For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?** (Isaiah 14:1-27)

We know that the prophecy given in Isaiah 13 and 14 had an immediate reference to the physical seed of Abraham, the nation of Israel, and their deliverance from Babylonian captivity. But **those who limit the prophecy to these historical events have missed its message altogether.**

There are some things spoken of in this text which cannot be applied to the Jews and the Babylonians. There never was a time in history when the Jews carried the Babylonians into captivity. And there never was a time when Israel ruled over Babylon. But, **if we understand the prophecy spiritually, as referring to the salvation of God's elect by our Lord Jesus Christ, its interpretation is both easy and practical.** The things spoken of in the passage before us will find their perfect accomplishment in the salvation of God's church, the Israel of God. **These are the accomplishments of grace in every believer.**

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

Proposition: The people of God shall be triumphant over all their enemies by the grace that is ours in Christ Jesus — We are more than conquerors through him that loved us and gave himself for us.

FOUR PROMISES

Here are four things promised in the opening verses of this great chapter of Holy Scripture. —

1. **The purpose of God in all things is that he will have mercy upon his own elect.** — *“For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob.”*

God’s treatment of Babylon, the nations of the world, and the demons of hell is determined and regulated by his purpose of grace toward his Israel, his elect (Romans 8:28; 2 Corinthians 5:18).

2. **Though in providence God sometimes appears to be angry with his people, he will never cast them off.** — He *“will yet choose Israel and set them in their own land.”*

There is a great multitude which no man can number, scattered throughout the nations of the world whom God will yet save by his grace. Though they are now strangers

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

to the covenant of promise. They must and shall be joined to the people of God (John 10:16).

3. **Many who now oppose Christ, his gospel, and his church shall soon be made to serve him, his cause and his people** (v. 2).

“And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors.”

(Isaiah 14:2)

Illustrations: *Saul of Tarsus — John Newton
Rolfe Barnard*

4. **And God’s elect shall triumph over all their enemies by his grace.** — *“They shall take them captive, whose captives they were: and they shall rule over their oppressors. And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.”*

Tonight, I want us to focus our attention on these words in the last part of verse 2 and verse three. They describe for us

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

every believer's experience of grace in four stages. —
“They shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors!”

Divisions: We will trace the work of God's grace in the souls of men in these four stages.

1. Grace finds us all in a state of captivity.
2. Grace brings us into a state of deliverance.
3. Grace sustains us in a state of warfare.
4. Grace shall deliver us into a state of victory and dominion.

STATE OF CAPTIVITY

Grace finds us in a state of bondage and captivity. All men like to boast of their freedom. They like to flatter themselves with the idea that they are morally, spiritually and intellectually free. But the fact is **every man by nature is in a state of bondage and captivity**. If you are here without Christ, you are a bondman, a slave, held in captivity. And **the first work of grace is to show you the misery of your present condition**. Like Israel in Egypt or in Babylon, we are all by nature in the land of captivity. **Even the believer is, in a sense, yet in captivity to sin** (Romans 8:23).

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

“And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.” (Romans 8:23)

And if the believer is yet in captivity, while he lives in this world, how much more so are you who are without Christ.

Fallen man is held in bondage by the world and to the world. Our minds are controlled by the sentiments of the world. Our morals are determined by the customs of the world. And our actions are directed by the fashion of the world. I am talking about natural, unregenerate men and women. And what I am saying is true of all men by nature.

Now and then, some individual steps out of the general mold of society and appears to be an independent individual. But upon closer examination, you will see the shackles of the world upon him. — He is a slave after all, held in bondage by the shackles of...

- Prejudice, Pride!
- Greed, Ambition!
- Opinion, Custom!
- And Approval, Applause!

The things of God appear to be foolishness to many and the multitudes cannot receive them, because the carnal mind

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

will not accept that which is contrary to the wisdom of this world (1 Corinthians 1:18-24).

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. ²⁰ Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? ²¹ For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. ²² For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: ²³ But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; ²⁴ But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” (1 Corinthians 1:18-24)

What bondmen we are to sin! You may not behave in the shameless manner of the profligate pervert, cold-blooded murderer, common thief, or drunken reveler. But there is a malignant principle of sin in us all that so corrupts us that every imagination of our hearts is only evil continually (Genesis 6:5) and every righteous deed performed by us is perverse and filthy (Isaiah 64:6). Sin is the nature of man

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

(Matthew 15:19). And no man can escape or change his nature (Jeremiah 13:23; 17:9).

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? *then* may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” (Jeremiah 13:23)

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jeremiah 17:9)

I know that what I am saying is offensive to the flesh. Some of you may be seething in your hearts with anger against me for saying it. But you know it is true. And your anger is but an evidence of the truth of what I am saying. You are in bondage to the world, in bondage to sin. And...

Fallen man is in bondage to Satan, taken captive by him at his will. We read in this chapter about Lucifer and his fall. Lucifer is Satan. He is here spoken of as the king of Babylon. It is he who made the earth a wilderness and made men to tremble.

How the prince of darkness secretly manipulates the thoughts of men’s hearts and the actions of their lives, I cannot explain. I only know that he is a mighty, subtle, cunning adversary. He is “*the prince of the power of the*

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

air, who now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). And I know that men are taken captive by him at his will (2 Timothy 2:26).

Illustration: My Cousin’s Husband.

The great pity is that man’s bondage to the world, the flesh and the devil is a voluntary bondage. It is true, we were born in bondage. But from the days of your youth, you have willfully, continually chosen to remain in bondage. And because your bondage is the result of your own, willful rebellion and sin...

You are in bondage as a prisoner under the sentence of God’s holy law (Ezekiel 18:20).

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” (Ezekiel 18:20)

Will you hear me, my dear friend? The wrath of God is upon you! You are guilty. You are condemned. The sword of God’s justice is thirsty for your blood. God is angry with you; and God will slay you.

- You owe God a debt you cannot pay — Satisfaction!

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

- God demands of you a work you cannot perform — Righteousness!
- Your only hope is to flee to the City of Refuge — Christ Jesus!

I hope that you see your natural state and condition. If you do, there is hope. God has set before you a door of hope. And that Door is Christ. Enter in now and be saved forever.

That is my first point. **Grace finds us in a state of bondage and captivity, lost, helpless, ruined, and justly condemned.** This is the condition of all men by nature.

STATE OF DELIVERANCE

Grace brings us into a state of deliverance (Isaiah 61:1-3).

“¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are* bound; ² To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; ³ To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.” (Isaiah 61:1-3)

We are by nature the house of a strong man armed. But when Christ comes in, by the power of his omnipotent grace, he binds the strong man, casts him out, and takes the spoils of victory (Isaiah 49:24-26).

(Isaiah 49:24-26) “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? ²⁵ But thus saith the LORD, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. ²⁶ And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I the LORD *am* thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.”

This deliverance is the work of God alone. — “**Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord!**” As soon as a man is born of God, as soon as Christ is revealed in the heart, as soon as you believe on the Lord Jesus Christ by the irresistible grace and power of God the Holy Spirit, you are

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

saved. Deliverance is accomplished! Christ delivers his people from...

- The Charms of the World.
- The Power of Satan.
- The Dominion of Sin.
- The Curse of the Law (Isaiah 40:1-2).

(Isaiah 40:1-2) “Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. ² Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD’S hand double for all her sins.”

We are saved, if we trust Christ, saved forever. But our deliverance is not yet complete. Like the children of Israel after they had crossed the Red Sea, we have many enemies to face, many conflicts to endure, and many battles to fight in this wilderness before we can enter the promised land of rest. But I want you to know that...

STATE OF WAR

Grace sustains us in a state of war. The believer in this world is not in the land of peace. We are at war with the world, the flesh and the devil. The world allures us, the flesh opposes us, and the devil tempts us. But, blessed be

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

God, grace sustains us! (See Philippians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 12:9).

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 1:6)

“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2 Corinthians 12:9)

If you come to Christ, I do not promise you a life of ease, peace and tranquility. I promise you nothing in this world but pain, conflict, tribulation, and war. But in the midst of that warfare, I promise you peace with God and the assurance of victory at last.

In this world, we have trials and tribulations to endure.
We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

- Natural Trials.
- Providential Troubles.
- Religious Persecutions.
- Doctrinal Heresies.
- Spiritual Trials.

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

But whatever the trial may be, however severe the tribulation, the Lord will sustain you. Indeed, the very trials themselves are means by which the Lord God works our salvation (Isaiah 43:1-7).

(Isaiah 43:1-7) “But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called *thee* by thy name; thou *art* mine. ² When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. ³ For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. ⁴ Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. ⁵ Fear not: for I *am* with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; ⁶ I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; ⁷ *Even* every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.”

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

In this world we must endure manifold, and sometime great, temptations. As our Lord was tempted in all points, so must we be. Satan will not leave us alone. When it appears that he has, we are in real trouble. But when we are tempted our God will not forsake us! (1 Corinthians 10:13).

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*.” (1 Corinthians 10:13)

- He can hold us up.
- When we fall, he will raise us up again.
- When we sin, he will forgive us (1 John 1:9; 2:1-2).

Illustration: *Bunyan’s Pilgrim and the Roaring Lion*

And while we live in this world, we must endure a constant inner warfare with sin (Romans 7:22-24; Galatians 5:17).

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” (Galatians 5:17)

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

(Romans 7:14-8:1) “For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. ¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. ¹⁶ If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that *it is* good. ¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not. ¹⁹ For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. ²⁰ Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. ²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? ²⁵ I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin. — ^{8:1¶} *There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

The flesh and the spirit are at war with one another in my soul. And I know that as long as I live in this body of flesh

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

this warfare will continue. But God will sustain me by his grace. — **And I think I know, at least in part, why these things are so.**

- God will not let us trust in ourselves.
- God will ever make us aware that we are saved by grace alone.
- God will make his own tender with one another.
- God will make his own to know that Christ is all!

STATE OF VICTORY

Grace shall deliver us into a state of victory and dominion. Look at Isaiah's prophecy again (Isaiah 14:2-3, 24-27).

(Isaiah 14:2-3) “And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place: and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the LORD for servants and handmaids: and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors. ³ And it shall come to pass in the day that the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,”

(Isaiah 14:24) “The LORD of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand:”

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

(Isaiah 14:26-27) “This *is* the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this *is* the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. ²⁷ For the LORD of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul *it*? and his hand *is* stretched out, and who shall turn it back?”

Soon we shall be free! The God of Peace will bruise Satan under our feet shortly! In the end we will rule over our oppressors. “**And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall give thee rest**” (Revelation 7:14-16; 21:4; 22:1-6). He will give you...

- Rest from Your Sorrows.
- Rest from Your Fears.
- Rest from Your Hard Bondage.

(Revelation 7:14-17) “And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. ¹⁶ They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”

(Revelation 21:1-5) “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ² And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. ⁴ And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. ⁵ And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

(Revelation 22:1-6) “And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. ² In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, *was there* the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations. ³ And there

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: ⁴ And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads. ⁵ And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. ⁶ And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.”

Illustration: *The Robins’ Shells*

APPLICATION

The work of grace is...

1. A Stupendous Work — This is the work of God.
2. An Effectual Work.
3. A Sure Work (Isaiah 49:24-26).
4. A Work which God is ready to perform for all who call upon Him (Amos 5:9; Psalm 72:4, 12, 13).

It is he “that strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress.” (Amos 5:9)

FOUR STAGES OF GRACE

(Psalms 72:4) “He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.”

(Psalms 72:12-13) “For he shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and *him* that hath no helper. ¹³ He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy.”

These are the four stages of grace experienced by all God’s elect. Grace finds us **in a state of bondage**, brings us into **a state of deliverance**, sustains us in a state of war, and will at last give us an everlasting **state of victory** in and with our Lord Jesus Christ. No wonder the prophet said we shall be a people “*wondered at!*” Oh, may God graciously perform these wondrous works in you for Christ’s sake.

Amen.