

John 1:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

Analysis

Believers testify: 'of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace' (charin anti charitos). The word 'pleroma' (fullness) indicates Christ possesses complete divine attributes and blessings. From this inexhaustible reservoir, believers continuously receive. The phrase 'charin anti charitos' is debated: 'grace upon grace' (accumulating grace), 'grace replacing grace' (new covenant replacing old), or 'grace corresponding to grace' (Christ's grace matched to our need). Whatever the precise meaning, the emphasis is on abundant, continuous, overflowing grace from Christ's inexhaustible fullness.

Historical Context

Paul would later develop 'fullness' theology extensively (Colossians 1:19, 2:9). Early believers experienced ongoing grace—not merely initial forgiveness but daily provision. The phrase may also contrast the giving of the law through Moses (verse 17) with the greater grace through Christ—one gracious dispensation replaced by another, fuller one.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Study Questions

1. How have you experienced grace 'upon grace' in your walk with Christ?
2. What does it mean to receive from Christ's 'fullness,' and how does this shape daily dependence on Him?

Interlinear Text

καὶ ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἔλαβομεν
And of G3588 fullness G4138 his G846 we G2249 all G3956 have G2983

καὶ χάριτος· ἀντὶ χάριτος·
And grace for grace G2532 G5485 G473 G5485

Additional Cross-References

Colossians 1:19 (Parallel theme): For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

Romans 5:2 (Grace): By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Ephesians 1:23 (Parallel theme): Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Ephesians 3:19 (Parallel theme): And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

Romans 5:17 (Grace): For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

John 3:34 (Parallel theme): For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

Matthew 13:12 (Parallel theme): For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Colossians 2:3 (Parallel theme): In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Romans 8:9 (Parallel theme): But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Matthew 3:14 (Parallel theme): But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

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