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Faith alone in Christ alone

Greetings to you from all of us here at Grace Evangelistic Ministries. Our souls are saturated with gratitude to God for His indelible mark on this ministry. We cannot thank Him enough for what He is doing for and through Grace Evangelistic Ministries. He continues to encourage us in every sense of the word. We constantly pause to meditate on the many facets of the grace of God towards His children. Indeed, without exception, every believer is the product of the grace of God. The great Apostle Paul was directed to record an inventory of his life, achievement, and service to the Lord. In the end, he concluded without equivocation: "But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them [i.e., the other apostles], yet not I [Paul], but the grace of God with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). He realized that apart from the grace of God, he would have amounted to nothing! Paul knew that apart from the grace of God, even salvation was impossible. To this effect, he poignantly affirmed, "For by the grace you have been saved [Greek: sozo in the perfect tense, i.e., saved in a moment and remains saved forever] through faith; and that not of yourselves [i.e., devoid of human contributions or abilities], it is the gift of God; not as a result of works [such as making Christ Lord, baptism for salvation, reaffirmation of faith, dedication, or rededication of one's life, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9). God, in His infinite wisdom, has found a way to eradicate boasting in heaven—a way of grace! In fact, there will be no copy machines in heaven to replicate the original sin of Satan—pride. We know that when we get to heaven, we will fully comprehend the amazing grace of God.

We are continually thankful to the Almighty God for His grace provision. Every day we witness the evidence that He under girds this ministry. Indeed, we remain grateful that He uses His children as vessels, and through them, He pours out His financial blessings, so that we may fulfill our part of His eternal plan. Just as He is the One who called us to serve Him, He is the One who meets our every need. We have confidence that He will continue to provide for His work, so long as we remain responsive to His direction. Would you join us in thanking God for having elected to use you and us as His vessels of honor?

The ultimate objective of Grace Evangelistic Ministries is to bring glory and honor to God who has called us to serve Him. We recognize that out of His infinite mercy, we have been privileged to bring messages of hope to both unbelievers and believers. Many unbelievers across the globe have been regenerated through, "faith alone, in Christ alone." Also, many believers have accepted the challenge to make Bible doctrine and its application the number one priority in their lives. As a result we continue to receive letters of appreciation from those who have been blessed by this ministry. On the one hand, as we read these letters, we rejoice in that your prayers and financial support are indeed yielding eternal dividends. On the other hand, we channel our praises to the One to whom our success belongs. To Him alone, we stand in salute!

Fellow believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we encourage you to hold tenaciously to sound Bible doctrine, to give learning, thinking, and applying it your highest priority. Bible doctrine is the anchor that provides tranquility of soul, contentment in life's successes, true happiness, and capacity to enjoy His blessings in time and in eternity to come. It is heartbreaking to realize that many believers have yet to discover that Bible doctrine is the ULTIMATE glue prepared by God to hold believers together in the devil's world. The importance of Bible doctrine and its application is priceless! Its benefits are beyond measure! No wonder the Psalmist persuaded: "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8a) "How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!" (Psalm 119:103) Clearly, whatever is sweeter than "honey" must be more than good! Bible doctrine tastes sweeter than honey; therefore, it is more than good. Consequently, daily perception and application of Bible doctrine is the only means by which believers can tap into and share God's happiness and His unique love. Indeed, anyone who removes Bible doctrine from the equation of his life has no spiritual life at all--he has become the manufacturer of his own misery!

A believer's daily intake and application of Bible doctrine is similar to the experience of many a gold miner. Armed with only sketchy knowledge of where the gold may be located and a few basic tools, the prospector begins a somewhat tedious but potentially rewarding adventure when starts digging a gold mine. He may dig five feet and find nothing except that his tools work. He digs another twenty feet, but still no gold, just evidence that the potential exists. But finally, after days and weeks and months of sweat and toil, the day comes when he locates a lode. He is rightly overwhelmed with the joy of success and the realization that he has before him abundant wealth. Similarly, when a believer begins with nothing more than the knowledge that spirituality depends on naming sins to God, so that the Holy Spirit can fill him and he can learn the Word of God, his progress may not seem very fruitful. Sometimes he may think that he is wasting his time. He may even allege that Bible doctrine does not work. But if he is PERSISTENT in learning and applying Bible doctrine to his daily circumstances, after many days, weeks, months or even years, he will come to the point in his spiritual life where he can say with the Apostle Paul: "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain [!]" (Philippians 1:21). And the believer can further declare: "But whatever things [wealth, success, fame and others] were gained to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing VALUE of knowing [through Bible doctrine] Christ Jesus, my Lord " (Philippians 3:7.8a). It is at that point in your spiritual life that you realize nothing, and I mean nothing, should ever matter more to you than your continuous fellowship with the invisible but real God!

We pause to thank everyone who has become a partner, in every sense of the word, with us. The work is enormous, but we thank God because the battle and the success of our endeavors belong entirely to Him. He is the One who has called every one of us to become partakers in bringing glory and honor to Him through Grace Evangelistic Ministries. We consider it a great privilege to be in His service. From the beginning, we never earned or deserved the opportunity to serve Him, and that remains true today and that will be true forever!

We would like to assure those who are serving the Lord through this ministry, that as a missionary, Bible doctrine, and grace-oriented organization, our objectives have not changed. Our goals are three-fold: First, we evangelize unbelievers with the simple gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ—faith alone in Christ alone. Second, we follow up with those who have responded positively to our message.

We assist these new believers in their spiritual growth by providing them with sound Bible doctrine by means of literature or audiotapes. And third, we identify those to whom the Holy Spirit has given a communication gift. As funds become available, if these individuals are motivated to learn sound Bible doctrine, we send them to recommended seminaries to further equip them with the tools necessary for them to accurately divide the Word of God and precisely present its message to others.

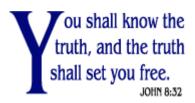
Grace Evangelistic Ministries never solicits funds. We believe that God provides financial support for this missionary organization by permitting believers to exercise their free will with regard to becoming partners in spreading the good news of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus making the gospel and sound Bible teaching available to everyone without regard to ethnic background or race. That choice is solely a matter between the believer and the Lord Jesus Christ; however, we do ask that believers remember us in their prayers as we toil to glorify God to the maximum.

We pause to pray that God, in His infinite mercy, would cause the infallible Word of God, which you take in and apply on a consistent basis, to serve as a source of encouragement and comfort to you as you live and operate in the enemy's territory.

"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him." (Nahum 1:7)

"The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms." (Deuteronomy 33:27) Stay with Bible doctrine; for "... He rewards those who earnestly seek Him." (Hebrews 11:6b)

Forever in His matchless grace, Moses C. Onwubiko, President Grace Evangelistic Ministries



DOCTRINE OF GRACE

By Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko

Dear Heavenly Father,

We pause to pray for those who will study this important doctrine. Father, we pray that the individuals' mind may be fully enlightened with regard to Your unfathomable, unparalleled, immeasurable, and matchless grace. We humbly ask that their inner eyes may be opened to behold "how wide and long and high and deep" is Your unchanging grace towards the entire human race. May their understanding of this doctrine serve as a link to other biblical doctrines, such as salvation by grace and the eternal security of those who have personally trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. May Your children, for whom this glimpse of Your grace is new, enjoy a sense of relief at the end of this biblical exposition. And we ask that Your promise in John 8:32 which states, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free." be fulfilled for those who will approach this teaching in humility. May they be set free from the bondage of legalism. Thank you, Father for answering this prayer, which is offered in the Name of the King of kings, Lord of lords, and our Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

Theologically, grace is the most difficult doctrine in all of Scripture. Most all believers rejoice at hearing the word "grace;" however, only a handful of believers have a grasp of this subject. Nonetheless, it is the foundation of everything that we are, or will ever be, in this life, or in eternity to come. It is the foundation of our so great salvation, the foundation of our atonement, namely, propitiation, justification, regeneration, reconciliation, sanctification, redemption and adoption into the Royal family of God. Grace is a perfect mirror of Who and what God is; and it is a reflection of His handwork.

As a believer grows in his spiritual life to the point where he has an understanding of the grace of God towards him, his life and his spiritual sense of destiny are forever changed. Another way of saying this is, show me a believer who understands grace and applies it, and I will show you a believer that truly understands God; and has great tranquility in his soul. Grace causes one to relax; it replaces pride, and brings one to a total humility. Grace makes one aware that whatever he is, or could become, spiritually depends totally on who and what God is. With this in mind, let us review a prayer of David, recorded in the Old Testament. Cleary, David understood grace:

"... Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of Israel our father, forever and ever. 'Thine, O Lord is the greatness and power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in heavens and the earth; Thine is the dominion, O Lord, and thou dost exalt Thyself as head over all. Both riches and honor come from Thee, and Thou dost rule over all, and in Thy hand is power and might; and it lies in Thine hand to make great, and to strengthen everyone. 'Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise Thy glorious name. BUT WHO am I and who are my people that we should be able to offer as generous as this? For all things come from Thee, and from Thy hand we have given Thee. 'For we are sojourners before Thee ... O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided to build Thee a house for Thy holy name, it is from Thy hand, and all is Thine. 'Since I know, O my God, that Thou triest the heart and delightest in uprightness, I, in the integrity of my heart, have willingly offered these things; so now with joy I have seen Thy people, who are present here, make their offerings willingly to Thee. 'O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, preserve this forever in the intentions of the heart of Thy people, and direct their heart to Thee [in the Name of the One who saved us. Amen]" (1 Chronicles 29:10-18).

What a marvelous grace attitude by King David! He understood perfectly that apart from the grace of God that he would have weighed zero on the scale of the Supreme Court of Heaven. At this juncture, may I assert that apart from the grace of God, no one can ever amount to anything before God. Apart from His grace, no believer, even the most self-righteous, self-elevated, and pious, could ever qualify to enter Heaven, for we fail God every day. If we do not fail Him in our actions, we fail Him in thoughts. Keep that in your frame of reference as we study this vital subject, a subject that has been the target of distortion for centuries.

Here is the outline for this in-depth study of grace:

- 1. Introduction to grace
- 2. Definition of grace
- 3. God displays His grace in creation
- 4. God's grace in the Garden of Eden:
- a. Before the fall
- b. After the fall
- 5. God's grace toward Abraham
- 6. God's grace towards Israel
- 7. God's grace provides a Savior
- 8. Grace in salvation of mankind
- 9. The Apostle Paul—a man of grace
- 10. The satanic attack on Grace
- 11 Grace vs. works in salvation
- 12 Spiritual orientation to Grace:

- a. In marriage
- b. In human relationship
- 13. The application of grace by Joseph
- 14. King Saul, an anti grace believer
- 15. King David applies grace:
- a. Toward Saul
- b. Toward Mephiboseth
- 16. Sharing in God's grace.

As we approach this doctrine, we do not approach it as though we have attained to the fullness of the understanding and application of grace, but as those who have been graced out by God; and have been given the privilege to communicate His grace. Let us begin to develop our outline.

INTRODUCTION TO GRACE

The word "grace," "hen" in the Hebrew and "charis" in the Greek, has been employed by the Holy Spirit through the writers of Scripture to convey a variety of meanings ranging from goodwill and mercy to "kindness given by a master to his slave." It has come to signify the kindness of God towards man. We are going to restrict this exposition of the doctrine of grace to deeds or favors bestowed by God to humanity, or given by one person to another. There term that we need to keep in mind throughout this study, it is "UNMERITED FAVOR." Many believers have come short of understanding grace simply because of their failure to fully understand this phrase. What is an UNMERITED FAVOR? The English meaning is clear; it is deed, such as an act of kindness, given to one who is undeserving. If the one bestowing this favor discovers even an iota of merit in the recipient, then it is no longer an UNMERITED FAVOR, but a reward! Let us conclude the introduction by offering four illustrations:

Illustration #1: When I was in High School, I had a fellow classmate whose academic performance was below standard. This fellow later dropped out of school. Apparently, he suffered from a form of mental retardation. He tried hard, but when he took examinations the results never reflected on his hard work.

On several occasions he was caught cheating on examinations. Once he copied from my examination paper without my awareness. He was not caught during the examination, but afterward. How did the teacher know that he cheated? The student copied my answers word-for-word from. To further indict himself, he copied my name too! On another occasion he copied directly from our textbook, including the phrase, "...As we studied in the previous chapter." I know that it will cause some of you to laugh; however that is not my purpose.

Imagine for a moment that the teacher ignores his academic crimes and passes him with an honor grade. Then, based on his academic records, the student applies and is accepted at one of the world's best universities. In this case, what the teacher did for him is nothing but an UNMERITED FAVOR!

Illustration #2: The government has just advertised a position to be filled as soon as possible. The starting salary for this executive position is \$150,000 a year. After reviewing the requirements for the position, you apply for the position, even though you are not fully qualified.

During the job interview, the interviewer reveals that he has interviewed hundreds of applicants who hold job-related doctoral degrees and each had completed more than fifteen years in the field, both of which are principle qualifications. Upon reviewing your curriculum vitae, the interviewer discovers that you have no high school diploma, let alone any degree, and not a day's experience in the field. Just as he was about to laugh at your application and to tell you that you did not qualify for the position, the department head walks in, and says, "Give this gentleman the position and ensure that he gets all the

necessary training." The interviewer, recognizing that this is an order from his superior, leans back in his chair in total shock. Reluctantly he leans forward and says to you, "Sir, you are hired!" That's grace, an UNMERITED FAVOR! Obviously, you never earned or deserved a position of this kind--you know it, your employer knows it, and those who know you know it.

Illustration #3: Imagine owing the Internal Revenue Service \$1,000,000, in back taxes, interests and penalties. You are arrested, cuffed, and promised that you will stay in jail until the last penny is paid. The IRS has confiscated every known asset and your Bank account over drawn by \$10,000. As far as you are concerned, you are helpless to do anything about the situation. In fact, you have concluded that you are going to live and die in that prison since you cannot come up with the money.

One day, a wealthy stranger hears about your situation and writes two checks. One covering your debt to your bank and the other for every penny you owe the IRS. Then the Judge issues a release order. The jailor walks into your cell and says, "Madam, you are free to go, for an anonymous person has paid all your debts!" You have received an UNMERITED FAVOR! That's what grace is all about!

Illustration #4: Luke records our final illustration: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the [HELPLESS] man, passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side [without showing him grace]. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the [HELPLESS] man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he [the Samaritan] took out two silver coins [a lot of money at that time] and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have'" (Luke 10:30-35). Again, this man is the object of an UNMERITED FAVOR. He probably would have died, had the Samaritan—a total stranger—not come to his rescue.

From these four illustrations, some principles emerge:

- The life history or biography of the one who receives an unmerited favor is never an issue; however, if it were considered, then the deed is no longer an unmerited favor but a reward.
- · The credit belongs entirely to the one doing the favor.
- · Therefore, once the gracious act takes place, it becomes an irrevocable one.

This brings us to the definition of our subject.

DEFINITION:

The Lexical Aids (Greek Dictionary) to the New Testament defines grace in this way: "A favor done without expectation of return; absolute freeness of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and free heartedness of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor." The exposition of the doctrine of grace ANCHORS on this definition. Therefore, we need to expound on it:

- 1. "A FAVOR DONE WITHOUT EXPECTATION OF RETURN": Many believers often have ulterior motives when they help others. It is a wrong application of doctrine; however, it is not within the scope of this exposition of the biblical doctrine of grace to cover that subject now. We can deal with it at a later time. What we have here is "a favor done without expectation of return." Who does the favor? God does the favor. It is imperative that we examine some of the attributes of God:
- 1. God is Righteous: "Righteous are You, O Lord" (Psalm 119:137a) God has always been righteous; there has never been a time when He was not. In addition, righteousness is the foundation of His throne. The Psalmist declared: "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne . . .
- ." (Psalm 89:14a) Ironically, a synonym for an ulterior motive is hypocrisy. It is a blasphemous

assumption to think that God would have an ulterior motive when He does a favor for any helpless member of the human race!

2. God is veracity: God cannot and will not lie. If God could lie just one time, it would destroy His integrity, which is insulated in righteousness and justice. Though the thought is blasphemous, it would dash forever our hope in Him for eternal salvation, and Satan and all the rebellious angels would escape the Lake of fire! However, the Bible makes it clear that "... His righteousness endures forever." (Psalm 111:3) Indeed, every believer should take great comfort to know that nothing in heaven or on earth could ever move God to lie. Concerning God's veracity, in the Old Testament Moses wrote, "God is not a man, that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should change his mind " (Numbers 23:19) God cannot say one thing and mean another. For instance, in Ephesians 2:8,9, the Word of God is crystal clear: "For it is by grace [UNMERITED FAVOR] you have been saved [Greek: sozo in the perfect tense, i.e., saved in a moment and remains saved forever!], through faith [a non-meritorious system of learning and belief], and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, so that no one can boast." The PILLAR that holds everything in Ephesians 2:8 and 9 is GRACE. Apart from the grace of God, one's faith in Christ is meaningless. And the Greek meaning of grace is nothing short of an unmerited favor. Many false teachers have tried to add works to saving grace, such as baptism and lordship salvation, but by doing so they have caused many to err. What is most disturbing is that many of these false teachers are theologians. They ignore the interpretive principle that theologians call "illegitimate totality transfer." Illegitimate totality transfer is an attempt to bring meanings to a word that cannot be possible in light of the context. For instance when one suggests any work as a condition for salvation, he has a head-on-collision with Romans 11:6: "And if [salvation faith is] by grace, then it is no longer by works; if it were [works salvation], grace would no longer be grace." Furthermore, those who say that grace means that one should bear good fruit are polluting the word. Scripture reveals that in the thinking of God, grace means only one thing: UNMERITED FAVOR, and that's it! 2. God is immutable: Immutability means that God cannot change. All of His attributes are in perfect harmony, including immutability. Neither His love, nor His justice, nor His righteousness—nor any other attribute--can ever change. God is absolutely stable. It is the quintessence of human arrogance, or worse, a blasphemous assumption to ever think or imagine that a person's obnoxious behavior can cause an attribute of God to change, or could cause God to change His mind or His policy. Today, millions of believers try to humanize God, and by doing so make mockery of themselves and their worship. They shout "Hallelujah!" and clap their hands, jump high and higher, thinking that God is jumping along with them. They think that they can manipulate God's love. If we, as humans, were tasked to deal in with the instability of all mankind in love, we would likely have had a heart attack or a stroke brought on by high-powered blood pressure on the first day. His love does not swing like the pendulum of human love. God's happiness cannot depend on any human merit because His attribute of love (1 John 4:8) is fixed. He loves us the same whether we are failing or succeeding in our spiritual lives. Consider how many times you fail God in a day, a week, a month, or a year? How many times do you pause to name those failures per 1 John 1:9? The truth of the matter is that God is Immutable, and that no aspect of His essence can be altered by human effort. His Immutability guards the rest of His essence or attributes, namely, eternal life, Justice, Sovereignty, Omnipresence, Omniscience and Omnipotence. In the light of His Immutability, Malachi recorded God saying, "I the Lord do not change" (Malachi 3:6a). The author of the book of Hebrews affirmed: "But You [God the Father] remain the same, and your years will never end" (Hebrews 1:12b). Regarding God the Son, he asserts: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8). Therefore, it makes sense to conclude that if God says that one's salvation is the product of His grace (and He did: Ephesians 2:8), He meant just that, and NOTHING ELSE! Now that we have established that it is ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE for God to tell a lie or to change His mind with regard to His promises, we can go forward to examine the phrase, "A FAVOR DONE WITHOUT EXPECTATION OF RETURN." Let us go back to Ephesians 2:8: "For by grace are you saved [in a moment and remain saved forever] through faith...." Keep in mind that in the provision of salvation, mankind is always the recipient while God is the provider.

MANKIND AS THE RECIPIENT OF SALVATION: It is necessary to take a close look at the condition of man after the fall, outside the Garden of Eden. The instant Adam and Eve chose to disobey God they became spiritually dead. As a result of their sin, they constructed a BIG, impassable, line of

demarcation between themselves and God. They instantly became spiritually dead, helpless spiritual corpses. It should be pointed out that the Holy Spirit has used words and phrases in the Bible that a human mind can comprehend. Everyone understands that a corpse is incapable of doing anything. That is exactly the spiritual condition of everyone born into the human race. The apostle Paul put it this way, "Therefore, just as through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world, and [spiritual] death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned" (Romans 5:12). In light of this verse, because of Adam's original sin, everyone born into this world arrives spiritually dead. What can God have to do with a spiritually dead corpse? Or more to the point, what can a spiritually dead man have to do with God—his enemy? Of course nothing! The apostle Paul asserted, "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behaviors [i.e., your spiritual death]" (Colossians 1:21). In the human realm, what things do enemies have in common? At least animosity and the potential for war. Another question: when two enemy aircraft are engaged in a battle, what do they do to each other? Smile and wave? No, they endeavor to destroy one another. Similarly, as God's enemies, God's objective would have been to destroy every member of the human race, "[since] all have sinned [or have become God's enemy] and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). However, He chose another route, namely, grace.

GOD THE PROVIDER OF SALVATION:

"But God demonstrates His own love in this: While we are still sinners, Christ died as a substitute for us" (Romans 5:8). "You see, at just at the right time, when we were still powerless [helpless], Christ died for the [sinners]" (Romans 5:6). After God imputed all the sins of the whole world to Christ on the cross, and judged every one of them in His justice and fairness, He took His salvation solution to every member of the human race. But there was a problem. Those for whom this good news was intended were spiritually dead; therefore, they could not possibly comprehend the message. "The man [a spiritually dead person] without the Spirit does not accept [or understand] the things that come from the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:14). Because of this, God the Holy Spirit comes to the rescue of these spiritually dead corpses and temporarily awakens them so that He can help them understand what the three members of the Trinity have done for them. The Holy Spirit does not go beyond making the issue of salvation clear, for that would be an intrusion on the freewill of mankind. Why does God come to our rescue? We might think that He had an option to let us die and go to the Lake of fire forever. As God He does not need our help to maintain His eternal state, nor does he need us to make Him happy. The author of the Book of Job emphatically questioned: "Can a man be profitable to God? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself' (Job 22:2). And God Himself unequivocally poses the question, "Who has a claim against me that I must pay? Everything under heaven belongs to me" (Job 41:11). The question the, is why did He choose to rescue us—the totally depraved ones in every sense of the word? Let us go to the Scripture for the answers: "But God, being rich in MERCY, because of His great LOVE with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)" (Ephesians 2:4,5). His act was entirely consistent with His mercy and unique love toward mankind, the depraved ones. The BIG question is, when you as a believer perform an act of mercy to a helpless individual, do you expect to receive something in return? You may pause for a moment and meditate on this question. If man with an old sin nature can help a helpless individual without an expectation of return, how about God, the Author of mercy? Hence the partial definition of grace, "A favor done WITHOUT an expectation of return...."

God does not benefit from us, we benefit from Him. God's concerns and actions toward man overwhelmed King David, and he poignantly asked, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?" (Psalm 8:4). Therefore, one can conclude based on the phrase "a favor done without expectation of return" that God, on the basis of His great mercy extends His grace in the provision of salvation to those who believe in Christ with no condition attached.

Therefore, no biblical scholar can do justice to grace by adding anything to it. The apostle Paul wrote, "But if it [salvation] is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace" (Romans 11:6). The apostle Paul is saying in essence, that no one can add anything to grace

without destroying its meaning. With this last statement in mind, I say to you, who have personally believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, may "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power [whose power? God's] that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (11 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 3:20-21).

OUR TRIP TO AFRICA

To be continued in Volume 16-2

Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko and Mrs. Debby A. Hagar (a Berachah member for more than 30 years) have recently returned from their missionary work in Africa, where they labored in Imo and Plateau states of Nigeria. They report that they had a wonderful time of ministry. The constant visitation of our missionary team to the Grace Evangelistic Ministries, Headquarters in Jos, Plateau state is truly yielding a great dividend for the glory of our God. There continues to be a great demand for our publication and doctrinal audiotapes. We hardly have enough publications and blank tapes to meet the demand of the positive believers. Furthermore, many are turning to Christ from reading the pamphlet, "Riding the Death Train."

BRIEF REPORT

Forwarded by Mrs. Debby A. Hager

Owerri, Imo State

March 19, 2000 Reverend Moses C. Onwubiko and Debby A. Hagar arrived in Owerri, the Imo State's Capital. Darlington E. Elekwa, African chapter president for Grace Evangelistic Ministries and Pastor Tony Sani from Jos met them along with Rev. Dr. Dike and his assistant, Peter.

Pneumatology—the doctrine of the Holy Spirit--was taught for 2 hours each evening, March 20-29 with a question and answer session March 30. The program was presented by Grace Evangelistic Ministries and hosted by Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Tony Dike at the Fizzy Model School, Owerri. The program was advertised with flyers, banners and through the Imo Broadcasting Service (IBS).

A detailed, thorough investigation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues – the bonafide time and use, coupled with a study of the modern day tongues movement was presented. Free books were available for all the participants. A promise to provide the teaching on audiotapes to those hungry believers was made. Many expressed interest in additional teaching of this caliber – one from Owerri in addition to others now plans to attend a Seminary recommended by GEM.

This study is critical and timely for Nigerian people. Christians abound, but they are in bondage to enormous amounts of false teaching—salvation by works, tongues, healings, miracles, tithing for blessing, and no eternal security for those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. 40% unemployment has driven the uneducated or barely educated into the ministry as a business and means of income. GEM intends to shine the light of truth into the darkness. "Know the truth and the truth shall set you free". Rev. Onwubiko always conclude his teaching with a gospel message and an invitation to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

JOS, PLATEAU STATE

The program, "Family Forum" was presented each evening for 2 hours April 3 - 19. It focused on marriage—designed to attract believers and unbelievers to both teach and evangelize. It was announced through flyers and on the radio as well as out of the GEM's office. Four times, Grace Evangelistic Ministries' representatives were featured on the radio, a popular radio station and a gateway to nine

Nigerian states.

Debby addressed several large groups of School children in both Owerri and Jos. Emphasis was placed on the gospel message introduced through the Essence of God. Teaching aid materials were used throughout the entire program. "Handbooks for Parents" and "The Great Adventure for Children" from R.B. Thieme, Jr. Bible Ministries were distributed free of charge to children, parents, and teachers. In each visitation, the program was welcomed with a lot of enthusiasm and participants asked that we make it an annual event. The people are eager and very receptive. With a return visit in mind, Debby plans to channel children's Bible doctrinal study materials to Nigeria.

OVERVIEW

GEM's emphasis from Debby's perspective seems to be: Evangelize and teach the adults and children, and challenge the pastors, or those with gift of Pastor-Teacher. The GEM's office had a constant flow of traffic. The office was out of Pastor Thieme's books, and blank tapes for duplicating his doctrines on tapes. One is so spoiled seeing a library full of books at Berachah church in Houston, Texas. It is painful to see so much positive volition and supplies so low. The ministry is just in its beginning stages and there is no doubt that God will provide – as He is already doing. Pray that one day, Grace Evangelistic Ministries would be able to send a container full of books and tapes for the Nigerian people. Currently, we have a 10-tape limit per month for a household. GEM will increase the limit as the Lord provides. Rev. Onwubiko's publications are now being reprinted in Africa.

Besides the stated agenda, Moses C. Onwubiko's presence seems to generate another entire layer of events. "Airport ministries" and "Hotel ministries" developed each place they went. Rev. Moses' hotel room turned into office/embassy visited by positive friends, family and pastors. Anyone who inquires about Onwubiko was presented to him.

Two unscheduled events were open doors for us: 1. The Obedient School in Oyigbo, Cross Rivers State hosted a field day for all the schools within the County. Rev. Onwubiko was invited, and he gave the gospel message to the entire crowd, including students, invited guests, families and friends. 2. The prison in Owerri: He was also invited to speak to the prison inmates. They gathered in the chapel, and he gave them the message of eternal hope with a crystal clear, unadulterated gospel message. They were promised that "Riding the Death Train" and "Comfort in Suffering" would be made available to them once they become available.

God has provided through Moses an incredible network of family and friends across Nigeria, which allows this ministry to function as no other could. Truly God is working in Nigeria. The people are warm, open, positive, intelligent and inquisitive. They have turned to God in these times of economic and leadership stress. But these God fearing people are in bondage to false gospel message and doctrine. Thank God that he has sent another man named Moses, as His servant, to set his people free!

OUR SPECIAL TRIBUTE

To Pastor R. B. Thieme, Jr., on his 50th anniversary as the pastor of Berachah church, Houston Texas.

We considered it a great privilege to have participated with Berachah Church members and associates who came from every corner of the globe to pay a great tribute to pastor R. B. Thieme, Jr., on 7 May 2000. What a celebration! For us it was a day of good emotions, but we know that over the years, his ministry must surely have given the host of elect angels many opportunities to cheer as doctrines became clear and many have advanced in their spiritual lives thanks to his faithfulness to the Word!

His lucid presentation of Bible doctrine, through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit has, for each of

us, made the daily celebration of the Unique Son of God, namely His birth, His unfathomable victory on the cross, His death, burial, resurrection, and ascension a reality. The celebration in Houston was, for us, the greatest in the Christian history of this generation. To our great God who made it possible for R. B. Thieme, Jr. to stand tall among the greatest Bible teachers of this generation, we stand in salute!

Pastor Thieme, we know that you have many spiritual children in the Berachah Battalion, many of whom have gone to be with the Lord in a place of no more sorrow, no more pain, a place where old things have passed away. Over the years, we have heard or seen the enemy of the infallible Word of God mount opposition against you in every imaginable way. We have watched you ridiculed and attacked from every angle. What's even more intriguing is that we have seen the fulfillment of the Lord's promise, ". . . and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" fulfilled for you. To the faithful One, we give a standing ovation!

The spiritual race continues. You have passed the relay-batons to many. Your reward will based on your consistency and faithfulness in teaching accurately, the unadulterated Word of God. Indeed, you have fulfilled your assignment as a pastor-teacher, resulting in the glorification of God to the maximum. In fact, only in the eternal state can the believers world-wide who have associated with you understand the magnitude of your sacrifice because of your love that you have for the King of kings, and Lord of lords, our Savior Jesus Christ.

Unless God has answered pastor Sam Ammons' prayer and has given you another 50 years, we want you to know that we will continue to make your doctrinal materials available, especially to the hungry believers in Africa. We shall hold fast the relay-baton, which you have passed to our missionary team.

Doctrinally speaking, because of the grace of God and, as a man of great humility, you will one day have the privilege of joining the apostle Paul in his celebration: "For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have finished the race, I have [safeguarded] the [doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ]. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge will [in His immeasurable grace] award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who [will hold their spiritual-relay-batons in the right position and run successfully]—[those] who have longed for His appearing" (II Timothy 4:6-7).

Pastor R. B. Thieme, Jr., one more standing ovation for the job well executed! Grace-oriented people everywhere, here and in Africa, will be forever grateful to God for what He has done through you. We salute you!

REV. MOSES C. ONWUBIKO'S Evangelistic Meeting Schedule

January 27 – March 15: 2000: US

March 16 – April 24: 2000: Nigeria (Owerri and Olu, Imo State. Bukuru and Jos in Plateau State)

April 25 – July 27: US

July 28 – August 25: (with Mr. George H. Mueller: Ghana, Lithuania or Germany)

August 26 – November 30: US **December 1 – December 28:** Nigeria

December 29 – January 18 2001: Cameroon

God has opened a door for our ministry in a country that we have not visited. The demand for our doctrinal materials from that part of the world is overwhelming. We thank God who has opened the door.

PREVIOUS LETTER (received October 1999).

Dear Sir,

Greetings to you in the holy Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I hope you are doing well by His grace. Thank you for your sound bible doctrinal books that you sent to me recently. The books are, "Comfort in Suffering", "Riding the Death Train", "God's Plan After salvation" and the "Eternal security of The Believer". God bless you Reverend Onwubiko.

I would like to forward my application to you. I was touched, thrilled and excited after reading your sound Bible doctrinal books so much that my wife and I have decided to form a grace Evangelistic Ministries Audio tape group, that will lead us to open up a local church. After some period of time, we would like to invite you and your missionary team to come to Zimbabwe.

Thank you.

Yours in Christ, Pastor, South Province Zimbabwe

CURRENT LETTER (received April 2000).

Dear Sir.

Thank you for your letter received on December 15, 1999 dated November 19, 1999.

I would like to thank you very much for your response to my call and vision on true Bible doctrine and the start of Grace Evangelistic Ministries branch in Matabeleland here in Zimbabwe.

Many more thanks for the parcel of books that I received on the 2nd of February 2000. May the Almighty God bless you.

I am writing to inform you that we have opened a branch, called Grace Bible Church in Matabeleland. I have written to the African headquarters of Grace Evangelistic Ministries, in Jos Nigeria requesting for Bible doctrine on audiotapes. We would very much appreciate any other form of assistance be it financial or material as we prepare to extend our campaign to spread the gospel of Christ to the vast remote rural people here in Zimbabwe. I know that God will provide for us. Abraham said, "On the mountain of the lord, it shall be provided" Jehovah Jire (Genesis 22:14).

We are looking forward to inviting you in August 2000 for a Crusade.

Extend my sincere greetings and regards to the entire Grace Evangelistic Ministries.

Yours in His service,

Pastor—Zimbabwe

Please join us in prayer as we pray for the group and for a future Crusade in Zimbabwe.

God Will Provide

"God will provide" is the attitude of Grace Evangelistic Ministries. We do not beg for money. We believe that if this ministry is honoring to God, He will provide EVERYTHING necessary for its continuation. "God will provide" was Abraham's reassurance to his confused son, Isaac (Genesis 22:8). When God gives an assignment to us as His servants, He is under obligation to provide for the job. When God does not provide, it could mean one of three things. One, God may not want the job accomplished at that particular time. Two, it could mean that those who are to carry out the mission are not prepared to do so yet. Lastly, it could be a sign that God does not want to have any part of the ministry. Therefore, it is absolutely foolish and arrogant for us as believers to try to devise a way to accomplish a task in the name of God when He has already rejected it. For example, when we use gimmicks to manipulate people to contribute money, we are not glorifying God. It is blasphemy on our part to think that God does not know how to provide for the work which He has assigned. Take a moment and think about the following question: When we work to accomplish a job which God has rejected, who will be glorified in the end? God? Or me?

Letters to Grace Evangelistic Ministries

As you read these letters that have been sent to us, please join us in giving thanks to our Almighty God who does all the work. Our purpose in sharing these letters is to show that your partnership in financial and prayer support to this ministry is indeed yielding fruit to the glory of the One who called us to serve Him.

Dear Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko,

It affords me a great pleasure to write you this letter. In fact, seeing you for the second time in Jos, I am confident to say boldly that I am the happiest man of all. I cannot quantify my joy! I thank god who made it possible for you to visit us again.

Regarding your last trip in August, I was richly blessed by your exposition of the Word of God. That visit in August has resulted in a drastic change in my spiritual life. I hold tenaciously to the truth, which you taught us.

What baffles me is how you always make yourself available to teach this important, inevitable doctrine and to us individually. It is sad that you have to suffer so much before you can see or speak to many ministers in our area. In your on case, you have always make yourself available not considering the distance our small population, or time factor. Three things are clear to me: You are obedient, submissive and humble.

It is only God that can reward you. In fact, since your last visit, my spirit has been longing for your next visit, which God made possible for you to visit again. Since your last visit, I have been able to defend the truth when I interact with others. One thing that I do is that I have not seized to pray for you and Grace Evangelistic Ministries at large. I also pray that God would raise up teachers like you.

Your most obedient student, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

Dear Sir,

A note to let you know that we keep you on our published prayer ministry under the category of missionary and evangelist as we pray for your opportunities to present the gospel with a fair hearing and for your safety, faithfulness, guidance and provisions.

We at our church enjoy Graces News Today so very much. One lady told me that she uses it in her daily devotion, as she goes to prayer.

In Christ, U. S. A

Hello Rev. Moses,

It is a great pleasure writing you from Belo in Cameroon. I wish to send special greetings to you and Grace Ministries members and affiliates. I send words of appreciation to the Grace Evangelistic Ministries for its marvelous job in trying to evangelize the unbelieving world.

I just want to thank God for the work you are doing. I know the task is not all that easy, but God Himself has provided a means to use you because you are doing it His own way.

Thank you for the much literature I received from your ministry. "Grace News Today", "Riding The Death Train", "Comfort in Suffering" has greatly assisted me as I was in hospital with my son. The materials have also helped one lady who was with me in the hospital. When she left the hospital she wrote to me in appreciation of what the book "Comfort in Suffering" did for her. I am greatly delighted that I have the opportunity to share the gospel.

"God's Plan After Salvation" and the "Eternal Security of The Believer" are really a source of spiritual milk to my family. I hope you will always remember me in your mailing list for any resourceful materials from Grace Evangelistic Ministries.

God's richest blessings.

Belo, Cameroon

Bible Doctrine for Thought

"A wise man [believer] will hear [Bible doctrine] and increase in learning, and a man of understanding will acquire wise counsel." (Proverbs 1:5)

I have learned that to travel any distance, one needs a chart—a map that clearly shows where one is going and what lies ahead along the way. The believer's chart is the Holy Scripture, the infallible Word of God learned through the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit; his course is determined by his response to that teaching. We must consistently digest and correctly apply Bible doctrine in order to move steadily along the King of kings' highway—toward wisdom. Wisdom is the accurate application of Bible doctrine resulting in good decisions no matter what comes your way. The Scriptures warn travelers about many, all too popular detours, detours that distract from the objective.

One such detour is the sin of pride. It was the first sin, the sin of Satan. Since then it has been the mental attitude sin of choice among humans. Often quite subtly, pride is a launching pad for many other mental attitude sins. Pride is always arrogance.

Do you allow pride to take you off course? We are warned to ". . . clothe yourselves with humility toward each other, and you must, because God makes war against the arrogant believer, but gives [greater] grace to the humble believer." (I Peter 5.5) The only solution for sin, the only means of getting back on course is to name our sins to God the Father (I John 1:9). Once back on course, the doctrine we learn will insulate us from the subtle detours into pride.

Here is the Truth

1. Can a person be saved more than once?

Let us go to the Scripture for the answer. Jesus Christ, giving the gospel message to the Samaritan woman says, "Everyone who drinks of this water [referring to the natural water in the well] shall [continue to] thirst again" (John 4:13). After this statement, He unequivocally declared, "But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him [eternal life appropriated through faith in Christ] shall NEVER thirst [therefore, shall never drink of it again]; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up [non-stop] to eternal life" (verse 14).

2. Is it possible for a believer to abandon the plan of God for his life and live in carnality?

Again, the Bible has the answer: "My brethren, if any [believer] among you strays from the truth [meaning: it is possible to deviate from God's plan], and one [fellow believer] turns him back [i.e., helps him to return to the plan of God for his life], let him know that he who turns a sinner [carnal believer] from the error of his way will save his life from [the sin unto] death and will cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).

We have established that a person can be saved only once; it is possible for that person to drift off course from God's grace plan, but as a believer, the straying one can choose to recover the spiritual life.

3. When a carnal believer is helped to come back to God, is he saved again?

No, because he is a believer, having a relationship with God forever, he simply recovers fellowship with the Trinity. The Lord Himself declares, "Those whom I love [every believer including straying ones], I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and [change your mind with regard to a lifestyle of carnality]. He adds, 'Behold, I stand at the door [of a carnal believer's soul] and knock [divine discipline]; if anyone [who is in carnality] hears My voice [through the ministry of God the Holy Spirit in his soul] and opens the door, I will come into him [i.e., his soul] and will [have fellowship] with him and he with Me [again!]" (Revelation 3:19-20).

4. What happens if he fails to return to fellowship?

Again, let us see what the Bible has to say: "It is actually reported that there is [sexual] immorality among you [Corinthian believers] of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles [i.e., unbelievers], that someone has his father's wife [incest] . . . Deliver such [a believer] to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be SAVED in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Corinthian 5:1,5). The believer will be saved; however, the worst thing that can happen to any believer is to have God remove "the wall of fire" which protects him from Satan's power to bring about death! Therefore, 1 Corinthians 5:5 stands as a warning to anyone who plays fast and loose with the justice of God. Note, however, that up to the moment of death recovery remains an option.

From this step-by-step exposition of Bible doctrine, an honest, good communicator of the Word of God

can conclude that when a believer peels off from the plan of God and remains in carnality that he is still saved. If, and when, he chooses to return to the Lord, his fellowship with the three members of the Trinity is re-instated (1 John 1:9). If he dies in a state of carnality, he will go to heaven, but he will lose rewards, which he would have received, had he advanced in his spiritual life in fellowship with God (1 Corinthians 3:11-15)!

The Good News

When our Lord Jesus Christ was on the cross, He had you on His mind. There was never a sin committed that was not poured out on Jesus Christ on the cross (I Peter 2:24). He endured all afflictions so that He might pave a way for you to have life more abundantly through Him. Regardless of how sinful you have been in the past or are now, you can be forgiven and your slate wiped clean by God. How? By telling God right now that you are believing in His Son, Jesus Christ. The moment you put your entire trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, you will automatically become a regenerate person before God forever. The Bible says, "But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Will you believe in Him today? Or will you reject Him? The decision is totally up to you.

Financial Policy

Grace Evangelistic Ministries does not solicit funding. We believe that God in His grace will continue to meet our financial needs as they arise.

We do not charge for books or audio tapes. No money is requested. Anyone desiring to receive our books, tapes or other spiritual materials can receive them at absolutely no cost.

When gratitude for the Word of God and understanding of the need to reach the unsaved souls with the simple grace gospel and sound Bible teaching motivate you to contribute, you have the privilege of giving and sharing in the dissemination of the Word of God. This is a grace ministry.

Gratitude for Answered Prayers

"I love the Lord, because He hears my voice and supplications. Because He has inclined His ears to me, therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live" (Psalm 116:1-2).

"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2). God expects His children to thank Him whenever their prayers are answered.

Please join us in thanking God for the following answered prayers:

- 1. For helping us meet our financial burdens for the months of February April, 2000
- 2. For protecting and granting Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko and Mrs. Debby A. Hagar a success in their recent trip to Africa
- 3. For helping those who are interested in Bible doctrine form a group in Zimbabwe

- 4. For the safe trip of Mr. George H. Mueller and his wife from Cameroon to Germany
- 5. For many open doors for our ministry
- 6. For His daily sustenance for R. B. Thieme, Jr.
- 7. For His daily protection and provision for our partners

Would You Join Us in Prayer?

GRACE EVANGELISTIC MINISTRIES' PRAYER GROUP

The importance of prayer cannot be over emphasized!

The God-Man, our Lord Jesus Christ, gave us a perfect example to follow. His life and earthly ministry was encapsulated in a lifestyle of prayer. Prayer occupied a place of singular importance in His own life and teaching. In time of decision and crisis He gave Himself to prayer. Thus our Lord prayed when He was baptized (Luke 3:21,22); when He chose the twelve disciples: "It was at this time that He [Jesus Christ] went off to the mountain to pray and He spent the whole night in prayer to God [the Father]" (Luke 6:12,13); when He was transfigured (Luke 9:29); when He was engaging in sustained and exhausting service: "And in the early morning, while it was still dark, He arose and went out a departed to alone place [for privacy], and was praying there" (Mark 1:35-39); when He called forth Lazarus from the grave (John 11:41); when He was burdened for Simon Peter (Luke 22:31-32); when He faced betrayal, execution, and divine abandonment, and thus the Scripture recorded: "And He withdraw from them [i.e., His disciples] about a stone's throw, and he knelt down and began to pray... And being in agony He was praying very fervently; and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down upon the ground" (Luke 22:41,44). He prayed when He thought of His disciples and their future ministry (John 17) and before His physical death (Luke 23:46). Therefore, if you are a believer who finds it difficult to spend a time with our heavenly Father, sin no more. "Far be it from that I should sin against the Lord by ceasing to pray for you" (1 Samuel 12:23).

If Jesus Christ, a perfect God and a perfect Man spent all night in prayer (Luke 6:12-13), we the mortal believers should spend all year in Prayer!

In light of the importance of prayer, would join us as we pray:

- 1. That God would continue to open door for our ministry.
- 2. That God would continue to sustain the groups and newly formed churches in Cameroon, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.
- 3. That believers, everywhere especially in America may have a renewed interest in learning and applying sound Bible doctrine.
- 4. That God would continue to meet the spiritual and material needs of our partners.
- 5. That God would continue to sustain Col. R. B. Thieme, Jr., and his staff.
- 6. That God would bring stability in Zimbabwe, where we have been invited to conduct a Crusade in August 2000.
- 7. That God would help GEM meet their monthly budget.

Our Grace Ministry Has No Limits

Therefore, if you would like to be on our mailing list to receive this bi-monthly issue, "Grace News Today", or other materials of spiritual value, please write to the following address:

Grace Evangelistic Ministries
P. O. Box 17246
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or
call us at (615) 365-0015
or
you may visit our web site
on the Internet at:
http://www.gracemissions.org/

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