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Faith alone in Christ alone

Greetings to you from all of us at Grace Evangelistic Ministries. When, in eternity past, our heavenly Father chose to use this ministry, it was to bring glory and honor to Him. Our gratefulness to Him continues undiminished and unshakable. Indeed, Bible doctrine resident in our souls reminds us that without God's grace we could accomplish nothing of great value! Never! We can humbly echo the words of the apostle Paul: "For by the grace of God . . . [we are what we are]" (I Corinthians 15:10a). It is only by grace that we serve His purpose so long as He sees fit. What He has done for and through this ministry overwhelms us with amazement! We consider it a great privilege. As a participant in this ministry we encourage you do likewise. Together we are vessels in His plan and purpose.

You may recall the Y2K syndrome struck many believers at the end of last year. Those who had little or no doctrine in their souls were easily drawn into the confusion and concern. Then, our reminder that Jesus Christ is the Lord of history placated the fears of many. In a few weeks, the 20th century draws to end—Jesus Christ still controls history. Here at Grace Evangelistic Ministries we have taken a moment to pause to recount God's many blessings over this last year. We are astonished, sometimes stunned, and always pleasantly surprised to see what the Lord has done! Doors have been opened for the gospel. Many have responded with "faith alone, in Christ alone." Still others have accepted the challenge to make learning and applying Bible doctrine the highest priority in their lives. Overseas distribution of our publications and Bible doctrine audiotapes has quadrupled. Contributions increase despite our financial policy not to solicit funds. The list goes on! His grace toward us is beyond any human computation!

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, growing in grace, you will arrive at the same conclusion—God is a gracious Father and His love and blessings toward us are measureless. You may not fathom why Christ—the Bright Morning Star—chose to become the object of your sin as He hung on the cross as a substitute for you, but He did. You may not fully comprehend why God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have elected to indwell your body, but they do. And, given your shortcomings, it may be hard to imagine why God loves you with an unshakeable love, but He does. The apostle John summarized: "How great [how unfathomable, how immeasurable, how awesome] is the love the Father has lavished [showered, rained] on us, that we should be called the children of God!" (I John 3:1). What a blessing to know that we, who are depraved—totally undeserving in every sense of the word—have been adopted

into the Royal family of God for all eternity! What blessing could ever outweigh that?

As you think about your situation, you may identify with the words of this song:

*When upon life's billows you are tempest tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings—name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.*

Of course, you might be one who says, “The Lord has not blessed me yet.” Then I say to you, “Learn more doctrine and learn to apply it consistently. Keep on growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” When you are enlightened by doctrine you will appreciate how you have been graced out in many marvelous ways. God has given you the ultimate blessing—His very own life and righteousness forever! Knowing that you can never be separated from the love of God for all eternity is just the beginning.

We thank everyone who is a partner with us in this ministry. God is the One that called you to become partakers in this ministry to bring glory and honor to Him. Indeed, we consider it a great privilege and honor to be in His service. From the beginning stages of this ministry, we never earned or deserved the opportunity to serve Him. The work seems enormous, but we thank God because the battle and the success of our endeavors belong entirely to Him.

The letters that we receive continue to overwhelm and encourage us. Our joy abounds because through these responses we have learned that many are turning to Christ, and others are growing in grace. We thank God that our labor in Him is yielding dividends to His glory.

Our heavenly Father we join in with the host of other believers in approaching Your throne with gratitude in our souls. We thank You for the staggering immensity of what You have done and for what You will accomplish through Grace Evangelistic Ministries. We thank You for those whom You have called to partake in this honorable service and for Your continued provision, sustenance, and protection of them. Our souls are filled with gratitude for Your attitude of grace toward us, as we realize that we are forever indebted to You.

Father, we recognize that our great nation is in a time of great danger. The failure of so many believers to execute the spiritual life has brought us near to maximum national divine discipline, when we will no longer enjoy our status as Your client nation. We ask that believers in this nation will be awakened and challenged to focus on that which is essential. That they will recognize that apart from the spiritual life which You have provided, we have no light, and no salt to preserve this nation.

We are acutely aware of client nation U.S.A.'s responsibility to provide messengers of the gospel, and it burns in our souls. Father, we pray for those already on the mission field and for their supporters, that they will not relent in their endeavors to fulfill Your plan. We ask that as God's client nation, we will continue to have the zeal to prepare, send, and support those whom You have called to serve You as missionaries. Father, please help us, so that at the end You alone may be glorified to the maximum. All this we ask in Christ's Name. Amen

“You will keep in perfect peace him [every believer] whose mind [is anchored in You] because he trusts in You” (Isaiah 26:3).

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

You shall know the
truth, and the truth
shall set you free.
JOHN 8:32

Doctrine of Grace

By Reverend Moses C. Onwubiko

(Lesson 4—Continued from volume 17[Lesson 3])

As noted previously (Lesson 3), few subjects in Scripture are more difficult to comprehend than the grace of God. Nonetheless, there is nothing more precious to those who understand its overwhelming significance. Grace-oriented believers are the most relaxed and realistic of believers. They reject any temptations to impress God with their human good; rather, they embrace all that God does for them because of His Son, Jesus Christ.

We have carefully examined how God demonstrated His grace in creation. We focused on the creation of man in the Garden to illustrate God's grace provision. In the fall of man, we saw the striking distinction between man's solution ("operation fig leaves") and God's divine solution (grace). There are three important questions that remain to round out our discussion on God's grace in the creation of man. First, where was man before his creation? Second, what did man contribute during his creation? And third, what motivated man's behavior after the fall—specifically "operation fig leaves"? These questions are vital to understanding the doctrine of grace.

MAN BEFORE HIS CREATION: “Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [Hebrew: *Neshemah hayyah*—a spark of His [God's] own life]; and man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). The words describing the material from which the human body was formed are of special interest. The Hebrew noun, *aphar*, can be translated as “dust,” “clay,” “mortar,” or “ashes”. It is even used for a heap of “rubbish” in reference to structural ruins. The Hebrew word *adamah*, means, “ground” or “earth.” Therefore, the created body of man is composed of the chemical elements of the pristine earth. To paraphrase Genesis 2:7: “Then the Lord God, Christ Jesus, formed man from the chemicals of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the spark of His life, and man became a human being.” Hence, in Adam's creation, God formed his body from the same elements of which everything—animate and inanimate—were formed, elements that God created. Yet Adam was unique among all creation. King David, an Old Testament hero, sang about this (Psalm 8:3-8):

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained;
What is man that You take thought of him,
And the son of man that You care for him?
Yet You have made him a little lower than [angels],
And You crown him with glory and majesty!
You make him to rule over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,
All sheep and oxen,
And also the beasts of the field,
The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,
Whatever passes through the paths of the seas.

Nevertheless, while the soul that God gave Adam is immortal, when he died, his body reverted to the chemicals of the soil (Genesis 3:19). The *Lexical Aids to the Old Testament* (Hebrew Dictionary) tells us

"dust and ashes, is a proverbial phrase to express the lowliness and fragility of human nature." Job used it in bitterness when he thought God abandoned him (Job 30:19). "Then Abraham spoke, . . . I am nothing but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27). Of course, Abraham, of all people (as we will see shortly), knew this was not literal, but used the proverbial phrase to assure God that he recognized that he had no standing in negotiating with God to spare Sodom from destruction. Remember that God told Adam, " . . . you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Proverbial or not, any believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, who cannot fully accept that he is nothing apart from God and His marvelous provisions, has a long way to go in the spiritual life.

WHAT DID MAN CONTRIBUTE DURING HIS CREATION? The answer ought to be obvious, but consider this: "Woe to the one who quarrels with his maker [God]—an earthenware vessel among the vessels of the earth! Will the clay say to the potter, 'What are you doing?' Or the thing you are making say, 'He has no hands'" (Isaiah 45:9). Isaiah makes the point that clay is helpless to shape itself into something useful. Thus, when the Lord God formed man in the Garden, God did all the work. Can a lifeless corpse take part in its own burial? Of course not. Nor could the lifeless body of Adam give itself life. The creation of Adam was complete—including body, soul, and spirit—uniquely created in God's shadow image, by God, and without anyone's help. This brings us to the last question.

WHAT MOTIVATED ADAM'S BEHAVIOR AFTER THE FALL? The answer to this question is a very simple one — he chose to act as he did—just as he chose to disobey God in the first place. The decisions that we make determine the lives that we live. Adam's decision to eat the fruit was made without a sin nature. But in that one instant of negative volition (will), the sin nature was born. The sin nature produces **ALL SIN AND ALL HUMAN GOOD**. Through procreation each of us has inherited a sin nature. Then at the very moment we are born, God imputes Adam's original sin, so that we are born physically alive but spiritually dead. Like Adam and the woman, the very best that we can do with a sin nature in spiritual death is what is called human good. And the engine behind it all is volition, the freedom to choose. Adam could not say, "My sin nature made me do it." He was responsible for his own decisions.

An entire complex of sins can be summarized in one word: arrogance. Like other sins, arrogance is produced by the sin nature's area of weakness. Mankind—like Satan (Isaiah 14:12-15)—has a tendency to show off in an attempt to help God or to prove that he can do better than God. Such an attitude is unadulterated blasphemy at best, polished arrogance at its peak! Arrogance is often accompanied by human good produced by the sin nature's area of strength. Human good—which is always rejected by God—becomes evil when it is intensified to distort Bible doctrine or divine establishment. We saw that Adam and the woman chose the sin of fear from their sin nature when confronted by God (Lesson 3). But before the Lord approached them, their attempt to cover their nakedness—"operation fig leaves"—was human good. The lust for approval originating in their sin natures was distilled into arrogance. It gave them confidence in the false notion that "if they were right with each other, they would be right with God." Yet they could not say, "Our sin natures made us do it." They were responsible for their own decisions.

Today, Satan's forces are constantly busy, working to subtly influence the minds of careless believers with his original sin of pride—arrogance. That is why Peter sounds the warning: "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert [be watchful]. Your adversary, the devil [the enemy of grace], prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour [i.e., to destroy]" (I Peter 5:8). Those who have no concept of grace and are living according to the world's standards, are already in Satan's camp—enemies of the cross (Philippians 3:18,19). These are the monstrous, egocentric, legalistic, believers who have become involved in Christian activism, lordship-salvation, salvation-by-works, etc. Your only defense is to learn Bible doctrine. Learn grace and think in terms of grace—that's God's way. The alternative is punishment from the Supreme Court of Heaven. No one can say, "Satan made me do it." We are responsible for our own decisions.

GOD'S GRACE TOWARD ABRAHAM

Who was Abraham? What did he have to offer that caused God to impute His perfect righteousness to him? And precisely what did he do that caused God to make his name great? What kind of works did Abraham perform that earned him the title “A friend of God forever?” Let us pay close attention to the doctrinal exposition of the grace of God toward Abraham. After all, the Bible portrays his faith as a pattern for all who will put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We know from Scripture, that Abraham was a descendant of Shem—the eldest son of Noah. Born Abram, he was the youngest son of Terah, an idolater (Joshua 24:2), who lived in Ur of the Chaldees. The apostle Paul described idolatry this way: “The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world’s invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men [including idolaters] are without excuse. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles” (Roman 1:18-20,21). Abram became aware that it does not make sense to worship created—animate or inanimate—things. Breaking with his family tradition, he allowed the flame to know the true God ignite in his soul.

We have noted how God sought Adam after his failure: “But the Lord God [Jesus Christ] called to the man [Adam], ‘Why are you where you are?’” (Genesis 3:9). During His incarnation Christ said, “For the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Luke 19:10). God always reveals Himself to those who respond positively. Abram was no exception. God brought him first to Haran, where his father died, and then to Canaan where he became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the sweetness of grace. He could have abandoned Adam and Eve to wander, but He did not. He could have left Abram in Ur or Haran seeking the true God, but He did not. And far more personal, He could have left you, without hope in your depravity, and a guarantee of eternal death in the Lake of fire, but He did not. He stepped out of His glory “to seek and to save what was lost.” If that’s not grace, what then is grace?

THE IMPUTATION OF GOD’S RIGHTEOUSNESS TO ABRAHAM

“Then he [Abram] believed [Hebrew: *Aman* = believed, trusted] in the Lord [Jesus Christ]; and He [God the Father] reckoned [Hebrew: *Chashab*=imputed, credited] it to him as righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). According to Lexical Aids (Hebrew Dictionary) to the Old Testament; God registered [one’s] faith [in Christ] as tantamount to exoneration [i.e., a verdict of not guilty!]. Luke wrote, “Therefore my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him [Christ Jesus] everyone [including Abraham] who believes, is justified from everything from which you could not be justified by the Law of Moses [including justification-by-circumcision, lordship-justification, justification-by-works, justification-by-baptism, and so on and so forth]” (Acts 13:38,39).

The BIG QUESTION is what kind of work did Abram do that caused God to impute His very own righteousness to him? What is your answer to this BIG QUESTION? If you are among the lordship-salvation, salvation-by-works, or salvation-by-baptism proponents, you may want to pause and think hard on this question. Why? Because the answer from the Bible makes very clear, that Abram’s faith was GRACE and NOT WORKS. Abram did nothing except believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Lord revealed Himself to him. Is there any work in belief?

PAUL VIGOROUSLY DEFENDS ABRAHAM’S FAITH ALONE IN CHRIST ALONE

The apostle Paul analyzed Abraham’s faith. Beginning in Romans 4:1, he asks, “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather [of the Jewish race] according to the flesh, has found? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? ‘**AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD**, and it [his faith alone in Christ alone] was reckoned to him as righteousness’ (quoting Genesis 15:6). Now to the one who works [any kind of works], his wage

is not reckoned as favor [or grace—Greek *charis*], but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith [plus nothing else] is reckoned [credited or imputed] as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing upon the man to whom God reckons righteousness apart from WORKS [!]: **‘BLESSED ARE THOSE WHOSE LAWLESS DEEDS HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN, AND WHOSE SINS HAVE BEEN COVERED. BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE SIN THE LORD WILL NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT’**(quoting Psalm 32:1,2)” (Romans 4.1-8).

For just a moment consider yourself an employee, of XYZ Manufacturing Company. The company requires all employees to show up for work at exactly 6 a.m. and not to leave work until 9 p.m.—every day, seven days a week. You, along with every other employee, sweat fifteen long hours for XYZ, and have nine hours to do other things such as cooking, eating, bathing, and of course sleeping. At the end of the month, the manager approaches to hand you a check and says, “This check is a favor from XYZ to you.” How would you reply? Would you say, “Give me that check now! And don’t you ever give me that line again,” or would you politely say to him, “Sir, with all due respect, this check is not a favor, it is remuneration for my hard work—day-in-and-day-out—it is a compensation for my sweat—how dare you called it a favor.”

Another scenario: You are a parent of a large, but poor family. You cannot afford to buy a used bicycle, let alone a car. Every day you walk 14 miles to and from work. One day, a wealthy man who has observed you for several days on the road decides to do something for you. He goes to a car dealer and purchases an automobile. Early one morning, he arrives at your house just as you are about to leave for work, rings the bell, and says to you, “Here is a key to this Mercedes—it is my gift to you.” How would you respond? Would you say to him, “Give me that key now; that’s a payment for my sweat?” And more to the point, how would you feel when driving that car? I think that a normal person would be overwhelmed and speechless for some time! Only you and the giver know that you never worked for it, nor did you ever deserve it—it is truly a favor done without expectation of return! The Greek word *charis* (grace or favor) is not just the opposite of *erga* (work); the terms are mutually exclusive!

We have proffered two quite different analogies, in one a salary for one’s work, in the other a grace gift—an unmerited favor. Now we can follow the apostle Paul as he vigorously defends Abraham’s faith alone in Christ alone—as he draws an indelible line between works and grace. Keep in mind that the apostle’s theme is “grace and works are mutually exclusive.” In essence, he is saying that human works are not the means for a relationship with God, nor are human works a requirement to maintain that relationship. It baffles me to see how some believers can be so logical about issues of life in general, but how illogical they become when it comes to matters of spiritual value. For instance, if human works are not a means of entering into relationship with God, how could they possibly be a means of sustaining that relationship? It does not add up! Or, based on the definition of grace how can one try to add works to grace? What the apostle illustrates in Romans 4 is that works are works; and grace is grace. But most importantly, he demonstrates without equivocation that all attempts to add works to grace results in negating grace; faith plus any system of human effort results in a negation of faith.

The Apostle Paul later summarized: “But if it [salvation] is by grace [and it is], **IT [salvation] IS NO LONGER ON THE BASIS OF WORKS**; otherwise grace is no longer grace.” (Romans 11:6). With that in mind, he goes on to defend his argument.

DEFENSE # 1: CIRCUMCISION—A WORK: “And some men came down from Judea and began teaching the brethren [believers in Antioch], “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1). This was the heretical teaching of the Judaizers in the early church. Today this has become the pattern for many modern false teachers who have little or no knowledge of the grace of God. The apostle Paul puts his defense forward: “How then was [faith] reckoned [for righteousness]? [Was it] while he [Abraham] was circumcised, or uncircumcised? Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised!”(Romans 4:10). Paul asks he readers to remember their

history; Abram was a believer long before he circumcised himself and God changed his name to Abraham at age ninety-nine. The act of circumcision had **NOTHING** to do with Abraham's salvation and justification.

DEFENSE # 2: OBSERVING THE LAW—WORKS FOR SALVATION: “Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law . . . because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight . . .” (Romans 3:19,20). Paul added: “For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Romans 4:13). He argues that Abraham was believer long before the Law of Moses came about. The Law of Moses came 430 years after the Abrahamic covenant was last confirmed to Abraham's grandson, Israel. In Galatians he wrote, “What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate [or void] a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law [works], it is no longer based on a promise, but God has granted [the inheritance] to Abraham by means of a promise” (Galatians 3:17,18). It is interesting to note that the word "granted" is the Greek verb *charizomai*, meaning to give freely or graciously as a favor. Abraham's salvation, therefore, was something initiated, executed, and finalized by grace. And when the Law came, it neither added nor took away anything from what Abraham had already received by grace, through faith alone in Christ alone. Had the salvation-by-works folks understood this concept, they would not have been confused by James' doctrine of justification by divine works—a doctrine that has nothing to do with the justification received as a result of salvation!

“Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?” (James 2:21). If the apostle James were alive today, he might argue his case as decisively as Paul: When did Abraham become a believer in the Lord? Was it when he offered Isaac as a sacrifice on the altar or before Isaac was born? The answer is crystal clear: Abraham became a believer before Isaac was born. Therefore, his obedience to God in offering Isaac added nothing to his salvation; rather it demonstrated a high point in his spiritual growth, which gave birth to his new title, “the friend of God” (James 2:23). This situation demonstrates the difference between the justification of unbelievers by faith (unto salvation) and the justification of believers by divine works. (You may wish to read our book, *The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation*, for more on the doctrine of justification by works.)

Amazingly, it is many theologians and ministers of the Word who, by their failure to examine the infallible Word of God using isagogics, exegesis, and categories, have introduced religion and brought chaos to Christianity. Their isagogic removes the Bible from its historical setting; their exegesis replaces dependence on the original languages with arguments about the best English translation; and their categories emphasize emotion, feelings, and humanizing God.

A correct isagogic recognizes the fundamental importance of analyzing Scripture in its historical setting. Accurate exegesis requires years studying ancient languages, so that every idiom and nuance of Scripture can be precisely translated. And proper categorical development of the doctrines of Scripture must embrace the entire Word of God in a theological framework that will not collapse because it is self-contradictory. The Bible is taught—and learned—“precept on precept, line on line” (Isaiah 28.10).

Instead, false doctrines such as “lordship-salvation,” “salvation-by-baptism,” “salvation-by-works,” “salvation-by-inviting-Christ,” and many others dominate the theological landscape. Neither our Lord nor the apostles ever taught these, nor can these distortions be found in Scripture. They collectively represent the false gospel—a gospel that cannot, does not, and will not save. They are irreconcilable with the truth of the Word of God. Consider these Scriptures:

"For **BY GRACE** you have been saved through faith [like Abraham]; and that not of yourselves, it is the **GIFT** of God; **NOT AS A RESULT OF WORKS**, that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9).

"He saved us, **NOT ON THE BASIS OF DEEDS** which we have done in righteousness, but according

to His mercy . . ." (Titus 3:5a).

"Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling [through the gospel message], **NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS**, but according to his own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (II Timothy 1:9).

No wonder Paul was so adamant about drawing a line between grace and works! Apart from his non-meritorious faith in Christ, Abraham did nothing else to secure his salvation, nothing to merit God's imputation of His perfect righteousness. Scripture clearly contradicts anyone who would claim otherwise. Everything any of us have ever received from our merciful God has come to us through the funnel of the immeasurable, matchless, and unfathomable grace of God—no more and no less!

Finally, what about the place of works after salvation? Some will agree that we are saved by grace, but then argue that without works salvation is worthless in this life. Ridiculous! That is the same worn argument that man can do something to impress God, essentially the salvation-by-works heresy with an ornery twist. Of course, the exact opposite is true. Just as God does all the work in salvation, so He does the work after salvation. If we could do just one thing to help God, then our salvation would be nothing. God has not ever needed anyone's help and He never will. The principle is this: Any "good" done by an unbeliever is considered human good. When a believer is carnal (his old sin nature is in control) he imitates the unbeliever in producing human good. And God rejects all human good. Only when the Holy Spirit is in control does the believer produce divine good. The issue is never what the work is, but rather who does the work. Who is in control? In the post-salvation spiritual life God does all the work.

The Bible is very clear that we have been purchased (1 Peter 1:18-19); and now belong to God (1 Corinthians 6:20). It is arrogance to add anything to try to help God. When human works are added to the equation, it is an arrogant attempt to take back what is no longer ours. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy [in action] has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, **WHO ARE PROTECTED [KEPT] BY THE POWER OF GOD** through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Peter 1:3-5). Christ said, "And I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand [!]" (John 10:28,29). Here is one of the true beauties of grace—the believer is held by two omnipotent hands! How could it get better? Paul summarizes what it means when a person becomes the object of the eternal love of God by saying, "For I am convinced [by the Holy Spirit] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created being, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is [concretely rooted] in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38,39).

God is perfect and His work is perfect. He initiated salvation by means of His grace. We can add nothing to grace. He purchased you through His Son (1 Peter 1:18,19). He sealed you with His Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 1:22). He is the One who keeps you [saved] by His power (1 Peter 1:3-5). God began your salvation with grace, and you will enjoy His grace forever. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling [i.e., losing your salvation], and to make you stand in the presence of His glory, blameless with great joy [with no accusation against you], to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority before all time and now and forever. Amen" (Jude 1:24-25).

(to be continued in Volume 19—lesson 5)

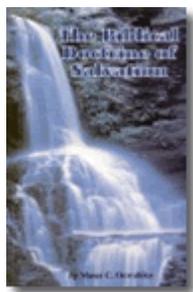
Progress Report

This report will bring you up to date about what God is doing for and through this ministry. Its purpose is to inform you so that when you approach His throne to remember Grace Evangelistic Ministries in your prayers, your heart will be filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for His indelible work. On the other hand, if your attention or praise is directed toward GEM or Rev. Onwubiko, you have missed the mark!

USA

God continues to glorify himself through Grace Evangelistic Ministries as the demand for our publications has increased tremendously. The number of prison inmates that request material has doubled since last year. Some of these inmates have responded to the gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ by “faith alone and in Christ alone,” and some have accepted the challenge to learn accurate teaching of the Word of God. We have referred others who have asked for doctrine on tapes or literature for their daily studies, to R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries. We cannot thank God enough for what He is doing.

NEW PUBLICATION



By the grace of God we have published a new book: *The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation*. This publication presents the biblical doctrine presented by Moses C. Onwubiko in “Grace News Today,” volumes 1-14. We believe that this book will help everyone who wants to understand more about salvation. Very importantly, it will help thousands of pastors in Africa who have entered the ministry with little knowledge of the Word of God. Many of these pastors can hardly afford a good Bible translation, let alone Greek or Hebrew study tools.

OVERSEAS

Today, our mailing list includes addresses from Australia, Canada, Scotland, Philippines, China, India, Egypt, Germany, Croatia, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Gambia, and Nigeria—just to name but a few. Many are pastors. The list grows as God takes His doctrinal truth to those who are positive. This underlines the justice, fairness, and matchless grace of God, who removes any linguistic, racial, cultural and geographical barriers to make Himself known to anyone who desires to know and have a relationship with Him. We are just witnessing the grace of God as it unfolds. We consider it a great privilege to be an instrument through which God brings the gospel to unbelievers, and Bible doctrine to those who have personally trusted in Christ.

REPORT FROM GAMBIA

Forwarded by D. E. Elekwa, Africa chapter president for GEM

Thank you for keeping me posted from the home front. There is what one individual described as a “spark of life” in those who come in contact with GEM’s materials and who also attend some of the meetings, where I am privileged to speak. The striking thing about the meetings is that 98% are Physicians, Pharmacists, Nurses, Nigerians as well as Gambians.

One Gambian Pediatrician is eagerly waiting for Grace Evangelistic Ministries to be officially borne in

Gambia. She told me that there are no doctrinal teachers at all here in Gambia. At the back of my mind, I know that there is a reason why God brought me here.

(Please remember Darlington Elekwa in your prayers that God may use Him for His own glory.)

REPORT FROM NIGERIA

May/June 2000

Forwarded by Pastor Tony Sani

Here are few testimonies from those who have come in contact with Grace Evangelistic Ministries:

I borrowed one of your books from a friend; and after going through it, I trusted the Lord for my salvation. Ever since then, I am hungry for more truth. I need your help. I want you to send me more books that will help me in my spiritual growth.

Bukuru, Plateau State, Nigeria

I must tell you the truth; I have never taken God's word seriously as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. But when I read your book titled "God's Plan after Salvation" my life has a complete turn around. I have this to say about your ministry: It is very unique. I will be coming to your office for more doctrinal material and I hope to support your ministry financially as the Lord blesses me.
Jos, Nigeria

Please extend my greetings to Moses C. Onwubiko. Thanks a million times to him for writing the book "Comfort in Suffering". After going through it, I was much uplifted in my spiritual life. Indeed, God is using your ministry to be a blessing to us.

Lagos, Nigeria

After going through one of your publications, titled, "Riding the Death Train," my inner eyes were enlightened. In fact, my conclusion is that God has placed words in your mouth for the benefit of both unbelievers and believers alike. I need a large quantity of the "Riding the Death Train" for my personal evangelism. It is really a clear presentation of the gospel.

Abia State, Nigeria

As our ministry continues to grow, we believe that the One who has opened doors for this ministry, will continue to provide for more publications and distribution of Bible doctrine on literature and audiocassettes to those who are positive.

REV. MOSES C. ONWUBIKO'S Evangelistic Meeting Schedule

August 19 – September 6: Zimbabwe, South Africa

September 7 – November 17: US

November 18 – December 17: Nigeria

News Update

After Rev. Onwubiko's trip to Zimbabwe, he plans to hold pastors' Conference in Jos, Nigeria where he plans to distribute about 100 Greek/Hebrew Bibles for those pastors who are positive to sound doctrine. Then he will conduct a 3-day Crusade in Aba, Abia State (Eastern part of Nigeria), followed by 11 days basic teaching for the new converts and others who are interested in truth.

God Will Provide Genesis 22.8

"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?

A believer in the Lord once said, "God's work, done in God's way, will have God's provision".

Gratitude for Answered Prayers

"Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Colossians 4:2).

Please join us in thanking our heavenly Father for answers to the following prayers:

1. For helping us meet our financial obligations for the month of July and August 2000.
 2. For giving Rev. Onwubiko journey mercies to and from Zimbabwe.
 3. For the freedom and stability we enjoy here in America.
 4. For the spiritual food, which He provides for the positive believers.
 5. For His children whom He used to meet our needs in July and August.
-

Letters to Grace Evangelistic Ministries

We would like to share some of the letters that have been sent to us. As you read these letters, please join us in giving thanks to our gracious God who does all the work: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose" (Philippians 2:13).

Our purpose in sharing these letters with you is to show you that your partnership in financial and prayer support for this ministry is indeed producing dividends for the glory of our merciful God.

Dear Grace Evangelistic Ministries,

I would like to receive 6 copies of "Comfort in Suffering." We are tapers of R. B. Thieme, Jr., Ministry. Your books, especially the "Comfort in Suffering," are excellent—right on target! So glad you are doctrinally sound and grace oriented. We pray for the effectiveness and fruitfulness of the doctrine you impart to others. I will pass on this book—"Comfort in Suffering" to others when sorrow enters their live.

*Yours in Christ,
OK, USA*

Brethren in Christ,

Many thanks for your wonderful teachings-I enjoyed them! Thank you for your newsletters-they are source of nourishment to my soul. I am also glad to hear that the Conference in Nigeria was quite successful and enriching. I thank God for the way He is using you in Africa. Many of us now have gotten a grip on sound Bible doctrine.

There are over two hundred people in our group who effectively listen to the teachings of Rev. Moses on tapes here in Cameroon. I thank God for that.

*Yours in Christ,
Bamenda, Cameroon*

Dear Rev. Onwubiko,

Thank you for ministering to me personally through your "Grace News Today." I am personally thrilled with your grace ministry and doctrinal teachings. I give thanks to our God for His awesome grace, love and for His faithfulness to us, as His children who are so very undeserving. I read each newsletter and they are fabulous. I am praying for you and those who are being taught by you in Africa.

*Thank you,
CA, USA*

Bible Doctrine for Thought

"I came that [you] might have life, and might have it abundantly" (John 10:10b).

Life in abundance is the preserve of a mature believer. The believer who consistently learns and utilizes Bible doctrine, while motivated by love for God, will advance spiritually to the point where he is "filled up to all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3.19). While few in number, such believers become "Friends of God." The Supreme Court of Heaven justifies them to share in God's happiness, ultimate joy, and life in abundance.

During the church age we have been given more spiritual assets than believers in any other time in history. At this juncture, are you a Friend of God? Or do you regard yourself as a believer who is

moving in that direction? Or would you say that your advance has slowed or stagnated? We have paused to ponder on these questions; we trust you can do likewise.

Here is the Truth

(Continued from volume 17)

BUILT-IN-GRATITUDE—A MOTIVATOR IN GRACE GIVING

Any giving in the name of God that is not gratitude-motivated is nothing more than wood, hay and straw—human good. It will fuel a huge fire at the evaluation seat of Christ! (1 Corinthians 3:11-15) Simply put, it is not spiritual giving at all!!

We have carefully examined Luke 6:38: “Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return.” We previously concluded that this verse has nothing at all to do with biblical giving. We saw that, when taken in this sense, that it stands contradictory to other passages of the Scripture, especially Job 41:11 and Roman 11:35. Now, we want to carefully examine 2 Corinthians 9:8-15, but accuracy demands that we look at the larger context, beginning with chapter 8.

Now, brethren, we wish to make known to you the grace of God, which has been given in the churches in Macedonia, that in a great ordeal of affliction their abundance of joy and their deep poverty overflowed in the wealth of their liberality (2 Corinthians 8:1, 2).

The apostle Paul, in appealing to the church at Corinth for funds to support the needs of pastor-teachers in training, cited the generosity of the church at Philippi—the first church in Europe. Much has been said about the church at Philippi. One expositor said, “If there is such a thing as a perfect church, it would have been the church at Philippi!” These believers utilized Bible doctrine under adverse circumstances, and many advanced to spiritual maturity. One of the hallmarks of the Philippians’ church was joy. Despite every kind of affliction, many had perfect joy. What gave them this joy was a profound love for God and Bible doctrine resident in their souls. Gratitude built up in their right lobes motivated them to reciprocate with generosity because of their passion for the Lord’s work!

In 2 Corinthians 8:2, the Greek word *haplotēs* is rendered “liberality.” According to Lexical Aids to the New Testament (Greek Dictionary), it means faithful benevolence out OF PROPER MOTIVATION. The Philippians had proper motivation because of an accurate application of doctrine.

For I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability, they gave of their own accord [no outside pressure or gimmicks], begging us with much entreaty for the favor of participation in the support of the saints” (vs. 3,4).

They could not wait to participate in spreading the truth that had made their lives so meaningful! That’s gratitude. That’s true motivation. And doctrinally, that’s true giving!

And this, not as we had expected, but they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God” (v. 5).

(to be continued in volume 19)

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 ([1 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.

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: "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded 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 [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:

- That God would continue to open doors for our ministry.
- That He would continue to support and provide for the newly formed churches and groups.
- That believers, everywhere especially in America may have a renewed interest in learning and applying sound Bible doctrine.
- That God would continue to meet the spiritual and material needs of our partners.
- That God would continue to sustain Col. R. B. Thieme, Jr., and his staff.
- That God would continue to help Grace Evangelistic Ministries meet their monthly budget.
- That God would protect Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko as he travels.

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
Nashville, TN 37217-7246

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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