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Faith alone in Christ alone

Greetings to you from all of us at Grace Evangelistic Ministries. This is our 20th issue of "Grace News Today," marking our fifth year in this ministry. Reviewing the testimonial letters received, these past years, leaves us overwhelmed with joy for what God the gracious One has done! In response to His marvelous work, we have approached His throne with gratitude in our souls. We thank Him, and stand in salute to Him for His eternal purpose, choice, and plan to use us as vessels of honor. We are especially grateful to God for many who have come to know Him by faith alone in Christ alone. Also, we are gratified that God has challenged believers to respond to Bible doctrine.

Our joy abounds and we continue to be encouraged by your letters that show our labor in Him is yielding fruits to His glory. If you are a new reader, please acquaint yourself with our ministry by reading the framed "Overview" section in this newsletter.

We live in a remarkable period of human history-an age when we can enjoy the same spiritual life designed and tested by our Lord Jesus Christ. Never before has the body of every believer been indwelt by God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Never before has every believer been a priest-forever-representing himself or herself before God. Never before has every believer become a member of the Royal Family of God and been entered into union with Christ at the moment of salvation. Never before has every believer been commissioned a Royal Ambassador to represent Christ before a lost and dying world.

While there are many other things that are uniquely ours, I am thankful especially that we have a completed canon of Scripture-66 books of the Bible containing all that God wants us to know. Today's believer has more divine assets-more spiritual tools-than any believer in past dispensations. Yet many are careless with these magnificent grace provisions, and still others are not even aware of the abundance of their wealth. This is not financial wealth-it is far more significant than that! God set unique and perfectly suited blessings aside for everyone in His family billions of years ago.

This is a tale about two believers, a dad and his incorrigible son. The son had no interest in Bible doctrine, no interest in discovering the plan of God, and he cared even less about spiritual growth, glorifying God, or being a royal ambassador. His dad was a grace-oriented believer who understood the importance of Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it." As he was growing up, his dad never missed an opportunity to remind him of God's grace, and while still quite young, he became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. As he grew up he was easily distracted from spiritual things. Because he chose against God, he was anxious to get away from his dad's constant reminders. By the time he was old enough to move away, he was willing to go anywhere that doctrine wasn't.

When the day came, his dad handed him a brand new Bible. Before he could say a word, Bible waving in hand, his son exploded, "Is this the best the richest man in town can do? What a stupid gift! I guess I should have expected as much—GOOD BYE!" When he got to his car, he threw the Bible behind the seat and squealed out of the drive en route to his new home, hundreds of miles away. There he would live like he wanted to live, do what he wanted to do, when he wanted to do it.

In his new home no holds were barred; he polished his lifestyle of carnality into an art form. While no longer under the thumb of his parents, he soon became aware that his Father in heaven disciplines regardless of age. Now he was sowing to the wind, but that lifestyle brings a hurricane of self-induced misery, intensified divine discipline, and eventually physical death (cf. Hosea 8:7a). "For those whom the Lord loves, He disciplines, and [skins alive] every son whom He receives" (Hebrews 12:6).

Nothing seemed to work for him. In no time, he depleted his personal resources. His 'friends' disappeared as quickly as they had come. His health suffered, but nothing could move him to call on his dad for help. In his bitterness, he reminisced about his last day at home, the Bible, the stupid send-off. But after months of complete despair, he began to remember the principles his dad had taught. He had memorized Revelation 3:20 as a lad: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone (carnal believer) hears my voice and opens the door (acknowledgement of sins), I will come in to him, and will dine with him (restoration of fellowship), and he with me." He knew his trouble was spiritual. Shuffling through the closet he found the Bible his dad gave him. He turned to another verse that he had memorized, I John 1:9. "If we [acknowledge] our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and [purify] us from all [wrong doing]."

From that moment he chose to turn his life around. He named his sins and knew he was instantly forgiven. He found a church where doctrine was taught and began to advance in the spiritual life. One night in Bible class, he turned to a passage that his pastor-teacher was expounding. There between the pages was a check for more money than most people make in a lifetime—signed by his dad. Gulping, he suppressed the urge to shout aloud. Here he had been-barely living hand-to-mouth-as an extremely wealthy man.

Today, millions of believers are spiritual beggars, flitting from one emotional experience to the next, demanding entertainment rather than learning doctrine. Many are like the incorrigible son. Imagine, the Royal Family of God living like paupers, unaware of the abundance of wealth they have had from the very moment they trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ. Searching for

happiness in all the wrong places, they can achieve no more than pseudo-happiness. There is no reason for believers to be in that condition! In their own minds, these will elevate activism in all of its evil to the status of divine good. They will tell you how they love God, but it is a love without integrity. Many will die the sin face-to-face with death (I John 5:16; Proverbs 21:16) and enter heaven with NOTHING to reward (I Corinthians 3:11-15)!

Doctrine in the soul and integrity-love for God create capacity for life and true happiness-sharing the happiness of God. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has [abundantly] blessed us with every spiritual blessing [wealth] in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3). This wealth remains hidden in Christ until a believer-through perception and application of Bible doctrine-discovers the spiritual life. It is in occupation with Christ, when doctrine and its application become the highest priority in life, which makes these blessings a reality in time. Nonetheless, whatever you may have in this life, it is only the doctrine in your soul that you can take with you when you die.

By the grace of God, as our ministry continues to expand, so does His provision for our every spiritual and financial need. Indeed, there is no doubt in our souls that the One who began the work in Grace Evangelistic Ministries will be the One who will see it through to His glory. Since we have never earned nor deserved to be used by Him, whatever is achieved is totally a result of His matchless grace. It's that simple.

The principle applies for you as well. Grace made it possible for your entrance into the plan of God, and that same grace will carry you throughout time and eternity. Remember that Jesus Christ controls history and that includes your personal history; therefore, no matter how difficult things may be, remember your Savior said, "...Lo, I Am with you always, even to the end of this age" (Matthew 28:20b). And in Hebrews: "I WILL NEVER DESERT you, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE you" (13:5c). These are solemn promises of God to you, a redeemed one.

"The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Israel is our stronghold" (Psalm 46:7).

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 6—Continued from volume 19[Lesson5])

"And I [God the Father] will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise Him on the heel" (Genesis 3:15).

CONDEMNATION IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Genesis 3:15 is pivotal to our understanding of how the grace of God provided a Savior for the undeserving human race. Previously, especially in our book entitled *The Biblical Doctrine of Salvation*, we showed how God pursued the first couple in human history-Adam and the Woman-when they became spiritually dead. While trying to hide themselves from God, He pursued them with love, integrity, and grace. We saw how God's righteousness demanded their judgment, and judgment resulted in their just condemnation. Remember that-minus sin-Adam and the Woman could have lived forever in the Garden, but they had no eternal life. Despite its inherent ugliness, the beauty of condemnation is that it makes salvation and eternal life possible. Yes, if one is not condemned, then there is nothing from which to be saved.

CONDEMNATION AT BIRTH

With the exception of the virgin-born humanity of Christ, every innocent little baby is born condemned, spiritually dead. Did someone mumble, "That's not fair?" Think again. Babies are not condemned for personal sin, but because at the moment God gives the newborn life, He also imputes Adam's original sin. Why? Because, as in Adam's case, condemnation must precede salvation. This imputation affords equal opportunity for salvation. This is the beauty of God's grace and integrity-He is fair to all. You do nothing for your condemnation; you can do nothing for your salvation. Without condemnation there would be no need for a redemption solution.

THE REDEMPTION SOLUTION

What was Adam's status in Genesis 3:15? Answer: Spiritual death and total depravity. Yes, unlike babies, Adam and the Woman were God-conscious adults, painfully aware that they were separated from God and without hope. Before he chose to sin, Adam knew exactly what the consequences would be. Now-in spiritual death and separated from God-he was in no position to make peace with God so he hid. Yet, it was when he was totally obnoxious to God that God promised a Savior, for that is the message of Genesis 3:15.

The apostle Paul wrote, "Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and (spiritual) death through sin, and so (spiritual) death spread to all men, because all sinned (when Adam sinned)" (Romans 5:12). "For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6). "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died [as a substitute] for us" (Romans 5:8). Adam and all believers in the Old Testament looked forward to the Cross. God promised to send His Son (deity of Christ), the uniquely-born One (The Impeccable Lamb of God-the Man, Jesus Christ) who would go to the Cross and there receive the imputation and judgment of the sins of the entire world-thereby removing sin as an issue for eternal relationship with God. Only the God-Man was qualified to be Savior. So when Adam and the woman expressed faith in the promised Savior, God gave to each of them His very own Eternal Life.

GOD THE OMNISCIENT ONE

God knows everything about everyone, including thoughts, decisions, and actions. Even more, He knew these things billions of years before He created the dust-man, before Adam's failure. David wrote, "O Lord, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise, you perceive my thought from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word was in my mouth, you know it completely, O Lord. Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book (the Decree of God) before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:1-4, 16a). God told Jeremiah, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you . . ." (Jeremiah 1:5). So why did God create man knowing that He would fail? While God is not the author of sin and did not decree sin or failure, he did know all about them. Man had to be a volitional creature-able to choose for or against God-in order to resolve Satan's appeal case. You will recall that before the fall, the only

volitional test for Adam and the Woman was whether to obey God's command regarding the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

MAN'S FAILURES MET BY GOD'S GRACE

Since the fall, mankind has many volitional tests and everyone has failed. In this study, we have recounted many of these failures, which were recorded in the Word of God for our benefit. The lesson to be learned in every case is that God's perfect justice meets each failure with love through grace. No one deserved more punishment; no one deserved less punishment; no one deserved a different kind of punishment. Therefore, when you fail, you may expect punishment that is fair, always perfect in every sense of the word. None of us can ever earn or deserve God's love and grace. God's love is eternal and immutable, never swayed by any of our sins, failures, or successes. The issue is His integrity, not our lack of it. God loves the carnal or reversionistic believer just as much as He loves the spiritually mature believer who advances all the way to maximum glorification of God. Grace emphasizes who and what God is, and what He does for man. While we bask in His grace, we cannot manipulate or take advantage of it.

BLESSING OR PUNISHMENT

As a believer, you are the object of God's love and grace in time and forever. You may ignore God, but God will never ignore you. Whether spiritual or carnal, His grace policy continues unabated. On the Cross, Jesus Christ paid the penalty for all of your sins in full; however, personal sin destroys your fellowship with God, removing you from the spiritual life-you instantly become a carnal believer. When you choose not to utilize God's grace provision for recovering the filling of the Holy Spirit (I John 1:9), you have no spiritual life. When you fail to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, through the perception, and application of doctrine, instead of advancing you are retreating.

In fellowship, His love and grace pours out blessing; but in carnality, the same love and grace pours out punishment. You are punished for your failure to stay in fellowship, which precludes execution of the spiritual life. The punishment continues until you change your mind and use the SOLUTION (I John 1:9) to recover your fellowship with God. If you choose to perpetuate your carnal status, divine punishment intensifies. Eventually, the sin face-to-face with death results in a miserable, horrible death. But all the while-warning punishment, intensive punishment, dying punishment-God's love for you cannot change. You will go to heaven when you die-God's grace, love, and integrity guarantees it-but you will have missed out on all the wonderful, unique, special blessings God has designed just for you personally because you did not acquire the capacity from doctrine to receive them. No, you did not make consistent daily decisions to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ-other things needed your attention. Something was more important to you than Bible class-you didn't see its value. So instead, you receive the discipline God has designed just for you personally. It's fair. It's just. It's love. It's grace. And never forget, it's your choice.

THE PROTOEVANGELIUM

Genesis 3:15 (quoted at the beginning of this lesson) is the first (proto-) declaration of salvation (-evangelium) and one of the key prophetic passages in the Bible. The context of the protoevangelium is God's pronouncement of a sentence on the serpent (Satan) who had just won a massive victory. His sentences on the Woman, all of creation, and Adam follow. You recall that God judged Satan and condemned him to the Lake of Fire long before man's creation. Satan appealed, thereby postponing his sentence. Then God created man to resolve Satan's case. If just one human being chose for God, Satan's case was lost. Not only did Adam choose against God, but as a result abdicated rulership of the planet to Satan for the remainder of time. Matters could not have been worse. But God's grace found a way to turn the entire situation around.

In the middle of His sentence on Satan, God provided a glimpse of His eternal plan to provide a Savior—our Lord Jesus Christ. "And I will put enmity (personal hostility) between you (Satan) and the woman (Eve) and between your seed (unbelieving humanity) and her seed (humanity of Jesus Christ); He (Jesus Christ) shall bruise you on the head (mortal wound) and you shall bruise Him on the heel (the Cross of Christ)." Keep in mind that Adam and Eve were listening to this in spiritual death. "But a natural man (soulish; i.e., unbeliever without a human spirit) cannot accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually [evaluated]" (I Corinthians 2:14). Therefore, it was God the Holy Spirit who made the gospel clear to them.

1. ENMITY BETWEEN SATAN AND THE WOMAN: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman." Enmity is the Hebrew word *eybah*, a noun meaning "personal hostility." In addition to this use, Brown, Driver, and Briggs' Hebrew and English Lexicon cites its use elsewhere between individuals and nations. This phrase acknowledges that Satan has become the world's ruler. For all time his world-system would be the source of hostility and distraction for humanity. "Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world (Satan's system) makes himself an enemy of God" (James 4:4b).

2. ENMITY BETWEEN SATAN AND CHRIST: "...and between your seed and her seed...." "Your seed" speaks to Satan's followers, unbelieving humans (cf. John 8:44), while "her seed" ultimately speaks to the humanity of the Messiah, our Lord Jesus Christ. Though not delineated until much later (Isaiah 7:14), "HER seed" also emphasizes the unique virgin birth of Christ.

3. CHRIST'S BRUISE: "...you shall bruise him on the heel." (Note that this phrase and the next are taken in reverse order, following their sequence in time.) The bruise on the heel refers to the unparalleled suffering of Christ's humanity on the Cross. "And He (Jesus Christ) was foreknown before the foundation of the world (in eternity past), but has appeared in these last times for us" (I Peter 1:20). During those three hours of supernatural darkness, God the Father poured out and judged every sin of human history on His uniquely-born Son. The penalty for every sin of every person who ever lives was paid in full. Grace provided the perfect work to which we can add nothing. While we may never fully comprehend what it meant for perfect Christ to come face-to-face with all of our sins, we have assurance that the heel wound was not fatal. Christ's resurrection ensures that Satan's rulership will terminate.

4. SATAN'S BRUISE: "...He shall bruise you on the head." This phrase prophesies Satan's defeat by our Lord Jesus Christ. The bruise on the head will terminate Satan's rulership of the world. Now his coup d'état in the garden was doomed to failure. Knowing this, Satan did everything within his power to thwart the plan of God. The angelic infiltration was designed to prevent the true humanity of Christ's hypostatic union (Genesis 6). God answered with the great flood and the race started over with Noah and his family. His temptation of Christ was designed to prevent the Cross, but the Cross became reality and Satan's back was broken. At the Second Advent, Satan will personally suffer defeat at the hands of our Lord. Jesus Christ will reign for one thousand years and then Satan and his millions will receive the sentence pronounced at his original trial. They will be cast into the Lake of Fire forever (Matthew 25:41), along with all who have rejected Christ as savior (Rev. 20:11-15).

Adam and Eve neither earned nor deserved God's justice and grace on that great day, nor has anyone since. God the Son would take the form of a servant to become the sin offering for the entire world! Succeeding generations learned many more details about the coming Messiah, but each was responsible for the details they had. In every generation the only way of salvation has been faith alone in Christ alone—as Christ was revealed to them.

ISRAEL'S DELIVERANCE

There are no accidents in God's plan and purpose for believers. God used the 430 years of Egyptian bondage to hone the character of the Israelites. Now it was time for nationhood. Nine plagues, each demonstrating the awesome power of Israel's God, had not convinced Pharaoh to release His chosen people. So, in one night, the tenth and final plague would launch Israel as an independent nation. It was the night of their national regeneration. No human agent could claim credit for this event, it was wholly the work of God. In sovereignty (His decisions are final) and omnipotence (all-powerful), He accomplishes whatever pleases Him. When God speaks, all human debates, suggestions, and discussions are over. In stark contrast to Pharaoh's failure to keep his promises, this final plague-like everything else He does-was anchored entirely in God's integrity.

THE INSTRUCTIONS - Exodus chapter 12 (excerpted)

1. Now the Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt...
3. Speak to all the congregation of Israel, saying, on the tenth of this month they are each one to take a lamb for themselves, according to their fathers' household, a lamb for each household.
5. Your lamb shall be unblemished male a year old; you may take it from the sheep or from the goats.
7. Moreover, they shall take some blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the house.
12. For I will go through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike down all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and the beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments-I am the Lord.
13. And the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you live; and when I see the blood I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.
28. Then the sons of Israel went and did so; just as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

Have you ever noticed how instructions often get changed as they pass through a chain of command? Each recipient tends to add a slight 'spin' to the instruction as they received it. Sometimes this is beneficial; the originator may not have had all the facts. Other times, it can be fatal. God always has all the facts. His instructions must never be spun, amended, or ignored. Notice that Moses and Aaron precisely conveyed the instructions the Lord had given them. It was a matter of life and death.

THE PASSEVER LAMB

Beginning in the Garden of Eden and throughout the Bible, animal sacrifices are a type of the perfect "...Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The paschal lamb was very special, a male yearling without blemish. The "tenth of this month" is analogous to the incarnation of Christ. For three days-analogous to the public ministry of Christ-they watched over the lamb to ensure its perfection. In B.C 1441, the lamb was slain by each household, representing Christ's death on the Cross. Without this sacrifice, there could be no salvation. Annual observations of Passover were unique in that they memorialized a yet future event.

THE ANIMAL BLOOD

In the Old Testament, the system of animal sacrifices always illustrated the future salvation

work of the Savior. In this case, the blood of the sacrifice was to be painted on the door in the form of a cross, "on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the house." Every household that followed this instruction would be secured from the ravages of the plague. Against this background, a simple picture of salvation and eternal security, a nation was born. That evening, every Israelite household ate roasted lamb. Eating is non-meritorious just as belief is non-meritorious. The roasted lamb represented the work of Christ on the Cross as He was judged for the sins of the human race.

That night, in every household where the blood was not found, the Lord killed all the "first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and the beast." Notice that blood was necessary and belief was sufficient for salvation. God had provided everything.

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

Because there is so much misunderstanding and false doctrine, it is important that we define our terms at the outset with a dogmatic statement of doctrine. It is vital to understand that the "blood of Christ" refers specifically to the substitutionary spiritual death of our impeccable Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross. With reference to the Cross, the blood always is used as a spiritual metaphor, never in the literal, physical sense.

There is no power in Christ's physical blood. Christ did not bleed to death. And an angel did not collect His blood in a bowl and take it to fill a fountain in heaven. None of these concepts have any basis in Scripture. We sometimes hear the phrase "pleading the blood" used as some kind of mystical formula for protection or forgiveness. Again, there is no basis in Scripture for that kind of religious mumbo-jumbo. Consider Paul's afflictions: "imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. I have been on frequent journeys, in dangers from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from my countrymen, dangers from the Gentiles, dangers in the city, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren..." (II Corinthians 11:23-26). Is there any record that he ever pleaded the blood? Did anyone in the Bible ever do this? The closest that we can come to a, "yes," are the many martyrs of the Tribulation (Daniel's 70th week) in Revelation 12:11. They are said to overcome the accuser, Satan, by means of (1) the blood, (2) the Word, and (3) their willingness to die rather than obey Satan. But this 'blood' is the same substitutionary spiritual death of Christ on the Cross that saves believers during the Church Age. It is disheartening to see how far believers have gone into the heresy of religion!

Prior to the cross, the human nature of Christ faced more undeserved suffering than any other human being will ever face. He met that suffering through the power of the Holy Spirit and doctrine. But none of those sufferings, including beatings and bleeding, had anything to do with providing our so great salvation. Nor did any of those sufferings compare to the suffering He received while being judged for the sins of the world on the Cross. During His sixth trial, by order of Pilate, He was literally skinned alive with a Roman mastix and a crown of thorns was put on His head (John 19:1-3). Scourging included rubbing salt into the bare flesh to increase pain and cauterized the wounds. We know from Isaiah that His abuse was so intense that His form was unrecognizable, but He did not die. "...so His appearance was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isaiah 52:14). He bled when His hands and feet were brutally nailed to the Cross, but He did not die. (So far, our salvation was yet future).

It was there, as His mutilated body hung on the Cross, that one of the convicts who was crucified along side, placed faith alone in Christ alone. Our Lord assured him that he would be

with Him in paradise that very day. Then, at about noon, the sun was obscured by a supernatural darkness that covered the whole land (Luke 23:44). During the next three hours, God the Father imputed every sin of human history-including yours and mine, those of believers and unbelievers-to the body of His innocent Son and judged Him for each one. Isaiah prophesied the unimaginable intensity of His experience: "But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities" (53:5a). Through it all, Our Lord remained absolutely perfect. This was the "blood of the Lamb without spot or blemish," His substitutionary spiritual death.

The judgment for our sins caused Him to cry in agony, "ELI, ELI, LAMA SABACHTANI?" that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' (Matthew 27:46) Of course He knew the answer. The Father had to forsake Him while imputing and judging our sins so that His absolute righteousness could be imputed to us in regeneration. Still alive He shouted, "Tetelestai!" (Greek, perfect tense: "finished in the past [moments ago] with results that go on forever") (John 19:30). His spiritual death was complete. And when Jesus had shouted with a loud voice, He said, "Father (fellowship with His Father was restored!) into Your hands I deposit My spirit. And having said this, He let out His breath" (Luke 23:46). Now he was spiritually alive but physically dead.

Jesus Christ died twice on the Cross, first spiritually and then physically. What was finished forever? All that was necessary for our salvation; salvation is the legacy of His spiritual death. The citizens of Jerusalem soon discovered that God had torn the veil of the Temple (60ft. x 30ft. x 6in. thick) in two. The Holy of Holies was no longer inaccessible; the barrier between God and man had been removed by the deaths (plural) of Christ on the cross. Luke did not record the entire statement of Christ at His physical death. It is found in Psalm 31:5: "Into Your hand I commit My spirit; You have delivered Me, O Jehovah, God of doctrine." Yes, Bible doctrine is the spiritual heritage of His physical death.

THE GOSPEL

Because an unbeliever is spiritually dead, unable to understand the Gospel and doctrine (I Corinthians 2:14), God the Holy Spirit makes the Gospel clear. It is the Holy Spirit-not cleverly constructed logic-that convinces unbelievers that their choice of one unpardonable sin-the sin of disbelief-keeps them separated from God forever (John 16:8, 9). God ensures that anyone having positive volition, regardless of geographical location, will hear the Gospel so that they may choose to accept or reject it.

All believers in the Church Age are ambassadors for Christ (II Corinthians 5:20a). Those who know the pertinent doctrine will make it known to a lost and dying world. Always at the ready, the believer will never make an issue of himself or anyone else, but will always keep the focus on the person of Jesus Christ, the life-giving Word. "It is the Spirit (of God) who gives life; the flesh profits nothing, the words that I (Jesus Christ) have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (John 6:63). "Simon Peter answered Him, '...You have the words of eternal life. And we have believed (without adding to faith) and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God" (John 6:68, 69).

SALVATION-THE MECHANICS

It is simple, it is clear; it is lucid and perspicuous. "...for unless you believe that I am He (the Savior), you shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31)-it is faith alone in Christ alone! Those who teach anything more or less, any who teach salvation by works-whether raising hands, baptism, confession, lordship, or anything else-are anathema (Galatians 1:8).

Salvation is God's EXCLUSIVE monopoly. "Salvation belongs to the Lord." (Psalm 3:8a); "My salvation shall be forever . . ." (Isaiah 51:6b). In essence, those who distort the Gospel are saying that they know better than God-it is blasphemous. If you added anything to faith alone in Christ alone you are not saved! Nothing can be added to Christ's work on the Cross; nevertheless, Satan continues to enjoy remarkable success at the personal level. Each time someone is taken in by the notion that faith plus something is better than faith alone in Christ alone, Satan wins.

THE MOMENT OF SALVATION

The very moment a person simply believes in Christ-whether sitting, walking, standing, laying, or kneeling; whether in a car, a plane, a swimming pool, or a hospital bed; whether at church, a bar, the beach, or at home-it makes no difference, the miracle of eternal life occurs in an instant! Don't ever let anyone tell you that salvation requires a certain posture or a certain place. Remember, it's nothing but faith. God accepts you where you are, as you are, because of who and what Christ is.

Salvation is an inclusive term that describes at least forty things that personally happen to every believer at the instant of faith. None of these forty things are seen or felt. The entire list appeared in our book, *Biblical Doctrine of Salvation*. Here, we will review just a few of the things that are part of our "so great a salvation . . ." (Hebrews 2:3b).

The believer has all sins and transgressions blotted out: "Everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins" (Acts 10:43b).

The believer receives a human spirit: In the process of "regeneration," the Holy Spirit makes the dichotomous (body and soul) unbeliever a trichotomous (body, soul, and spirit) believer. "That which is born of flesh is flesh (i.e., physical birth), and that which is born of the [Holy] Spirit is [human] spirit" (John 3:6).

The believer is made righteous: God imputes His very own righteousness to the believer: "Even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ (and nothing else) for all those who BELIEVE; for there is no distinction" (Romans 3:22).

The believer is justified (declared righteous): "...being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus..." (Romans 3:24). "Therefore, since we have been justified through faith (alone), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). The Supreme Court of Heaven forever acquits the believer! He is exempt from the Lake of Fire. "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

THE SALVATION MINISTRY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

It is an insult to God for a believer ever to pray for the Holy Spirit. "Do you not know that you are a temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16) "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?" (I Corinthians 6:19). Apparently there are many who lack this confidence. Every believer of the Church Age has the baptism, indwelling, sealing, spiritual gift (s), and filling of Holy Spirit at the moment of salvation. Some point to Acts 19:2: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?' And they said to him, 'No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.'" From their answer, Paul immediately deduced that these believers were not Christians. Does that sound strange?

We need to be very clear that from the Day of Pentecost to the out-resurrection of the Church, regeneration and the baptism of the Spirit are inseparable and always simultaneous. Everyone who is regenerated is at the same time baptized by the Spirit into the Church, the Body of Christ. It's that simple, but it wasn't so simple at the beginning of the Church Age. Starting with the Day of Pentecost-four groups of believers actually received the baptism of the Holy Spirit after they were saved. The first were Jews in Jerusalem (Acts 2); the second, racially mixed Jew-Gentiles in Samaria (Acts 8:12-17); the third were Gentiles in Caesarea (Acts 10-11); and the fourth represented Old Testament saints in Ephesus (Acts 19-our passage). These citizens of Ephesus were disciples of John the Baptist. They had placed faith alone in Christ alone but were not present in Jerusalem when the apostles and other believers received the baptism of Holy Spirit. After this brief transitional period from the dispensation of the Hypostatic Union to the Church Age, there is no excuse for any believer to ever ask for the Holy Spirit since His baptism, indwelling, sealing, spiritual gift(s), and filling are an integral part of his so great salvation.

While the baptism, indwelling, sealing, and spiritual gift(s) of the Holy Spirit are permanent and irrevocable, the filling of the Spirit is lost whenever a believer sins and is recovered by using (I John 1:9). If you are in fellowship the filling of the Spirit is automatic. So we need to be very clear that you cannot ask God for the filling of the Spirit under any circumstances. If you are out of fellowship with God, you can only recover the filling of the Spirit and your spiritual life by naming your sins to God the Father.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Paul—a trophy of grace—wrote, "But by His doing (God's doing, minus anyone's effort) you are in Christ Jesus" (I Corinthians 1:30a); and, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works (of any kind), that no one should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). God is perfect and His work is perfect. God the Son purchased you (I Peter 1:18, 19). God the Holy Spirit sealed you (II Corinthians 1:22). God the Father keeps you saved by His power (John 10:29). God provides salvation in grace. We have nothing to add. We are the objects and beneficiaries of 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 (no accusation against you) with great joy, 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-(Volume 21-lesson 7)

NEWS BREAK

Recent news has the U.S. economy slowing down. Certainly today's prosperity can easily become tomorrow's recession. Economic woes are just one of the ways that God can punish a nation that rejects the Biblical principles of establishment. As a priest nation, the USA has received tremendous blessing by association with believers who have attained maximum glorification of God through their spiritual advance. But that could be easily lost if believers lose sight of their spiritual responsibilities and objectives, thereby failing to provide invisible impact. Evidence suggests that the majority have done just that.

This is what the Lord says, "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength, and whose heart turns away from the Lord. He will be like a bush in the wastelands;

and he will not see prosperity when it comes. He will dwell in parched places of the desert." (Jeremiah 17:5, 6)

Those who trust in politicians or economists, those who derive strength from human viewpoint, or those who reject Bible doctrine are without confidence. Apostates have no capacity for life. They are like a naked person in the desert of false doctrine. Politicians and economists neither deserve credit for prosperity, nor the blame for adversity. Adversity is the result of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ who have the wrong focus. They have only themselves to blame.

But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in Him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its root by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in year of drought and never fails to bear fruit. (Jeremiah 17:7, 8)

Those who advance to the high ground of the spiritual life have maximum capacity for life. They share the happiness of God and understand that God's plan and provision does not depend on circumstances. Whether facing adversity or prosperity, the water of Bible doctrine, rooted in the stream of consciousness of their right-lobes, sustains them in every circumstance. Adversity never disturbs them. Whether the news is good or bad is of no consequence, because they know and have virtue-love for the Lord Jesus Christ who controls history. The doctrine in their souls assures them that God will sustain them as they ride the crests of the waves of history.

Progress Report

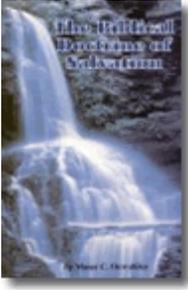
The purpose of this report is to bring you up-to-date about what God is doing for and through this ministry that your heart might be filled with gratitude as you remember Grace Evangelistic Ministries before His throne. On the other hand, if your attention or praise is directed toward GEM or Rev. Onwubiko, 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 tripped since last year. Some of these inmates have responded to the gospel message of our Lord Jesus Christ by "faith alone 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, Ireland, Scotland, Thailand, Philippines, China, India, Egypt, Germany, Croatia, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana, Gambia, and Nigeria-just to name a few. Many are pastors. The list grows as God takes His doctrinal truth to those who are positive. This underscores 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 witnessing the grace of God as it unfolds. It is 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 ZIMBABWE

Forwarded by Pastor John Gumbo

We thank God for what He is doing in our newly formed church here at Shangani, Zimbabwe. The church is really growing; and the good news is that quite a number of believers from several denominations within the community have joined our doctrinal church. These include former members of the Islamic religion who have embraced faith in God through the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible doctrines taught by Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko and the ones I gathered from R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s books have served as a foundation for my communication of the Word of God to my congregation. We are most grateful to God.

May God bless the entire Grace Evangelistic Ministries in the U.S.A, the board of directors, and all the supporters of this ministry for their support to the ministries in Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Nigeria, and elsewhere.

Yours in His Service,
Pastor John Gumbo

REPORT FROM NIGERIA

Prepared and forwarded by Mr. Nelson Ibeji (Chapter Vice-President for GEM).

We have continued to receive appreciation from many especially following the last conference held here in Jos. Those who did not come have also expressed regrets for having not come. The distribution of our publications have helped so many believers tremendously.

Recently, two pastors have told us that they are teaching their congregations the doctrine of eternal security of the believers using our publication, "Eternal Security of the Believer" as their doctrinal resource.

Another highlight of the increase in awareness of Grace Evangelistic Ministries' presence and acceptance of its teachings is the request from one of the highly rated Theological Colleges in Jos for our publications for their students. We were able to supply them with limited quantity because of low stock.

We really thank God for what He is doing for the people of Africa through G.E.M and its associates.

REV. MOSES C. ONWUBIKO'S Evangelistic Meeting Schedule for 2001

January 1 – April 6: U.S.A.

April 7 - May 18: Nigeria (April 9 - 14: Antioch Bible Conference /Evangelism-Lagos).

April 15 - 28: Bible Conference / Evangelism-Owerri, Imo State.

April 29 - May 14: (Jos, Plateau State: Back to the Bible Ministers' Conference; General Conference / Evangelism).

May 15 - 18: He prepares to leave Nigeria back to US on the 18th.

May 19 - June 30: U.S.A.

August 3 - 24: Crusade (Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe)

August 25 - September 6: U.S.A.

September 7 - 28: Switzerland or Ghana

September 29 - November 1: U.S.A.

November 2 - 23: Cameroon or Gambia

November 24 - 31 December: U.S.A.

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".

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,

Thank you for sending me the wonderful bi-monthly issue of "Grace News Today" which dwells mainly on faith alone in Christ alone. It was an eye-opener to discover such amazing spiritual truths as the writer leads me into the great deep truth of God's unfailing Word. The teachings have helped me so much in my spiritual growth. I have no doubt that this ministry has been erected to awaken people of all nations to the truth of the Word of God.

I will always read "Grace News Today" issues for my spiritual nourishment and growth; and I will continue to share them with others with hope that many may be spiritually enriched here in Harare.

I pray that God may continue to bless Grace Evangelistic Ministries with wisdom.

Yours in Christ,
Harare Zimbabwe

Beloved in Christ,

Grace be multiplied unto you through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I have been a pastor of a church for the last four years, but after going through the two books you gave me, I was not really myself again. In fact, I became afraid of standing at the podium any more. I also came across some of R. B. Thieme's books; and the truth therein turned my head around.

Please, I need all your doctrinal materials so that I can begin learning Bible doctrine afresh. In quest for hunger of spiritual truth, I am longing to go into ECWA Theological Seminary, which has been recommended by your ministry.

Yours truly,
Pastor, Abia State, Nigeria

Dear brothers in Christ,

I have been heart-touched after begging from a friend a copy of one of your publications "God's Plan After Salvation." It went right deep into me and I had to share the impartation, which I gathered from it with other friends especially during our Bible class. Thanks for such a mighty job! I therefore wish to have the copies of the books as indicated on the other form; and if there is any current publication, I would like to have it (them) also.

Thanks in advance.

Kumba, Cameroon.

Dear brethren,

Your doctrinal teaching through "Grace News Today" has touched and affected my life. In fact, when I look at what is happening today in our churches and compare them with the sound Bible doctrine in "Grace News Today" I feel like weeping for so many churches. However, I keep praying that someday somehow that God will lead many of them to your ministry.

Thank you all for your service to our Lord.

Jos, Plateau State

Dear Rev. Moses C. Onwubiko,

Greetings in the most precious name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

I would like to thank you for including my name on your mailing list to regularly receive "Grace News Today." It has been a great help in my Christian life and ministry as well. The doctrine from it has really inspired me and challenged me to stand for the truth. I'm very grateful that you've included in your publications those Biblical-based articles that teach and uphold the sound doctrine of the Christian faith. I also commend you for not shrinking from the responsibility of alerting us to the new and increased threats to Christianity.

May God continue to give you strength, and wisdom so that more people will come to the saving knowledge of Christ.

Your fellow servant in the Lord's work,
Camarines Norte, Philippines

Bible Doctrine for Thought

Reporter: Mr. X. died yesterday; he was 33 years old.

Our Response: Imagine that, ...and so young!

Reporter: Miss Y. just died this morning; she was only 18.

Our response: Oh no, no-no-no!

Question: Who's next?

For some, life is long; for others it is short. The time of our birth and the time of our death are the sovereign decisions of God. We can control and are responsible only for the time between these events. Unless the rapture takes place in our lifetime, everyone will die at God's perfect time. The issue is how you use your allotment of time. A few will become famous, others will become wealthy, and still others will become powerful. Of course the vast majority will succeed at being ordinary. But for believers, there is a far greater consideration. Christ said of these, "They are not of the world . . ." (John 17:14b). Every believer's life has tremendous spiritual significance.

Whether life is long or short, God has allocated ample time and everything necessary for every believer to become an invisible hero in the raging angelic conflict, to succeed in the spiritual life, to be God's witness before the angels. To those who succeed, the grace of God pours out greater blessings in time and in eternity. Our human achievements stay right here when we die. But the doctrine in our souls survives death and all eternity. Whatever else you do to keep body and soul together, learning and applying Bible doctrine must become your highest priority. This requires consistent decisions to use (I John 1:9) every time you are out of fellowship, daily decisions to press onward in your spiritual life (Philippians 3:13-14) in order to grow in grace (II Peter 3:18) and advance to the high ground (Ephesians 3:19) whereby God is glorified to the maximum (I Corinthians 6:20). Do you live your life with your eternal destiny in view?

Here is the Truth

PLEDGING TO THE LORD'S WORK

(Continued from volume 19)

"For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have" (II Corinthians 8:12). In my opinion a believer should never pledge to give money that he does not have.

Somewhere in the United States, a church took one of its members to court to recover funds that he had pledged. The church was financially overextended, so the pastor played on emotions to get his congregation to commit their resources. The member was motivated to pledge a huge sum; but when the time came, he had none to give.

This kind of scenario, a true story, is never found where doctrine is properly taught. Suing another believer under such circumstances should be avoided (I Corinthians 6:1-7). Further, giving is always a private matter, a function of our priesthood. That the church would go public with anyone's pledge was an egregious violation of that privacy. Though the appeal was tainted by emotion, if the member was in fellowship at the time that he gave his pledge, it was bona fide giving. The church's financial woes may well have stemmed from failure to understand this simple principle. God does not expect money; He expects an attitude. No matter how much you have, it doesn't begin to compare with God's wealth; he holds title to everything. Until you understand that God doesn't need your money, you are really not prepared to give anything.

THE SOUL: King David sang: "O Lord you have searched [my soul] and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you understand my thought from afar. Even before there is a word on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it all" (Psalm 139:1-2, 4). God is not discovering anything; He is omniscient; therefore, billions of years ago-in eternity past, He knew every thought, motive, and action of every member of the human race-and He knew it all simultaneously! God cannot be fooled by false motivation. Giving to make an impression on

others, or giving for "good luck" are blasphemous distortions of Biblical giving. "God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the [soul]" (I Samuel 16:7b).

DOCTRINE IN THE SOUL: Wisdom is an accurate application of knowledge. Without knowledge of Bible doctrine, a believer cannot give as unto the Lord. Giving does not depend on your finances; it depends on your consistent spiritual motivation-that's the "readiness" in our passage. The one who would leave his family destitute in order to give "what he does not have" is worse than an unbeliever (I Timothy 5.8). It is among the most sublime truths of Scripture that when you have nothing financially, you are giving, nonetheless, if you have developed virtue-love in your soul.
To be continued-(Volume 21)

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 audiotapes. 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 (II Corinthians 9:7). 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 withdrew 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 you join us as we pray:

- Thanksgiving for God's guidance and provision
- Pastor-teachers and other evangelists
- Spiritual advance of our partners in this ministry
- Spiritual advance within the indigenous churches we have established
- Our national, state, and local leaders
- The peace of Israel
- His provision for April-May 2001 evangelistic meetings in Nigeria
- His provision for our publication ministry
- Guiding us toward unbelievers with positive volition
- Guidance and awareness of open doors for our ministry
- His provision of land for our African headquarters

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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