

*God Speaking to Us*

*What a Miracle!*

Carl H. Stevens Jr. is pastor of Greater Grace Church located in Baltimore, Maryland. Pastor Stevens is also chancellor of Maryland Bible College & Seminary and host of the international Christian radio program "The Grace Hour." This booklet was created from a message preached by Pastor Stevens.

Pastor Stevens can be seen weekly on cable television stations throughout the United States. Call us for information regarding programming in your area.

*All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the King James Version. Italics for emphasis are ours.*

GRACE PUBLICATIONS  
P.O. BOX 18715  
BALTIMORE, MD 21206

Printed in Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A.  
Copyright © 1997

Grace Publications is a ministry of  
Greater Grace World Outreach, Inc.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

*INTRODUCTION* . . . . . 5

*Chapter 1* . . . . . 7

*THE SALUTATIONS OF GOD*

*Chapter 2* . . . . . 18

*CHOSEN BY GOD*

*Chapter 3* . . . . . 23

*SET APART TO SPEAK TO HIM*

*CONCLUSION* . . . . . 30



## INTRODUCTION

“But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:9-14).

Many Christians today have never had their hearts and ears set apart to hear God's Word. Therefore, they are unable to hear God speak to them personally.

We must not be familiar with our opportunities to hear the Word of God. We should approach each time of listening as serious, sanctified hearers. Allow the Holy Spirit each day to teach you and develop your spiritual faculties so that you will understand spiritual things.

God wants to show us personally where we are in these last days. One thing is certain: we are living in the reality of 1 Peter 4:7, "The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." Our best provision and protection for the last days is to have a circumcised heart and ear that will *hear* God's still small voice.

This booklet was created from one of Dr. Stevens' early morning college classes at Maryland Bible College and Seminary in Baltimore.

## Chapter One

# THE SALUTATIONS OF GOD

One of the greatest mysteries in the world is that *God desires to speak to each one of us*. And He *does* speak.

“To whom shall I speak, and give warning, that they may hear? behold, their ear is uncircumcised, and they cannot hearken” (Jeremiah 6:10a). To have their ear “uncircumcised” means that God’s chosen people had inattentive, wandering minds. They had not been converted in their capacity to listen.

“Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the LORD hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me” (Isaiah 1:2). I always wondered why God wanted *heaven* to hear, but now I understand that it’s because of the angelic conflict. Once again, the problem with Israel in Isaiah 1:2 was an uncircumcised ear.

Throughout the Bible, God addresses indi-

viduals, families, and entire nations on a very personal level revealed by His *salutations*. Like a father calling to his son or a teacher to his students, He begins by saying the name of the people He is speaking to.

In Jeremiah 22:29, God gives the only universal salutation in the entire Bible: “O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the LORD.” Why was that important? When Jesus was on the earth, Matthew 8:20 says that He had no place to lay His head. The earth did not give Jesus Christ—Who was God—a place to sleep.

“Hear the word of the Lord, O ye women” (Jeremiah 9:20) is a domestic salutation. The King James says “women,” but in the original Hebrew, God is pleading specifically with mothers to teach their children. In Deuteronomy 6:7, God told parents to teach their children when they got up in the morning, while they walked in the way, and before they went to bed at night. Wherever they went and whatever they were doing, they were to teach their children diligently.

Sadly though, Israel did not obey God’s commandment, in Deuteronomy 6. Because they didn’t, Hosea 13:16 records that “their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with



child shall be ripped up.” According to Jeremiah 9:20-21, the children and the young men would be killed in the streets. Soldiers would invade their houses and rape the women—all this because Israel would not listen to the Word of God.

In Jeremiah 7:17-18, we find an entire family worshipping “the queen of heaven.” Instead of worshipping God, they were serving false gods. It is because of these things that God gave the salutations to Israel to hear His Word.

In the Gospel of John, we find the words “verily, verily” thirty-three times from the lips of Jesus. These words meant “What I am about to say is very important. ” God used double salutations when speaking directly to people: “Moses, Moses” (Exodus 3:4); “Samuel, Samuel” (1 Samuel 3:10); “Saul, Saul” (Acts 9:4); “Martha, Martha” (Luke 10:41).” In each of these cases, God was about to say something that would change their lives forever.

### *Too Late to Hear?*

In Jeremiah chapter 3:12, 14 and 22, the Lord said three times to Israel “Return.” God had warned Israel in 1 Kings 9:6-7 that if they turned from following the LORD, then He would cut

them off from their land and they would become a “byword among all people.”

God sent the prophet Jeremiah to King Zedekiah, who sat upon David’s throne, saying, “Hear the Word of the LORD, O king of Judah” (Jeremiah 22:2). Refusing to hear, Zedekiah had Jeremiah thrown into the dungeon. Later, Zedekiah took him out of the dungeon and in chapter 37, The king beseeched the prophet, “Speak to us. Speak to us!” And Jeremiah said, “It’s too late. The soldiers of Egypt and Pharaoh will go back to their land. The Chaldeans will come and destroy you. *It’s too late.*”

Stop reading for a moment. Close your eyes for sixty seconds and think of the times in the Bible where it was too late for someone. Think of the millions of people who are in hell today because it’s too late for them. This is an eternal reality. Think of the person who says “no” to God. God no longer deals with that person, because he has said “no” so many times that his heart has become hardened beyond capacity, just like Pharaoh’s heart.

### *God is Pleading*

The only triple salutation in the Bible was written to Israel in Jeremiah 22:29, “O earth,

earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord.”

God gave national salutations (Jeremiah 2:4; Isaiah 1:2); He gave a domestic salutations to a families (Jeremiah 9:20-22); and He gave royal salutations (Jeremiah 22:1).

Two times in Hosea 2:2 God used the word, “plead.” “Plead with your mother, plead”—“mother” referring to the nation of Israel.

Consider God in heaven, the creator of the universe. He sent His Son to die and shed His blood on the cross. Though Jesus had no place to lay His head, still He did everything possible to give men a way to heaven, to provide a way of escape, and to give them happiness and peace. Then, consider man, who so often does not listen to the Word of God.

I’ll never forget the time a friend of mine who was serving jury duty told me that he wasn’t sure whether the person on trial was guilty or not. My friend was in the courtroom and watched as the attorney went before the jurors and addressed one woman, saying “If you convict this man, your conscience will trouble you the rest of your life.” Then the attorney wept. He went up to a gentleman in the jury and repeated his plea. Then he went back and wept in front of the jurors. Over and over, he pleaded with them.

When the proceedings were over, the jury found his client not guilty.

God is pleading with His people—*pleading*.

It's not a light thing to assemble day and night to hear the Word of God; hearing God speak is such a serious matter. The Lord desires to speak to us, and He *does* speak.

God spoke to Israel through Moses. He spoke to David through the prophet Nathan. Then God spoke to the rebellious, reactionary, hateful people of Judah through Jeremiah. Through John the Baptist, God spoke to the decadent, evil people who ended up cutting off John's head. When Jesus was on trial before Pontius Pilate, the multitude cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" (Luke 23:21). It was just as much the decision of the crowd as it was the leader's.

### *How We Hear*

It is so important that when we hear the Word of God, we hear it not as the word of men, but "as it is in truth, the Word of God" (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Certainly we are not perfect. I'm a sinner as much as every other teacher. But as long as the message is from the Scriptures, we must hear it as the Word of God. This is why: The first thing we will be judged for at the Bema

Seat will be *how* we listened to the Word.

Romans 15:4 says the things that were “written aforetime were written for our learning.” 1 Corinthians 10:11 tells us that all the things that happened to Israel and Judea happened for our example and admonition.

### *Foolish Jesting*

One night years ago, I spoke at a church in another state. In my message, I mentioned how in Revelation 8, all of heaven will be silent for thirty minutes. It will be a time of unbelievable silence. The angels and the saints will stop singing. God showed what He was going to do as He poured out terrible judgments upon the earth (See: Zechariah 13:8). He would destroy one-third of the population along with one third of the oceans, the land, the moon and the stars. People would die, and the wrath of God would begin to take life after life, because people would not hear the Word of God.

During the rap session after the service, someone got up and said, “Well, after hearing that message tonight, I know there’s one place where women will be silent.”

I was angry. You never make foolish gestures about anything in the Word of God. It’s okay to

laugh at the Balaam story (Numbers 22), because it's true, but you should never use the Word of God to make foolish gestures. That's taking something that was sacred and solemn and turning it into foolish jesting, something God tells us not to do.

### *Warnings and Exhortations*

Life has so many sharp curves and steep inclines, so many dangerous precipices and rugged mountains that we must hear the Word of the Lord—hear it in all of its authenticity, in all of its glory, in all of its beauty. We must hear its warnings: “To whom shall I speak, and give warning?” (Jeremiah 6:10). God said they would not hear because their ears were uncircumcised. They didn't have a capacity. Their spiritual faculties and spiritual senses were dull. Therefore, they did not have the ability to retain the Word of God.

Throughout the Scriptures, God asked His people many questions. In Jeremiah 2:5, He asked, “What iniquity have your fathers found in me?” And in Isaiah 5:4a, “What could have been done more to my vineyard [Israel], that I have not done in it?”

Many in the last days will change their doc-

trine. For example, some are changing their view on the Rapture of the Church from the pre-tribulation to the mid-tribulation or the post-tribulation view. In doing so, they spiritualize the book of Revelation, making the entire book an allegory. These people have never had their ears circumcised to hear the Word of God.

“And boast not thyself for tomorrow, because you do not know what a day will bring forth” (Proverbs 27:1). The opportunities we have to hear the Word of God go by so quickly. That’s why it is so important to be serious, sanctified hearers. Let the Holy Spirit teach you and develop your spiritual faculties and spiritual senses so that you will understand spiritual things. God will show you privately and personally where we are in these last days. We are living in the reality of 1 Peter 4:7a, “The end of all things is at hand.”

### *Hear and Tremble at God’s Word*

How does God speak? In Revelation 1:15, His voice is as the sound of many waters. In John 7:37-38, Jesus spoke with a loud voice. But in Isaiah 51:12, God spoke with a comfortable voice. To Elijah He spoke with a still small voice (1 Kings 19:12).

Yes, He speaks in many different ways. He says to His people in Isaiah 66:2, I will “*ble*ss” (says the original Hebrew text) “...him that is poor and of a contrite spirit and trembleth at My word.” “Tremble” means “stop being anxious.” This speaks of someone who throws away all anxiety and puts aside every wandering thought so he can hear. Put aside every reflection in your soul; lay aside the things in your life that you want to be a certain way. Don’t consider another thing because *God is speaking*.

In verse 5 of Isaiah 66, “Hear the word of the LORD, ye that tremble at his word,” because there are many who will not hearken to it.

Jesus Christ is always dealing with His people. Consider what has happened to the Jewish people, how they were buried alive in trenches, and their children killed, just as Hosea 13:16 predicted. The Jewish people are precious. Many are getting saved today. The entire nation will be saved at the end of the Tribulation Period when Jesus Christ returns to earth in His Second Advent. Because they will see His wounds, Israel will recognize that He, indeed, is the Messiah, and once again, they will be the client nation during the Millennial Reign. Please understand that the reason any one of us undergo serious



and continual judgment, is because we do not *hear* the Word of the Lord.

It is no wonder that in Isaiah 55:3, God says, "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live." Do not think without hearing from God. That is why God says, "Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). This is so important, I could never emphasize it enough.

In Mark 4:24 and Luke 8:18, the Word of God instructs us to be careful *what* and *how* we hear. And in Ecclesiastes 5, we must be "more ready to hear." In Leviticus 14:13-16, the priest had to have the blood first, then the oil, placed on his right ear, because he had to be set apart and anointed to hear.

*Chapter Two*  
CHOSEN BY GOD

Acts 19 speaks of the great temple of “Diana.” It was the most magnificent structure in that part of the world at that time. According to ancient history, Diana worshippers suffered persecution and the original temple was destroyed. Deeply religious, they labored to rebuild the temple where they would bow, weeping and mourning their loss as they worshiped this false goddess. It was to a group of people that were saved and delivered from the worship of Diana that Paul wrote the epistle to the Ephesians.

Likewise, Israel in their captivity still placed Jerusalem—the holy city—ahead of God (See, Psalm 137.). They lost all their possessions, their homes, and their crops; yet, even after going into captivity (because of disobedience to the Word of God), they had the audacity to say, “Oh, we long for our land. We miss our property. We

miss what we had." Depressed, they couldn't play their harps; they couldn't sing in a strange land.

### *We Are God's Very Own*

Verses 1-6 of Ephesians chapter 1 deal with the Father's plan. Verses 7-12 deal with the Son's execution of the Father's plan of redemption, and verses 13-14 deal with the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

In the book of Ephesians, "grace" is mentioned twelve times. "Spiritual" is found three times, and "heavenly" four times. "Mystery" appears six times, "the body" seven times, and "walk" eight times. "In Christ" (or "in Him") is found ninety-three times (eighty-nine times in the Greek).

God is saying to the Ephesians, and to us, "I want you to be My very own."

There's a beautiful song called "His Very Own." It goes like this:

*His very own, His very own,  
Wonderful grace and His Word is made known.  
Chosen by the Father, purchased by the Son,  
Sealed by the Spirit, because the work is done—  
We are His very own!*

Think of that; we are His very own! That's

what Ephesians is all about.

### *Before Time Began*

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

“According as he hath chosen us” is *kathos exelexato hemas* in the Greek. “According as” (*kathos*) means that God is going to give the reason we were chosen. “Chosen” is a gnomic aorist middle indicative of *eklego*. The gnomic aorist is a timeless aorist revealing that God chose us before time began! The middle voice means the subject [the Father] produced the action of choosing us and He will receive the final benefits. The indicative mood is an assertion of reality. *Eklego* means “a special choice based upon significant preference.” It is God’s purpose according to His choice (Acts 13:17); and, God’s choice is the result of His own purpose (Romans 9:11). So because of God’s choice (Romans 11:28), we have become His friends.

“In him” is *en auto*. *En* is a preposition and *auto* is a masculine pronoun in the dative case of advantage. *En* with the dative denotes static position, or the position in which one has been

made to stand forever. So “According as he has chosen us in him” points to our position in Christ where we have been made to stand, because we were chosen in the plan of grace before the foundation of the world. God knew in His foreknowledge that we would respond with positive volition in time toward the gospel.

### *Knowing the One Who Knows Us*

God is saying, “I know you by name, and I knew you in eternity past. You may think you’re unimportant, or that you don’t have value to me. You may think that I don’t respect you, but I do. I have given you amazing dignity. Because I knew that you would respond to Jesus and the Gospel, I elected you by grace. Billions of years ago, *I knew you*. I knew every single thing about your life, every single sin you would ever commit, and every single decision you would ever make—I knew it all.

“You must never be a stranger to My voice. You must never be a stranger to My Word. I’ve known you from eternity past. Now I want you to get to know Me in time so that you can spend the future in eternity with Me in intimacy.”

People get so troubled about how much money they’re going to make, where they’re

going to live, and what they're going to do, when these things are not the issue. The issue is, Where can I best get to know God?

I don't want to hear strangers' voices because of materialism, or because I want to be affluent (there's nothing wrong with being affluent if it's God's will). I want to hear Jesus Christ's voice. I want to hear the Word of God from the pulpit. I want to hear in the place where I can grow, and be conformed to Christ's image. I want to be transformed every moment that I live by His Word—the mind of Christ.

Three of the most crucial things on earth is your availability to hear, how you hear, and having the right person to teach you. Don't let the cares and pleasures of this world, and the deceitfulness of materialism take the Word of God out of your heart (Mark 4:18).

## *Chapter Three*

### SET APART TO SPEAK TO HIM

God desires so much for His children to speak to Him. He says, “Even if you can’t say anything good to Me, say something. I want you to talk to Me often. Even if you don’t feel that you know Me, even if you don’t want to talk with Me, you’re My child, talk to Me! Say something. Say anything, but say *something!* I want to hear you speak!”

#### *Insulting Silence*

A wealthy man who was a deacon in a Baptist church had a wonderful wife and three beautiful daughters. I knew this man’s pastor who was previously the pastor of large churches in Canada and Philadelphia. We shared the pulpit during a two-week crusade in New York.

One of the deacon’s daughters asked the pastor, “Could you come to our house? My father is planning to divorce my mom!” The pastor

agreed, and upon arriving at the house he said to the deacon, "I'm going to get right to the point. I'm your pastor-teacher. You've been such a wonderful man. You have your own radio broadcast. You're a phenomenal giver. You have served the church magnificently. I love you! I love your family. Is it true that you are going to divorce your wife?"

The deacon replied, "Yes sir, it's true. My wife is the most wonderful mother that I could ever have for my children. She is a wonderful housekeeper and a loving person. But please understand. For years I have tried to have fellowship with her, but there is always an insulting silence. We never talk. I come home and try to initiate conversation, but she just won't talk."

Then he told his pastor, "I don't ever plan to get remarried. I'm going to live purely, but I cannot stand the insulting silence any longer."

Do you know that God says to some people, "I cannot stand your insulting silence—Talk to Me! You talk to people, and you're always wondering if people care for you, and if they're going to be close to you forever. You depend on people, so you talk to them. But I want you to talk to Me! And then fellowship with people in *Me.*"



This deacon ended up getting the divorce, and it broke his pastor's heart. I do not agree with him. I just told you the story, because it's true.

### *God's Verily, Verily's*

God has chosen each of us before the foundation of the world. He knows us by name. Don't think for a moment that God doesn't use double salutations to address you in His still small voice. He does, but we don't hear Him speak because we don't know how.

If you study the twenty-four "verily, verily's," in the gospel of John, your heart will respond wherever you may be in your life. For example, in John 5:24, Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life [right now], and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." As you focus on God's verily, verily's, you will experience an amazing mental and emotional response to truth when the Holy Spirit teaches you, because you have not received the spirit of the world. You are not consumed with details of life. In reality, it's easier to deal with the details of life when you're walking with God.

## *Be Holy*

“According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should *be holy* and without blame before him in love” (Ephesians 1:4).

God is saying to us, “I chose you by my standard of mercy, and by My standard of grace, and I want you to be holy.”

The words “be holy” are found thirty-nine times in the Scriptures. The first occurrence is in Exodus 22:31 when God said, “Ye shall be holy men unto me.” I can hear His voice saying this to me. He speaks so beautifully. I can hear the compassion in His voice, and yet I hear the urgency and fervency of His voice in Leviticus 11:44, “I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy.”

This does not mean that we should be hyper spiritual. None of us is perfect in our experience. But it does mean to be separated unto a thorough commitment to the Cross, to the mandates of God, and to the promises of God. Listen to God’s voice as He says to you, “Be separated unto Me, My plan, My Person, My provision, and My peace.”

Leviticus 19:2*b* says, “Ye shall be holy: for I

the LORD God am holy.” He says it again in Leviticus 20:7, 26, and in Numbers 15:40, “That ye may remember and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.” In Numbers 16:7*b*, “And it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy.”

In 1 Peter 1:15-16, God is saying, “I want you. I’m very jealous over you, and I want you to be separated unto Me. And by being separated unto Me, you will indeed have a life that is incomprehensible. When you face the sharp curves and the rugged mountains, and the dangerous precipices, you will be able to face them with Me. And you will understand what I meant when I said that all the Scriptures are inspired—*all of them*.” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Every word of Scripture is inspired. They are all profitable, and God wants His words to dwell richly in you. You will never be sorry that you took the time to let the Scriptures dwell in you. Your children will not end up like Israel in the Old Testament, and your young men will not have to be killed in the street. And your fathers will not have to lose everything because of God’s judgment. Your women will not have to fear soldiers from the Chaldean army coming through locked doors to rape them. (This is

speaking of a nation that was in the fifth cycle of discipline because of their repeated refusal to respond to the Lord's pleading. \*)

God is saying to us, "I will prosper and bless you." He said to Israel, "I'll make you a great nation." And Joshua and Caleb's victory in Canaan was followed by forty years of peace. God blessed them because they obeyed. Their confession was, "We can do it," and they were blessed. God does want to bless us, but He wants us to be holy, and He wants us to be without blame.

### *Without Blame*

Ephesians 1:4 goes on to say that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy "and without blame" (*kai amomous*). This means to have no obvious defects or spots; to have no scars in the emotions, no defects in the subconscious mind that would diminish your spiritual beauty.

God is saying, "I don't want you to have wounded emotions. I don't want you to keep confessing your defects. But I want you to know that my blood and my grace cleanses and purges your conscience (Hebrews 9:14), and that rebound results in absolute restoration of fellowship."

Therefore, “without blame” really means that God doesn’t want our unconscious mind to be scarred. He doesn’t want any defects. He doesn’t want our soul to diminish in its spiritual beauty.

### *Before Him in Love*

God Almighty has told us that He wants us to be without blame and to be before Him in love. “Before him,” *katenopion auto*, a preposition in the genitive case, means to be “in the presence of, made a participant, having His viewpoint.”

Not only that, the Lord defines our position further by saying that we are before Him “in love,” *en agape*. “In” (*en*) is a preposition followed by the dative referring to a position without certain limits. It marks a state, or condition.

Because of the Finished Work of Calvary, we are in a place with God that has no limits. That place is called “love.” We are living in the presence of love, and God’s love has no limits!

The Bible with its doctrine is simply God’s highway in time on earth; the Word is God speaking to us—what a miracle!

*\*For more about God’s judgments on nations and the cycles of discipline, read Dealing with Stressful Times, by Pastor Stevens, Grace Publications, 1997.*

## CONCLUSION

God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings. We stand “without blame before him in love.”

The Lord says, “I don’t want you asking a thousand questions when I’ve already provided everything that you will ever need—if you will only *talk to Me*. If only you will pray to Me, and believe Me, you won’t have to ask people so many questions. Just throw yourself on Me and act in faith; praise Me, worship Me, love Me, and respond to Me. I will provide everything you will ever need for your journey on earth.”

Since Adam fell, God has been calling out to His people to turn to Him. The words of the Lord have been given to faithful men throughout time. Without exception, God has chosen to speak through sinners. Still, each one was chosen because of a plan more vast than the universe that contained it, and more intricate and specific than the tiniest particle that participates

in the foundations of the magnificent creation we can see:

“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away” (Matthew 24:35). Can you fathom the value God has placed on His words that He speaks to men? Then fathom the depths of His love for souls whom He has chosen for a purpose to participate in His perfect and eternal plan. Are you listening? God is speaking.