

Grace Reversals

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 messages 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 9

THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE

Chapter 2 13

OUR PERSONAL HEALER

Chapter 3 17

THE WORD OF HIS POWER

CONCLUSION 22

INTRODUCTION

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God.

“Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.

“The LORD shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The LORD shall com-

mand the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

“The LORD shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the LORD thy God, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the LORD; and they shall be afraid of thee. And the LORD shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers to give thee. The LORD shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow.

“And *the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail*; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other gods

to serve them" (Deuteronomy 28:1-14).

In Deuteronomy 28, God established a covenant with the nation of Israel. The blessings of this covenant, however, were dependent upon Israel's obedience to God's commandments (Deuteronomy 28:1-2).

Even though God addressed this covenant to Israel, it has a relevant application to believers in the Church Age. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 asserts that "all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." 1 Corinthians 10:11 tells us that the things that happened in Israel's history are for our example, "written for our admonition." Finally, Romans 15:4 says, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Ephesians 1:3 is a New Testament commentary on Deuteronomy 28:1-14: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." We can enjoy the same temporal and spiritual blessings that God

promised to Israel.

God promised to reverse Israel's status as the smallest among all nations. He promised to bless their military operations so they could protect their freedom. He promised financial prosperity; everything that their hands would find to do would be blessed—in their cities, in their fields, and in the fruit of their bodies.

Most of all, God said he would bless Israel above all nations by showing the rest of the world that His people were His “peculiar treasure.” He said, “I will open up the treasures of heaven and provide for you. You will be the head and not the tail.”

God wants the same for His people today. He doesn't want us to be the tails of the world. By grace, He desires to reverse our situations and cause us to reign in order to bring glory to His name. The Lord is here to bless us; He's not out to get us. He wants to honor us, not hurt us. He wants to elevate every part of our lives. God is for our promotion, not our demotion. In a world ignorant of Jesus Christ's Finished Work, where the Kingdom of God is so misunderstood, God wants to promote us.

Chapter One

THE LORD IS IN THIS PLACE

“And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven” (Genesis 28:16-17).

As Christians, we face the danger of not recognizing the visitation of Jesus Christ; though He communicates and ministers to us, often we don't know that it's Him.

In his vision, Jacob saw angels going up and down a ladder to heaven. When he awoke, he cried, “God was here and I did not know it.” Mary Magdalene saw Jesus resurrected and “knew not that it was Jesus” (John 20:14). In Luke 24:16, the disciples on the road to Emmaus did not know that Jesus was walking with them. After Peter and the other backslidden disciples spent an unproductive night at their old fishing

trade, they heard a man on the shore calling to them in the early morning light, but, they “knew not that it was Jesus” (John 21:4).

God indwells your body as His temple. Do you know that He’s there? How much room have you given Him to operate in your life? Do you reverence His presence? Have you esteemed His promises?

Each of us must enter into communion with Christ and realize the blessing of His provision. We need to wake up every morning and say, “Oh, Holy Spirit, I reverence you today as you glorify Jesus Christ and His Word.”

Hearing Whom He Sends

When we hear the Word of God preached, do we recognize God’s presence? Regardless of who is speaking, Jesus will give them the precise words to say.

As Jesus sent out the disciples to preach the Gospel, in Luke 10, He told them, “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me” (verse 16). In 1 Samuel 8:7, God told Samuel, “Don’t be discouraged, they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me, because they refused to hear My words that I have spoken through you.” The people of Israel

demanded that Samuel give them a king, but they would never have made that request if they had realized that God was there all the time, speaking to them through His prophet.

If the people in this church were to slip into sinful, careless lifestyles, it is possible that this ministry—with all of its outreaches and affiliate churches—could be gone within twenty years. By God’s grace, I pray that will never happen. But if people fail to realize that God is here, then God will remove the light of our testimony.

Charles Spurgeon—the “prince of preachers”—once preached to thousands; but, today, the same church, just over a century since his death, has only thirty to forty people. The ministry founded by Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones now has just seventy-five to eighty people. Somehow, after these men were gone, the Christians in their churches ceased to recognize the presence of God.

The Gift of Righteousness

Jesus Christ has given us *His* righteousness apart from the law—it doesn’t depend on our own works. The moment we first believed in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, He imputed to us “the righteousness which is of faith”

(Romans 10:6) as a gift of grace. Then, we receive imparted righteousness through the Word of God because we believe that He is not only our Savior but also our Healer and our provision for life.

The Holy Spirit wants to take us beyond the veil of our flesh and the awareness of our circumstances. The Lord is saying, "I am already *in* you, but I want you to have so much more!" He wants to carry us beyond subjective reflections of the past into His mighty presence. Together, we are learning to have the right perspective through objective thinking.

God desires fellowship in perfect oneness, with "no air between" (Job 41:16), so that heaven can fill our souls. Thank God! We can be inspired by His presence, knowing that He is *for* us.

Chapter Two

OUR PERSONAL HEALER

“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?

“And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them,

“And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee” (Exodus 15:23-26).

Two and a half million people were in need of water, but the water they found was bitter.

Then, the Lord addressed His people saying, “I am the Lord your personal healer.” God showed Moses a tree, and when Moses cast the tree into the water, the water was made sweet. In the same way, when you apply the Cross to your bitter situation, death will enter into resurrection life and the waters of your personal life will be made sweet. Jesus Christ is here to bless, to speak, and to deliver. You can approach God and hear Him say, “I am your personal healer. That’s who I am, and I don’t care what anyone says about your life.”

When a young woman in our ministry was diagnosed with brain cancer, we began to pray and the Lord healed her. Years later, she is still absolutely cancer-free. I could show you documentation on cases of cirrhosis of the liver, emphysema, lung cancer, and liver cancer (just to name a few) that have been healed by the Lord. He’s our personal healer who brings into our lives *grace reversals*.

A Lame Man, a Prostitute, and a Publican

John 5:1-9 tells the story of a man who hadn’t walked for thirty-eight years. Because he didn’t know Jesus, he didn’t believe in Him as the Christ, the personal healer. Jesus said to him,

“Take up your bed and walk,” and the man took up his bed—the provision he had made for his condition—and walked! His healing was a grace reversal.

A prostitute, lost and on her way to hell, came seeking Jesus when she heard He was in the house of Simon the Pharisee (Luke 7:36-50). When she found Him, she began to wash Jesus’ feet with her tears, wiping them with her long hair. Then, she anointed His feet with ointment from an alabaster box she had brought with her. Answering Simon’s silent disapproval of this woman, Jesus said, “Because she has been forgiven much, she loves much.” She experienced a grace reversal—a prostitute from the streets, now in the throne room of God’s mercy, she became a child of the King in His royal family.

Zaccheus was a publican who lived a deceitful, crooked life. When the Master came through Jericho, the crowds gathered. Because Zaccheus was so small, he climbed a tree to get a better look at this “Jesus.” Jesus looked up, saw the little guy, and said, “Come down; I’m coming to your house today.”

Why Zaccheus? Everyone hated him. Publicans were crooks who stole money from the people by inflating the Roman tax system and

skimming the profits. But Jesus said to Zaccheus, "Today, salvation has come to your house."

The Creator of the universe, the Redeemer who would shed His blood, gave Zaccheus a grace reversal. No longer would he be crooked and deceitful because Jesus came to his house to bring deliverance. Zaccheus was so transformed by Jesus' presence in his house that he confessed, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (Luke 19:8). This, indeed, was a grace reversal.

Chapter Three

THE WORD OF HIS POWER

Proverbs 30:5 tells us that every word of God is pure. Jesus Christ created all things (Colossians 1:16) and upholds them by the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3).

We, as God's people, have great potential simply because of His character and the provision of His love toward us. Every single word of God is pure and has the power to produce an experience of divine love, eternal productivity, and spiritual awareness of everything that is ours through Him. In the Word, we learn the necessity of being deeply aware of God's presence. Christ wants us to understand that we are co-laborers with Him.

Jesus Christ is in you. The Holy Spirit indwells you. If the Word of life and Spirit of grace abide in you, why do you talk about depression and confess negative feelings? If *God* is living in you, why do you act as though He's not able to

deliver you? You behave like a practical atheist while you still go to an evangelical church.

Sanctified and Justified

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

In 1 Corinthians 6:11, the Apostle Paul is saying, “Some of you practiced these things, but you are not that way any more. There has been a reversal in your lives. Your heavenly Father doesn’t charge you with your sins because He doesn’t see them. He has given you a divine, providential, supernatural reversal. Now you are washed, now you are sanctified, now you are justified.”

God declares our sanctification before our justification because He speaks of our positional sanctification through the Finished Work of Christ, in Hebrews 10:10: “By the which will we

are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” Our positional sanctification makes it possible for us to accept our progressive sanctification according to Deuteronomy 28:13. As we live within the boundary lines of the pure Word of God, the Holy Spirit reveals the righteousness of faith and our potential to be the ‘head’, and not the ‘tail’, in everything we do.

Seek First the Kingdom

Picture it. Jesus Christ is saying so personally to you, “I have laid down my life for you so that I might live inside and be everything you need. I will provide for you, and I give you the abundant life. But, I want you to seek first My Kingdom and My righteousness, and not the ‘things’ that are all around you. Then, all these other things will be added unto you.”

When your eye is single, your whole body will be filled with the light of the Word of faith (Roman 10:8), the Word of grace (Acts 20:32), the Word of life (Philippians 2:16), and the Word of His power (Hebrews 1:3, 4:12).

God wants us to see that as we develop intimacy with Him through obedience to His indwelling Word, He will give us divine

protection and a godly reputation among the nations. We will have special favor as we enter into the unction of prayer power, prayer praise, prayer worship, and prayer provision.

Listen to the still small voice of God as He whispers, "Begin to understand what it means to spend one hour in the morning and one hour at night with Me. Come all alone to My throne of grace and mercy, shut out every distraction, and begin to pray *for* every promise in the Bible."

Pray for your marriage; God wants it to be good. Pray for your children; God wants to bless them. Pray for your job; God wants you to prosper. Pray for your health; God is your healer. Pray for creative ideas, that Jesus Christ will be glorified as He blesses you. Then, pray for your neighbors. Pray for missions. Pray for others who have ailments and problems because they have not heard the Word of life.

As you begin to develop fervency in prayer and an intimacy with the Word of faith, Jesus becomes the object of your communion. You will become one with the Lord as you agree with Him (Amos 3:3). You walk before Him who is Almighty (Genesis 17:1), and you are prepared to meet Him at any moment (Amos 4:12).

Heaven will open up, and you will begin to see the blessings of God poured out. His blessings will flow down the avenues of need and frailty. They will flow where deliverance is sought and in the places where you desire a greater consciousness of His presence.

As God begins to bless us, He calls us by name and leads us into precise light. When we follow the light we have received, He gives us more light, more blessing, more faith, more grace, more mercy, more purity, more hunger, and more thirst.

We are the sons and daughters of God (1 John 3:1). His resurrection power and life are available to work through the righteousness of faith given to us through the abundance of His grace. It is something we receive. God wants to begin bringing grace reversals in our lives—spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically, and domestically.

There isn't anything more enjoyable than obeying the Master. Nothing can match the joy that comes from obedience to His Word, fellowship with His Spirit, communion with His life, oneness with His plan, and union with His will.

CONCLUSION

When Jesus Christ reverses something in our lives, we don't earn it—it's a *grace* reversal. Just as He desires us to grow in the grace and the knowledge of Him, He also desires to bless us. He doesn't want one single child of His to be the tail. He doesn't want one marriage to be the tail. Businessmen or whoever you are, Jesus doesn't want you to be the tail.

Christ is the head of His Church (Ephesians 1:22). He's the head over the fallen angels who come against us (Colossians 2:10). He is above all principalities and powers (Ephesians 1:21), and He has seated us above with Him.

The Lord wants to make us the head over our enemies and to crown us with honor, blessing, glory, and joy. He wants us to have peace, purity, effectiveness, and righteousness as we understand the Spirit of life and the Word of faith.

Jesus Christ is the object of every promise. He supports each promise with His integrity

and veracity. God's omnipotence is behind His Word. He blesses us through the power of His omnipresence, and His truth is revealed through His omniscience.

"We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now the is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation)" (2 Corinthians 6:1-2).

Now is the accepted time for God to bring deliverance. He wants to do it through His love because we are His children. We are members of His body, flesh, and bones (Ephesians 5:30). We are one spirit with Him (1 Corinthians 6:17). He is saying to us, "You are a part of My body, a part of My eternal life, a part of everything about Me." When we begin to accept this without doubting, regardless of what we've done or how we feel, we will begin to have an expectation based upon His character (Psalm 62:5), an expectation that will not be cut off (Proverbs 24:14). As we realize that God is for us, we will experience the power of praise and worship and a tremendous release through the power of His promises.