

The Morning Star Order

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 © 1998

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| <i>INTRODUCTION</i> | 5 |
|-------------------------------|---|

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| <i>Chapter 1</i> | 7 |
|----------------------------|---|

FROM DUST TO GLORY

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| <i>Chapter 2</i> | 11 |
|----------------------------|----|

THE MORNING STAR

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| <i>Chapter 3</i> | 21 |
|----------------------------|----|

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| <i>CONCLUSION</i> | 26 |
|-----------------------------|----|

INTRODUCTION

“And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and *they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.*

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and *shall reign with him a thousand years*” (Revelation 20:4-6).

“And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my

Father. *And I will give him the morning star.* He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches” (Revelation 2:26-29).

Heaven will be a glorious place for everyone who goes there. Whoever accepts Christ as His personal Savior will be there, but not everyone will have the same experience. Facing the facts as the Bible presents them, it is clear that not all Christians will be rewarded equally.

There will be degrees of joy and privilege in heaven, just as there will be degrees of suffering and punishment in hell. If Paul went after the prize of the high calling, why can't we? Paul never said, "I'll be glad just to get into heaven." Rather, he gladly spent his life and was spent—for others. By the circumstances we go through in time, we are being trained to reign in eternity. Those believers who overcome and keep His works will be specially honored by the Father. They will receive the Morning Star Order and enjoy unmatched blessings in heaven.

Chapter One
FROM DUST TO GLORY

“The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have born the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” (1 Corinthians 15:47-49).

“Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:17-18).

Think of the validity, veracity, value, and virtue of God’s Word. The Bible says in Genesis 2:7 that God made man out of the dust of the earth. (The human body is made up of the same elements that make up the dust of the earth, and we have the scientific evidence to prove it!) Then

the Lord breathed into man the breath of life (the human spirit) so that man became a living soul—a spiritual, moral being with understanding and an intellectual capacity to expand to be like God (Genesis 1:27; 2:7).

God is Building a Glorious Church

God did not create both man and woman out of the dust. First He made the man and then took the woman out of the man. In the same way, the Church came out of Christ—out of His life. The same life that is in the Head, Jesus Christ, is also in His Body on the earth, “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Ephesians 1:23).

The Lord said through the apostle Paul, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a *glorious church*, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25-27). Imagine a perfect body in heaven, with no defects or impurities, and nothing gets old there, *ever!*

A song that we sing says, “From glory to glory He’s changing me...from earthly things to the heavenly.” God is building this glorious

Church through a process of transformation. As we continue to look into the mirror of God's Word, we are being changed from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:18).

What does it mean when 2 Corinthians 3:17 says, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"? During the process of transformation, the Lord liberates us from the old sin nature through the written Word that becomes a living Word by the inspiration of the Spirit. We are becoming just like Jesus Christ. As He is in heaven, so are we now on the earth (see 1 John 4:17).

Riches of Glory

"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: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, *to the praise of the glory of his grace*, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:4-6).

"To the praise of the glory of his grace" means that God has given us the riches of grace so that we may be complete in Christ.

Paul prayed in Ephesians 3:16 that God would grant each of us "according to the riches

of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” How are we strengthened? According to the riches of His glory.

God is rich in glory. His name, which reveals His nature, His character, and the essence of His glory, is Mercy, Grace, Longsuffering, and Abundance in Divine Goodness and Doctrine. He wants to extend the riches of His glory toward us, in us, and through us, to others. And as we are transformed from glory to glory, we have the potential to receive the highest honor God could ever give to His children—the declaration of the Morning Star Order.

Chapter Two

THE MORNING STAR

“There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:41-42a).

The heavens reveal varying degrees of brightness. Moons and planets reflect the light of the stars, and the stars are measured and known according to their degree of brilliance. As the stars differ from one another, there will be different degrees of glory or brightness among believers in heaven. While there will be no unhappiness, there will be *degrees* of happiness, because of the degrees of glory.

Daniel 12:3 says, “They that be *wise*”—those who know Bible doctrine categorically and precisely in the light of grace and the Finished Work—“shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteous-

ness as the *stars* forever and ever.” As we will see, these degrees of glory are stored up while we are on the earth and can lead to the declaration of the Morning Star at the Bema Seat of Jesus Christ. But, what is the Morning Star Order?

Jesus Christ: The Bright and Morning Star

According to Numbers 24:17b, “There shall come a *Star out of Jacob*, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel,” speaking of the first advent of Christ. In Revelation 22:16, Jesus Christ is “the root and the offspring of David, and *the bright and morning star*.” He came out of Jacob’s house and through the royal line of David.

The wise men came from the East to Jerusalem asking, “Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for *we have seen his star* in the east, and are come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2, also speaking of the first advent).

Then, in 2 Peter 1:19, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, *until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts*.” This refers to the Rapture of the Church, when we will meet Christ in the air.

When studying a category such as the decla-

ration of the Morning Star Order, it is important to compare spiritual with spiritual, line upon line, and precept upon precept. “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20). Why? Because “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Peter 1:21).

So, we read in Revelation 2:26-27a, “He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations. And he shall rule them with a rod of iron.” But in verse 28, He adds, “*And I will give him the morning star.*”

Rewards at the Bema Seat

The fact that any of us will go to heaven is the result of pure grace and mercy, only made possible by Christ’s sacrifice. But God is also very clear about the fact that he rewards people according to their faithfulness. What an honor it will be to stand before God at the Bema Seat and to have Him declare us “winners!” The Lord will then distribute the crowns described throughout the New Testament.

First, there is the *soul winner’s crown* (1 Thesalonians 2:19). Next is the *incorruptible crown*

(1 Corinthians 9:24-27). This crown is given to those who did not give in to lust, mentally or physically. They didn't involve themselves in pornography, promiscuity, or any form of sensual evil, but they kept their bodies under subjection.

Then there is the *crown of life* given to those who are faithful unto death (James 1:12; Revelation 2:10). The *crown of righteousness* in 2 Timothy 4:7-8 is for believers who lived in imparted righteousness by consistently receiving categorical doctrine. Finally, the *crown of glory* will be given to pastors who did not "lord it over" their flock, but used their office to lead, guide, and teach the Word of God in the classroom of the local church (1 Peter 5:4).

These are all crowns; however, there will be a group of people in heaven who will go beyond the crowns and receive the declaration of the Morning Star Order. A declaration is different from a crown. And the greatest privilege in all the world is to come before God at the Bema Seat and receive by grace one of God's declarations for all eternity (Romans 14:10-12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

Manifold Temptations? Celebrate!

Remember, the Bema Seat is not a place of

condemnation; it is a place of *evaluation*. “Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:5-7).

The believer who is an overcomer, a victorious winner through grace—will receive the reward of the Morning Star. He will be given power to reign over *nations* (plural), not just one nation. Being declared a winner doesn’t mean that the believer won every battle. Job failed in his third trial six times, but he finally came out on top. He was a definite winner!

When we are faced with manifold temptations, the Word says we can “greatly rejoice.” The Greek word is *agalliao*, which is translated literally “to jump for joy.” When trials come against us from the outside, then line upon line, the categories of doctrine in the soul unite through the joy and power of the Holy Spirit, causing an inner celebration of the illumination of God’s light.

Instead of withdrawing, getting bored and frustrated, and wanting to be a part of the world, when my faith is tested I have a celebration. With the Word of God dwelling richly in my soul, I begin speaking to myself in psalms and hymns, singing with grace in my heart unto the Lord (see Colossians 3:16). This is my privilege as a redeemed child of God.

So, as the Word dwells richly in your soul, it becomes the Word of His grace that builds you up (Acts 20:32). When trouble, pressure, projections, and accusations come against you, have a party inside your soul.

Doctrines come together and you can have an inward celebration to meet the outward circumstances. The doctrine of grace celebrates with the doctrine of mercy. The doctrine of mercy celebrates with the doctrine of compassion, which in turn celebrates with the doctrine of forgiveness, the doctrine of peace, the doctrine of honor, and the doctrine of faith. All of these doctrines gather together in your soul and pour themselves through your streams of consciousness making you God-conscious in the midst of Satan's cosmic world system.

Agalliao means that in *everything* we give thanks to God (Ephesians 5:20); we “rejoice ever-

more” (1 Thessalonians 5:16); and we “rejoice in the Lord alway” (Philippians 4:4a).

These manifold temptations could also be called “sanctification tests.” When you hear a specific doctrine, and you receive it with meekness so that it is borne in your memory center; then, you are sanctified or “set apart” in that category. This is what Jesus was saying when He prayed to the Father, “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth” (John 17:17).

How Long?

There are two adverbs of time in 1 Peter 1:6 that reveal the length of time we may be under manifold temptations: “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though *now for a season*....” “Now” is *arte* in the Greek, meaning for this moment. “For a season” is *oligon*, a longer period of time. But while the trial is going on, we are being conformed to Christ’s image. We glorify Christ before the angels—both the elect and the fallen. God promotes us by giving degrees of glory far beyond anything we ever dreamed of. We can’t even conceive of it! But by the grace of God we will continue to store up degrees of glory. Who knows how far we can go?

Praise, Honor, and Glory

Once we have internalized categories, God will try our faith before the angels and the world to see if we will use the doctrine we have to go against trials and attacks. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Romans 10:17). When the Word that has been worked in is worked out, I can have an inner celebration for the maximum glorification of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:31).

For example, suppose I am in a trial where people or circumstances come against me, and I choose to be positive in my decisions toward the Word of God. What happens when I respond with positive volition? 1 Peter 1:7 says we are “found unto praise and honour and glory.”

“Praise” (*epainos*) presents a picture of giving praise and commendation with applause. Imagine your angel (or angels) clapping for you! You can’t hear them or see them, but they are clapping.

The second word in 1 Peter 1:7*b* is “honour” (*time*) which stands for the honor code of heaven’s royal family. It means to place value on someone, with very high esteem.* As believer-priests, we respect one another, honor one an-

other, and see great value in one another's potential, no matter what's going on by sight. We love each other in the honor code of Christ.

The third word is "glory" (*doxa*), which speaks of glorious praise and worship. The Holy Spirit takes a category that we have learned and uses it to celebrate with other categories. As this happens we begin to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ's nature of love, mercy, grace, patience, wisdom, and peace during the trial of our faith. Every time we are positive in our volition toward the Word of God in the trial, a degree of glory is added to our soul bodies now and to our future glorified bodies.

A Raiment of White Light

"Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels" (Revelation 3:4-5).

The word for "white" in verse four refers to a brilliant white light that is over the already glorified body. Each believer has a soul-body

separate from his physical body. The amount of doctrine you have circulating in your soul will determine the size of your soul-body and the degree of the brightness of the light over your glorified body in heaven.

This raiment of white light will be brilliant beyond description for those who receive the declaration of the Morning Star Order. Those who remain positive under pressure and live by the Word of God so consistently, store up thousands of degrees of glory. They internalize the nature of God in their souls because “to live is Christ”—they have His life through the sanctification of doctrine (Philippians 1:21; John 17:17).

Why would anyone want to dismiss this declaration? It is the highest honor in the universe. According to the parables of the pounds (Luke 19:12-27) and the talents (Matthew 25:14-29), some people will reign over ten cities, others will reign over five, and still others will reign over one. But some Christians will not reign over any cities because they never mixed faith with the doctrine they heard (Hebrews 4:2).

**Read Love Comes through Honor, by Pastor Paul Stevens, Grace Publications, 1998.*

Chapter Three

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK

Paul said, “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:14). What is the prize of the high calling? It is a Christian becoming mature. At the end of his life while Paul awaited execution in a Roman prison he said, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7). Therefore he could say, “There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (verse 8).

The Word of God says in 2 Timothy 2:12, “If we suffer [through persecution and rejection], we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us [the privilege of reigning with him].”

Paul also said in Romans 8:18, “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the *glory* which shall be revealed *in us*.”

Qualified to Reign

These are the qualifications of the Christian who will receive the Morning Star Order, who will shine as the stars forever and ever:

He is oriented to the pure grace of God.

He is oriented to the categorical doctrines of Jesus Christ.

He has the right pastor-teacher.

He is in the right local assembly.

He is a faithful steward of the grace, the love, and the mercy of God (1 Peter 4:10; 1 Corinthians 4:2).

He lives in *theantric action*. (Theantric action is when the government of God operates in a man: The Father's plan within, the Son's execution of the plan, the Holy Spirit's revelation of the plan that glorifies the Son, the Word's definition for each thought and confession in the plan, and a Spirit-filled life using rebound when we fail.)

He believes and lives in the greatest commandment: to love one another.

He believes in the Great Commission to go into all the world and make disciples for Jesus Christ. It is not only believing, but being a part of a church that does these things. He is to be

personally involved with outreach in whatever way he can.

He is a true disciple of the Word of God, a member in particular in the Body, one who supplies the Body as well as receiving from it (1 Corinthians 12:27; Ephesians 4:16).

He has joy, faith-rest, and peace that passes understanding.

Called unto Glory and Virtue

“According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:3).

When there are problems in a marriage, the husband and the wife are not called to get a divorce. They are called to reflect the nature of God toward the guilty party. They are called to go on to another degree of glory through taking on the power of the mind of Christ through the inspiration and manifestation of God’s nature.

Though two people in a marriage are not perfect, they can use the grace of God and be pure in their motives toward each other. They have the privilege of expressing virtue love, first toward Jesus Christ—because He initiated it (1 John 4:19)—and then toward each other.

There are scores of Christian marriages where the husband does not have virtue love toward his wife, nor the wife toward her husband. They are not kidding anyone. This issue must be cleared up if they are ever going to receive degrees of glory. More than any other place, right decisions have to be made in the home.

Stars in Heaven

It will be one thing to receive crowns at the Bema Seat. But, friends, what an honor it will be for Jesus Christ to allow us to enter into the Morning Star Order through a declaration.

Jesus said, "I will give you the Morning Star." Even as He received from His Father and shared that glory, we shall receive from His Kingdom and share in a kingly glory. At the Bema Seat, everyone who receives the Morning Star Order is considered a star. (The unsaved "stars" in Hollywood have nothing on Christians!)

Daniel 12:3 says, "They that turn many to righteousness [will shine] as the stars forever and ever." Long after the arrogant crowd is in hell (and I pray they would be saved), Morning Star Christians will continue to shine for all eternity.

Let's not become familiar with the Word,

with the Body, or with Bible classes. Why should we? Every day is a step forward to new degrees of glory.

So why have a bad day if it's cold, or raining, and you have the flu? You are going to have a brand-new body forever in heaven. For now, just place your body under the dominion of the Holy Spirit, praise God, and live moment by moment singing praises, celebrating in your soul, because God is keeping His vineyard (Isaiah 27:2-3).

Knowing the promise is true (because the Promiser cannot lie), we can face tomorrow. When we consider the rewards that await us, we will have the energy and motivation to be Spirit-filled as we press toward the mark with our eyes on the Lord.

CONCLUSION

*This Book I would rather own
than all the golden gems
From off the monarch's coffers shown
and all his diadems.
Yea, were the sea of crystal light
and the earth a golden ball,
And diamonds for the stars each night,
This Book is worth them all.*

The Word of God is our provision to experience maximum glorification for all of eternity. Please consider this message. Please consider the Scriptures that have been given. Do not be forgetful hearers. After Jesus spoke a parable on the four kinds of hearers He cried, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Luke 8:8b).

What an opportunity we have to forget the things that are behind and have a fixed heart toward our purpose on earth. Everything in life is an opportunity to be covered with the riches of

God's glory for all eternity. Every thought can have an eternal purpose, every confession an eternal meaning.

You can receive the Morning Star Order. Make this confession to God: "I'm heading for the prize of the high calling." The pulpit provides the food that enables you to understand and go after this great declaration.

Be settled in your heart at all times. Purpose in your heart that neither circumstances, people, feelings, nor moods are going to take you away from pursuing the Morning Star Order.

Bibliography

Barnes, Albert. *Barnes' Notes*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1983.

The Expositor's Greek Testament. Edited by W. Robertson Nicoll. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980.

Jamieson, Robert; Fausset, A.R.; Brown, David. *Jamieson, Fausset, Brown: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984.

Robertson, Archibald Thomas. *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931.

Vine, William E. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. McLean, VA: McDonald Publishing Co., 1984.