

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume III

Issue 20

*Published occasionally for Zion's mourners*

*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## DISREGARDING THE THINGS OF GOD

*If I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man. Judges 16:17*

Samson was a great and powerful man who grew accustomed to the presence and power of GOD in HIS life. HE accomplished so many mighty deeds with such ease that he began to take the LORD's presence and power for granted. Ultimately, he forgot from whom it was that his strength came. He thought himself to be invincible and disregarded the secret of his power. When he told Delilah how his strength could be overcome, I don't believe that he actually thought that he would be weak if she cut off his hair. He presumed that he was so strong that it was not necessary for him to keep the vow under which he had lived. He thought his strength was natural. After he was shorn, he thought he would rise up as he had so many times in the past, only to find that the LORD had departed from him and he was ripe for failure.

Esau was Isaac's firstborn son, the apple of his father's eye. The firstborn son in a Hebrew family had a birthright which not only involved an inheritance of real property but carried with it the opportunity to have the spiritual blessings of the father bestowed on him. Esau had little regard to this spiritual blessing and willingly surrendered it to Jacob for a bowl of soup. *"And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me?" (Gen 25:32)* Then the scripture goes on to say, *"thus Esau despised his birthright."* (Gen 25:34) He counted its value as insignificant compared to his craving to fulfill the desire of his flesh.

David was a man after GOD's own heart (see 1 Sam.13:14). He fought and won many battles and was known as a mighty man of valor. Yet there came a time in his life when instead of going out to battle, he decided to take it easy and be a man of leisure. Then because he disregarded his calling, he succumbed to idleness and fell into a great sin with Bathsheba. Rather than fleeing from the temptation as Joseph did (see Gen.39:7-12 ) he entertained the thought of sin and ultimately indulged the lust of the flesh.

Though not all of these men were spiritual giants, we can nonetheless learn some very important lessons from their mistakes. We must never forget that our strength is from the LORD. If we are left to our own understanding and power for even a moment, we are sure to fail. Just because the LORD has been with us in the past does not guarantee that HE will always be with us. The scripture says, *"But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."* (Isaiah 40:31) GOD will not allow HIS children to continue in their own strength without taking measures to humble them and correct their thinking. *"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."* (Isaiah 25:9)

We must always regard that which is spiritual as far more valuable than the things of this material world in which we live. (see Mt.16:26) *"While we look not at the things which are seen,*

*but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor 4:18) "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John 2:17)*

We must regard the calling that GOD has given us with the utmost respect. We cannot afford to neglect those things HE has called us to do even as age or infirmity set in. The speed and seeming effectiveness of our efforts may diminish but our calling never does. *"The gifts and calling of God are without repentance." (Romans 11:29)* The old saying "idle hands are the devil's workshop" is just as true as a man ages as it was in his youth. *"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." (Eccl 9:10)*

The warnings that the LORD sent to the churches in the book of the Revelation serve as illustrations of the same warnings which are appropriate for believers in our day. To the Church at Ephesus HE said, *"I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." (Rev 2:4)* How true it is that our love for HIM sometimes waxes and wanes. Who among the LORD's children has not felt his own heart grow cold towards the things of GOD from time to time. When that happens isn't it always true that it is us who have "left" HIM, as we have disregarded the value of HIS fellowship and grace. When such a state is brought to our awareness, should we not fall upon our faces and seek HIS mercy and favor? *"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent (i.e.; turn around), and do the first works." (Rev 2:5)*

To the church at Pergamos HE said that they had adopted many false doctrines. (see Rev.2:14,15) We live in an age wherein the visible "church" in general has forsaken the true gospel of the glory of CHRIST for a doctrine which is weak, pathetic, and man centered. When the free will of man is mentioned in the same breath as the sovereignty of GOD, then there is a problem with a man's doctrine. *"Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9)*

HE told the Laodiceans that they had confused success in this worlds goods with the true blessings of GOD. This seems eerily appropriate for this day of health and wealth doctrines, mega-churches, celebrity pulpiteers, and best seller how-to guides to spirituality and "church growth". *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Rev 3:19)*

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