

GRACE GAZETTE

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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

JOB AT THE SCHOOL OF A SOVEREIGN GOD

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said, Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? Gird up now thy loins like a man; for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me. Job 38:1-3

It's an easy thing to be an expert on almost any subject when one is surrounded by those who are ignorant of the subject being discussed. A person does not actually have to be a genius in order to sound like one if the listeners know less than the one doing the talking. Or if men agree on certain pet truths and doctrines they can become a mutual admiration society as they reinforce one another's opinions on these things, (see II Cor. 10:12), convincing one another of the far reaching truths of their communal wisdom. This is most often demonstrated by little groups and cliques that form among those who claim to be the children of GOD. Some labor to be accepted by these various factions. Their ultimate goal is to become part of the "bible conference circuit" or a preaching rotation where the same things are hashed and rehashed for fear of possibly falling in disfavor, with the powers that be, by looking at neglected subjects. After all no one would want to be passed over when the invitations are passed out for the next meeting. Job and his friends each took turns "instructing" one another on the character of GOD and HIS dealings with men. They each were convinced that they spoke the truth as they pontificated and strutted their knowledge before one another. (see I Cor.8:1) In reality we find some truth in the opinions of each one. But, preachers often set forth as much error by omitting and neglecting certain truths as they do in actually misstating doctrinal truth.

GOD is not impressed with what we know nor is "what we know" nearly as important as "what we do with what we know." We often quote many of Job's sayings during the course of teaching and preaching, yet the LORD of glory described his ramblings as "words without knowledge". The Samaritan woman sought to engage the LORD JESUS in a religious discussion of the relative merit of the creeds of the Samaritans and the Jews. But the LORD basically told her the same thing that HE told Job many years before. "You don't have any idea of what you are talking about". *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24)

One of Job's "friends" (Zophar the Naamathite) spoke the truth when he asked Job the question, *"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"* (Job 11:7) The accurate answer to that question is NO. GOD cannot be "found out or discovered" by any of the methods and wisdom of men. HE dwells *"in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see:"* (1 Tim 6:16) Apart from a divine revelation and a heavenly intervention (i.e.; grace) no man can (because of the darkness of his sinful nature and simply because he is mortal) discover HIS ways. (see Rom. 11:33) Job thought he had a pretty good handle on exactly who the LORD was and what HE would do. He was quite mistaken however, as are those "preachers" we hear from time to time talking about GOD as if a man can just reach out and grab HIM any time he gets ready. They mistake the manifestation of HIS mercy

and grace in the giving of HIS SON as an offering for sin, as a change in HIS nature. HE is still the ONE who rules in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth and the ONE whose purpose cannot be hindered or even brought into question by mortals. (see Dan.4:35) It is quite common to hear some speak of the LORD of glory as though HE was “attempting” to save everybody and not quite being able to accomplish HIS purpose. Or that HE has extended mercy to all, hoping that some would take advantage of it according to their own free wills.

Sometimes we are accused of preaching “hard doctrine”, I suppose we are guilty, if by that our accusers mean that we shut men up to the mercy of GOD with absolutely no other hope or expectation of deliverance. But that is the absolute truth which can hardly be called “hard”. To me “hard doctrine” is that which gives men a shred of hope in any action of their own or leaves them with the impression that by their own understanding they can approach unto the LORD. Free-willism is a pretty tough doctrine to a man who has been convinced by the SPIRIT of GOD of his absolute lost condition without CHRIST. Such a man finds himself unable to even approach unto the LORD, he will not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven but smites upon his breast saying GOD be merciful to me a sinner. Sinners such as that aren’t looking for “offers” or “opportunities” but rather need a work performed in their behalf. Man’s “free will” is capable only of choosing that which he is disposed to choose. If the LORD in sovereign mercy doesn’t change a sinner’s will then he will keep on choosing the same old way of sin he loves.

Job, in all of his wisdom and knowledge was actually in great ignorance when it came to knowing the LORD. Had the LORD left him alone, he would no doubt have perished in his ignorance while convinced of his great knowledge. Brethren there is nothing that a lost sinner can do to save himself. The glorious good news of the gospel is that JESUS CHRIST has paid the necessary price to obtain eternal redemption for HIS people. The mercy of GOD is manifested as HE opens the eyes of the blind to behold HIS glory and to rejoice in the victory which HE has secured. HE is drawing HIS own to HIMSELF and there is no power in heaven, earth, or hell that can overturn HIS glorious purpose. *“Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” (Rom. 9:14-16)*

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