

# 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*

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## THE GREAT AND DREADFUL GOD

*And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments. Daniel 9:4*

Quite often we have heard men say that "the GOD of the old testament is a GOD of wrath and fear but the GOD of the new testament is a GOD of love". Such statements are made in ignorance of the ONE true GOD who rules the universe and changes not. HE is said to be the "*Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*" (Jas 1:17) "*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.*" (Heb 13:8) HE has manifested HIMSELF in times past and in the present in the same fashion, as the writer of Hebrews says, "*our God is a consuming fire.*" (Heb 12:29)

A friend of mine related to me an anecdote of an incident that happened to him that illustrates the ignorance that men have about the true nature of GOD apart from divine revelation. He said he was visiting a little country church that was having Sunday school. The teacher of the class pulled out the pre-printed "bible lesson" which was entitled "The Fear of GOD". He said the so called teacher read the title then closed up the book and said "well I ain't scared of HIM." I don't remember everything else my friend told me that was said, but it really doesn't matter. If a man does not have a basic knowledge of the fact that GOD is to be feared he cannot possibly have any understanding of anything else that the scripture may reveal about HIM.

The word "gospel" literally means "a good message; or good news". But the "good news" cannot be received nor comprehended apart from a revelation of the "bad news", which is; GOD hates sin and will destroy the wicked. Until a man's heart has been plowed with the convicting power of the SPIRIT in the setting forth of GOD's broken law and made aware that GOD will not be pleased with any remedies for this situation which is in the hand of men to bring before HIM, that man cannot receive the seed of the gospel which can give him comfort. Until a man is made aware (by that same SPIRIT) of the power and awesome majesty of Almighty GOD which strips men of their righteousness and humbles them in the dust before HIM, that man will never be brought to repentance and has not been given the gift of faith.

Daniel tells us what happened to him when he had a vision of the glory of the LORD, "*my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.*" (Dan 10:8) Isaiah was given a similar vision and he said "*Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips.*" (Isa.6:5) John relates the same experience when he says "*And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.*" (Rev 1:16-17) Now in each of these cases GOD was pleased to show HIS mercy and told each one to rise up upon their feet and to "fear not". They had been brought to an understanding of who the true and living GOD was and therefore the comfort of the LORD could be applied. "*No man knoweth who the Son is,*

*but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him."*  
(Luke 10:22)

Daniel says that the LORD is "the great and dreadful GOD". This word "dreadful" is often used by us to describe an "unpleasant" experience, such as I had a dreadful time on the trip. There is an element of this same feeling which must be rooted in the very fiber of a man's soul in order that he might properly regard the majesty and absolute holiness of GOD. We hear many glibly preach today about a GOD who wouldn't hurt a flea and just wants men to know how much HE loves them. Yet we find nowhere in the scripture where the LORD ever revealed HIS love to any except to those who were first afraid to approach unto HIM. (see the publican in Luke 18:9-14)

**GOD is to be feared simply because HE is GOD.** Had there been no sin, the awesome majesty of GOD would be that which would strike reverential awe in the hearts and minds of HIS creation. The angels which have never sinned cover their eyes at the brightness of HIS glory as Isaiah describes, *"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke."* (Isaiah 6:3-4)

**GOD is to be feared because HE is the judge of the living and the dead and HE has revealed HIS hatred of the wickedness of men.** The LORD JESUS said, *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."* (Matt 10:28) And also *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me."* (Deut 32:39-41) The reality of approaching judgement cannot be denied. *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."* (Heb 9:27) A man is a fool who does not tremble at the thought of standing before the bar of GOD with nothing to plead but his own righteousness, religion, or good works.

**GOD is to be feared because of HIS forgiveness.** This concept makes no sense except to those whom GOD has revealed HIS gospel. David said, *"If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."* (Ps. 130:3-4) The awesome display of GOD's judgement of the sin of HIS elect as it was laid upon HIS only begotten SON shall surely cause those, whom GOD has given eyes to see, to fall down in reverence before HIM and worship at HIS feet.

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