

# 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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## BY HIS GRACE AND FOR HIS GLORY

*And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, that he shall follow after them; and I will be honoured upon Pharaoh, and upon all his host; that the Egyptians may know that I am the LORD. And they did so. Exodus 14:4*

Until a man has been brought to bow down before the throne of an absolute, sovereign GOD, who does all things according to the good pleasure of HIS will, he will never be far from accusing GOD of unrighteousness. He will question in his own mind and heart the necessity of events occurring the way they do and he will murmur and complain when he is dealt a particularly hard set of circumstances. He will try to make GOD fit some moral pattern which he judges to be proper and he will not hesitate to demand that GOD should be "fair " in HIS dealings with men and act according to that moral standard he deems appropriate. He will define "good" and then say that GOD does good things because they are good; rather than confessing that whatever GOD does is good because HE does it. He will define justice and demand that GOD bow to it. He would rather compromise the glory of GOD than portray HIM as one who predestinates all things without regard to anything except HIS own purpose. His lack of understanding of the true nature of GOD will cause him to shun the proclamation of ONE who hath *"mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* (Romans 9:18) He will accuse those who preach such doctrine as being cold-hearted and cruel. He will choose to ignore such plain texts in order that he might make GOD appear more appealing to the masses. He will not acknowledge that even the wickedness of men is ordained by GOD even though the scripture says, *"The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."* (Prov 16:4) and *"A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps."* (Prov 16:9)

The LORD of heaven and earth does all things primarily for HIS own glory and honor. HE said to Moses, *"I the LORD thy God am a jealous God."* (Ex 20:5) HE is above reproach and cannot be accused by those who are the creation of HIS own hand. *"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherd of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou?"* (Isa.45:9) *"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?"* (Rom.9:20) So it is foolish for men to even try to understand GOD according to definitions and parameters set up by men. There is no scenario that can arise wherein GOD could be accused of wickedness or injustice since HIS actions are always right because HE does them and not because they can be construed to fit a particular order which men approve of.

There is probably no doctrine proclaimed in the scripture which angers the natural man any more than the doctrine of reprobation. Reprobation is the sentence passed upon those who are not elected by HIS grace. Reprobation insures the destruction of the wicked according to the purpose of Almighty GOD. The most classic verse in the scripture that illustrates this truth is *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* (Rom.9:13) Those that bow at the shrine of free will and man's worth are sent scrambling by this verse to come up with all sorts of explanations to modify the plain teaching of it and the rest of chapter nine. The natural man thinks it awful to consider that GOD would hate Esau, and will often go to great lengths to prove it

untrue. We must confess that we find some difficulty in this verse as well, but not because GOD hated Esau. The amazing and humbling part of the verse is that HE loved Jacob. Both of them deserved destruction, yet GOD who is rich in mercy chose to manifest HIS grace in Jacob. Now some who claim to believe in sovereign grace take comfort in this truth (after the fact) proclaiming that GOD hated Esau as a result of Esau's wickedness but the scriptures indicate that GOD made HIS choice without a consideration of this fact. *"For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.* (Rom.9:11) Some who embrace "unconditional election" nevertheless balk at the converse truth, "unconditional reprobation". Both doctrines shut men up to the mercy and grace of GOD and HE will have glory in one as well as the other. GOD will do right, HE may show mercy, but HE can never be rightly accused by men.

GOD does all things for HIS glory. HE said HE would be "honored" in the hardening of Pharaoh and HE would be exalted in the salvation of HIS people. *"But I wrought for my name's sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen, among whom they were, in whose sight I made myself known unto them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt."* (Ezek 20:9) Whether it be in the condemnation of men or their redemption HE alone will be glorified.

HE hardens men in their sin to fulfill HIS own purpose. GOD hardened Pharaoh's heart for the same reason HE hardened Judas Iscariot's heart. GOD's great purpose in the reprobation of them both was to set the stage for the manifestation of HIS deliverance of HIS chosen people. GOD is pleased to demonstrate the glory of HIS grace and the subsequent redemption of HIS chosen people as their deliverance is contrasted with the utter destruction of the reprobate. HE told Moses to tell Pharaoh that the death of the firstborn would be a testimony *"that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel."* (Ex 11:7)

The proclamation of the gospel is to be done to bring glory to HIS name in the publication of the fact that HE has redeemed HIS elect by the work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST in their behalf. GOD's preachers have been sent into the world to magnify HIS grace. HE hath anointed them *"to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified."* (Isaiah 61:1-3)

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