

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

THE PLEASURE OF GOD

But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. Psalm 115:3

Men are natural born idolators. They always design and serve gods which think like they do and reward the behavior they most like to exhibit. They know exactly the habits and whereabouts of these gods and worship and serve them according to a schedule which suits their own activities. David describes the “toothless” gods that they fashion in their own minds. He says these gods of men’s imaginations have eyes but don’t see, ears but don’t hear, mouths but don’t speak, noses but don’t smell, hands that don’t handle anything, and feet that don’t go anywhere. Basically they are as Ferrell Griswold described them, “wheelchair gods”. **BUT**, he says that the ONE who is the true and living GOD does exactly as HE pleases in the heavens and the earth. HE is never surprised, disappointed or lonely, nor does HE ever stand in need of anything. HE is perfect and complete in all of HIS ways, glorious above imagination in HIS person, and totally satisfied at the unfolding of HIS purpose. HE lacks nothing that HIS creation can supply nor can HE be made more or less glorious by anything that they may provide or do or neglect to provide or do. David said HE has done whatever HE pleased. Now if that be true then it behooves us to ask, wherein is the LORD’s pleasure?

HE has pleasure in selecting a people to be called by HIS name. *“For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people.” (1Sa 12:22)* The Jews thought (and many today still think) that those whom HE was pleased to call HIS own were members of a certain race or tribe. Though Israel was chosen for a season as a type and foreshadow of the sons of GOD, the true elect sons of GOD have always been a remnant out of every tribe and tongue on the face of this earth. Their number has never increased nor diminished. Paul plainly said, *“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh.” (Rom 2:28)* The full revelation of the mystery which was hidden from the foundation of the world but is now made plain, sets forth that the LORD is calling HIS own not on the basis of any blood or religious affiliation but according to the good pleasure of HIS will. These are those which ultimately *“were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1:13)* *“For the LORD taketh pleasure in his people: he will beautify the meek with salvation.” (Psa 149:4)*

HE has pleasure in righteousness. *“I know also, my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness.” (1Chr. 29:17)* This cannot be discovered in men, for even our righteousness is as filthy rags in HIS sight. *“Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that thou art righteous? or is it gain to him, that thou makest thy ways perfect? --Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities infinite?” (Job 22:3,5)* HE is *“of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.” (Hab 1:13)* so there is no “righteousness” in men for HIM to take pleasure in. So what is the righteousness which HE is pleased with? *“The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness’ sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honorable.” (Isa 42:21)* HE is pleased by HIS own perfect righteousness.

HE has pleasure in HIS SON. *“While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” (Mat 17:5)* The LORD JESUS CHRIST is that one who is the delight of HIS FATHER. *“Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth;” (Isa 42:1)* and HE is the ONE to whom all of the promise is given. *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal 3:16)* In CHRIST *“dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col 2:9)* and we need look unto no other for the FATHER *“Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;” (Heb 1:2)*

HE has pleasure in the redemption of sinners. *“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa 53:10-11)* Since HE was pleased to love HIS elect and to delight in uprightness, it has pleased HIM to offer HIMSELF as a sacrifice for sin, *“To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom 3:26)* The LORD JESUS did not go to the cross out of any obligation nor was HIS death a necessity except to fulfill HIS own design and be consistent with the holy law which HE set forth. The world was designed to magnify the glory of GOD in the redemption of those who HE was pleased to love. *“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” (Eph 2:7)* We have redemption only because of HIS good pleasure and not because of some good foreseen in us or some intrinsic value which we as humans possess.

HE has pleasure in the proclamation of the gospel. *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1Co 1:21)* The plain gospel message is *“that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;” (2Co 5:19)* The LORD could have chosen any method or means of communicating this glorious truth unto men that HE desired. HE could have used the angels who heralded the birth of the SAVIOR or designed some new creature just for this task. HE could have continued to speak directly from heaven as HE did at the LORD’s baptism and on the mount of transfiguration. But it pleased him to raise up fallen men to be proclaimers of this glorious truth, to lift up the name of HIS BELOVED and to preach this word of reconciliation to the poor and lowly, the halt and the lame, and those who are thirsty and hungering. Some have thought that the emphasis is on the preacher and they strut about as though their words are “the power of GOD”. Men are but clay vessels in the hand of the LORD, HE can raise them up or put them down, open their mouths or shut them according to HIS good pleasure. The “preacher” is but a means of communication to the minds of men the glorious message that JESUS CHRIST has accomplished the salvation of sinners. The power of GOD to bring life unto dead sinners is still solely in HIS hands and applied directly by HIS SPIRIT’s power according to HIS sovereign will. Preachers are used by HIM to bring the glorious word of reconciliation to those HE has thus awakened. What a privilege it is for any son of Adam to be entrusted with this glorious message of hope and peace. What a blessing it is to both the messenger and the hearer. GOD is pleased to draw men to HIMSELF as this word is proclaimed and rebel sinners are brought out of darkness and into the light of this glorious gospel. We preach HIM *“who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel” (2Ti 1:10)* and proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD. *“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” (2Co 4:5-7)*