

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume V

Issue 38

*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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## CLAY PITCHERS

*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

*II Corinthians 4:7*

Sometimes the meanings of certain words are “hijacked” and put into use in a manner in which they are never used in the scripture. In the last one hundred fifty years the word “dispensation” has come to mean a time, epoch, or age to many by this very method. The Greek word “oikonomia” appears in the New Testament seven times and is translated “dispensation” four times and “stewardship” three times. In none of these verses can the context of the passages or the meaning of the word ever be construed to mean a “period of time.” Yet it is used in that fashion by many who claim to be “scholars” and “experts” on Bible prophecy. Multitudes accept the teaching of what is generally called “dispensational premillennialism” without serious study of any other view. This view primarily appeals to the flesh with its neat charts and the mysterious aura it attaches to various scriptures which need the revelations and convoluted explanations of these “teachers” in order to be understood.

Paul said, *“If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ). (Eph 3:2-4)* Paul makes it very clear that the “mystery” which was hid from men in time past is now clearly revealed in the preaching of the gospel of CHRIST. GOD intends that HIS people understand the plain truth of the scripture. There are no “mysterious” prophecies to be fulfilled since all prophecy is centered in JESUS CHRIST and HIS purpose to redeem HIS elect. GOD’s purpose in the earth is now made clear as the LORD has sent HIS preachers into the earth to proclaim it. JESUS CHRIST is the SAVIOR of sinners, whether they be Jew or Gentile, bond or free. HE has purchased everlasting and complete redemption for all of those which were given to HIM in the eternal covenant of grace.

It is this gospel which is “dispensed” to and through the apostle and subsequently through all of those whom the LORD has been pleased to call, ordain, raise up, and send to this work in the earth. HE could have used any means to declare the gospel of HIS redemption which HE wanted to. HE chose to use sinful men for this task not out of any urgency, necessity, nor because they had some natural ability to perform it, but simply because it seemed good in HIS sight. Paul was ever aware of this very fact and often made reference to this in his epistles. (see I Cor.4:9-13; II Cor.4:1; 10:10; Eph.3:8) Those into whose hands this glorious message is committed (see I Tim.1:11) are sent into the world, not to play upon man’s emotions, satisfy his religious need, nor to appeal to his philosophical intellect but to plainly declare the accomplished redemption of the SON of GOD. (see I Cor.2:1,2) They are not sent to titillate the imaginations of their hearers with fantastic interpretations of obscure passages of scripture, but to exalt HIM who has triumphed over death and is the center of all prophetic truth.

This word "dispensation" is clearly about stewardship or the fact that GOD has entrusted men with HIS gospel. This is a very serious matter and one which should cause any who would undertake to proclaim these unsearchable riches to tremble in fear before HIM. (see James 3:1, I Cor.3:12,13) There is also an aspect of this word which leads us into the text we have chosen at the beginning of this article. A dispensation is a "dispensing" or pouring out of something. In this case it is clearly the gospel of CHRIST JESUS: A glorious message to sinners of the fact that JESUS CHRIST has alone purchased redemption for sinful men, imputing their sin to HIMSELF and HIS righteousness to them. This is a message about an accomplished redemption and not one which must yet be agreed with in order to be effectual. HE has obtained it for those HE intended to obtain it for and it cannot be overturned or fail in any sense. (see Heb.9:12)

Paul says that GOD has committed this gospel into the hands of men whom he likens to "earthen vessels" or literally, "clay pitchers". A pitcher is a vessel used for dispensing a liquid.

**These pitchers are made of clay.** *"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."* (1 Cor 1:27-28) These are not silver pitchers; they are not designed for beauty nor is their intended purpose ever that they should be the objects of our attention. Religious men and societies desire more polished dispensers and are often willing to pay a high price to obtain them. The message that these earthen vessels contain cannot be enhanced by decoration or eloquence nor is it the purpose of GOD to exalt the "dispenser". These vessels are fragile and expendable. GOD is able to raise up stones to praise HIM and HE does not give any man an exclusive understanding of HIS truth regardless of station or earthly education. Each one of these pitchers shall one day wind up on the scrap heap, broken and forgotten, but the message will not die with them, for HE will fashion others of the same material to proclaim it.

**These pitchers must be lifted by the handle to be poured.** Who ever heard of a pitcher which could pour itself out. *"Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God"* (2 Cor 3:5) Unless the LORD sees fit to pour out a blessing none of those vessels which HE has prepared will be of any profit, regardless of their education, fine scholarship, or willingness to the task. It behooves the LORD's people to pray that the LORD of the harvest might send forth laborers into the harvest.

**Thirst cannot be slaked by the pitcher, only the liquid which it contains can suffice for that purpose.** The preaching of the gospel is not designed to bestow life to dead sinners, but it is a message of life and hope to those who have been awakened by the SPIRIT of GOD to hear it. *"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."* (2Tim.1:10-11) The grandest of orators cannot soothe a sin weary soul but when that BALM of Gilead is spread out; even by the weakest of men sent for the task; a sweet relief is applied.

**These clay pitchers are used so that CHRIST alone might be glorified.** If the success of the message was dependent in any way on the ability or suitableness of the preacher then men could take some credit for it. But as Paul says. *"the excellency of the power"* is of GOD and not of us. CHRIST alone must be magnified, even as John the Baptizer said, *"He must increase, but I must decrease."* (John 3:30) JESUS CHRIST is not only the provider of redemption but HE is its applier as well. HE has purchased those which are HIS and HE is now calling them to HIMSELF. There is nothing that a man can boast in concerning this great salvation. Most certainly not in counting the number of souls any preacher has won. Away with such notions, let men bow in the dust and proclaim the glory of HIM who is worthy of ALL praise. May our declaration ever be *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."*

(Gal 6:14) [www.gracechapelobrien.net](http://www.gracechapelobrien.net) <http://wayfarerblog.blogspot.com/> mam