

# 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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## OUR LIFE

*When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*  
*Colossians 3:4*

Paul stood on Mars Hill in Athens, Greece and declared unto those gathered there, an Unknown GOD whom they ignorantly worshipped. (see Acts 17:22-32) He was not commending them for actually worshipping the true GOD in some level of ignorance but was rather proclaiming unto them the fruitless nature of ignorant human religion which is built upon the understandings of the flesh rather than the enlightenment which only the True GOD can give of HIMSELF.

This natural religion is often seemingly very similar in outward form and basic tenets to that TRUTH which is found in JESUS CHRIST alone. All truth emanates from the LORD, so it has pleased HIM to identify HIMSELF as *"the TRUTH"* in John 14:6. We are not surprised to find an element of truth in most of the religions which man has devised over the course of his existence. The Athenians listened intently to Paul's discourse as he told them that GOD had made them all, and that they were part of a larger human family. He even told them of GOD's sustaining power wherein they had their very existence. *"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."* (Act 17:28)

Natural religion embraces the concept of creationism and the natural relationship which all men have with one another and supposedly to GOD himself as a result of this creation. It takes delight in a GOD who will be mindful of a man's troubles, not to mention answer his prayers. In fact the Psalmist said that a man is a fool who would declare that there is no GOD. (see Ps.14:1) So it should not come as a surprise to us to conclude that man seeks after some fulfillment of his imaginations concerning "deity".

Hence these Greeks worshipped and served many gods, all of which were very similar in many ways, and they looked forward to hearing and telling some new thing, most especially when what they heard reinforced basic ideas that needed no revelation to grasp. Paul says *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."* (Rom 1:20) Those at Athens (who are quite typical of man by nature) would have answered Zophar's rhetorical question to Job; *"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"* (Job 11:7), with a great big, yes!

Their religious meeting was going well it seems until Paul began to speak about repentance and judgment. Even those subjects could be tolerated but the straw that broke the camel's back was when he preached the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead. We have observed that even the "legendary" aspect of the resurrection of CHRIST is quite popular among most religious societies which somehow couple it with eggs, rabbits, candy and new clothes to make a perfect religious holiday that they can rejoice in.

Yet the absolute truth of the bodily resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead cannot be embraced apart from divine revelation because it forms the very foundation of the hope of the true sons of GOD. *"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."* (1Cor 15:16-17) The fact of the resurrection can be seen by the natural man in some measure, but the reliance and confidence by faith in this event as one's hope and expectation can only come as GOD is pleased to give men faith to believe it. When that occurs the historical fact of it becomes secondary to the delight and rejoicing that one has in the ONE who triumphed over sin and death and demonstrated the deliverance that each one of the sons of GOD longs for. John said, *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* (1 John 5:11-12) This is what the essence of being a witness of HIS resurrection is all about. It is not simply being aware of the "fact" that HE came forth from the grave but that HIS coming forth from the grave bears witness that HE is our source of life and light. HE is our LIFE:

**In eternity.** All life has its beginning in HIM. *"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."* (John 1:3-4) Let no man think that life is the result of some random cataclysm of natural forces for HE is the ALPHA and the Omega. Though all forms of temporal life have sprung from HIM, that life which is alone eternal is most especially that which is found "in HIM." The scripture says that the FATHER chose a people "in CHRIST" before the foundation of the world, (see Eph.1:4) and these were a people which HE "foreknew". Because of the "life" which was given to them "in CHRIST", they were predestinated to be conformed to CHRIST before they were ever created in actual fact. HE is the very fountain or spring from which their life has sprung and is eternally sustained. They have life because HE is their LIFE.

**In this world.** The stark difference between those who are "without CHRIST" and those who by HIS grace are "in CHRIST" is this "life" which springs from HIM. Paul said, *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."* (Eph 2:1) Though the elect were born into the same spiritual darkness and dead condition that all of the human race share in, yet because they are appointed unto life "in CHRIST" HE has in his own time awakened them and made them new creatures "in CHRIST". *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Cor 5:17) HE is pleased to dwell in them (as HE always was pleased) and they are now pleased to dwell in HIM. Paul said, *"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Gal 2:20) We are now gladly identified with CHRIST in our mind, (which was at one time alienated and enemies by our own desire,) having been reconciled to HIM by that which HE has performed for us and declared to us. (see Col.1:21:22; John 17:26) HE has taken up an abode with us and is daily our PERFORMER and SUSTAINER. *"For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."* (Phi 2:13) *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:"* (Phi 1:6) We have life because HE is our LIFE. The natural life which all men have will one day be taken from them but that life which is "in CHRIST" shall endure forever.

**Through the ages to come.** It is impossible that the grave should hold the bodies of the elect forever. The living cannot be found among the dead. JESUS CHRIST has purchased redemption for our whole man and shall in HIS own time come to claim that which is HIS possession. *"Even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."* (Rom 8:23) Though the worms eat our flesh and we slumber until the sound of the last trump. *"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."* (Col 3:4) HE is indeed our LIFE!