

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

ONE WELL PLEASING BEFORE THE FATHER

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

II Peter 1:16-17

It pleased the LORD to call out twelve men to be HIS apostles. They were taught the gospel directly from HIS lips, were witnesses of HIS glory, and saw HIM firsthand as the risen CHRIST. It is them of which the scriptures speak as being those who delivered the gospel to the church of GOD scattered across the world. *“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.”* (Eph 2:19-20)

It was to them that HE spoke the “great commission” of Matthew 28:19-20 and them which HE gave power to lay hands upon men to empower others to cast out devils, handle serpents, and be immune to poison. (see Mark 16:15-18; Acts 8:18; I Tim.4:14) This ability died with the apostles. Not long after they began preaching the gospel to the ends of the earth, there came deceivers whose intent was to corrupt the simplicity of the gospel and scatter and divide the flock of GOD by drawing away disciples after themselves with various and sundry doctrines and heresies (i.e., divisions) seeking to overthrow the faith of some.

Until his dying day Peter testified of the central truth of the gospel which was revealed unto himself and the other apostles (most especially James and John) on the mount of transfiguration and at other times during the LORD's ministry. Paul was as *“one born out of due time”* (see I Cor.15:8) and even though he was not physically present during the LORD's days of ministry yet HE testified of having been a witness of the resurrected CHRIST and having been taught directly by HIM after being struck blind by HIM on the road to Damascus. (see Gal.1:15-19)

There are numerous clowns and charlatans who have arisen over the years claiming to be “apostles” or having some special power not generally seen. They each manifest their deception by having some agenda which promotes themselves and not CHRIST alone. It matters not what a man may speak about or how learned and persuasive he may be, if the central point of all that he has to say is not to exalt and honor CHRIST alone then he fails the first basic test of a true apostle even if he can produce “miracles” or unexplained oddities.

The glory of GOD revealed in the unfolding of the redemptive work of CHRIST is that which is the sum and substance of true gospel preaching. The preaching of the gospel is not an exercise in persuasion whereby we try to convince men to take some action. It is not an

offer of benefit for those who are willing to agree with it and accept some premise as being true. Nor can the “success” of its proclamation ever be judged by the amount of visible response which it generates. Its power and success is in its declaration that CHRIST JESUS is the LORD of heaven, earth, and hell and that HIS dominion is without end. That HE is triumphant over sin and death and has both declared and purchased the liberty of every captive for which HE came to bring deliverance. It is the clear pronouncement that HE has saved HIS people from their sins and that there is therefore now no condemnation to them nor can they ever be brought into bondage by either sin or the law which is the strength of sin. *“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 53:11)*

Peter plainly understood that CHRIST is the center and sum of the gospel. *“God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 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; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.” (Heb 1:1-4)* He said that CHRIST is the ONE who with whom the FATHER is well pleased:

In Eternity. Eternity cannot be measured in any sense. The word “eternity” only appears once in the KJV. *“The high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place.” (Isa 57:15)* No creature can in any wise enter it nor can a creature be described as eternal since HE *“only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.” (1Tim 6:16)* It seems clear enough from the scriptures that eternity is the sole habitation of GOD, the unique dwelling place of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. It is rather glorious to contemplate the Eternal love of the FATHER for HIS SON and the delight which the SON has always been to HIS FATHER. HE is that ONE who is the apple of HIS FATHER’s eye, ELECT and PRECIOUS.

In the decree to redeem that people which HE chose and gave to CHRIST before the foundation of the world. The decree and purpose of GOD cannot be separated from HIS eternal nature, HE changeth not. HIS declarations cannot be dated nor can man in any wise presume to be able to go beyond that which HE has declared and revealed to us in the pages of holy writ. Before the first atom of this creation of which we are now a part was ever brought forth, GOD did indeed choose an elect people to be the objects of HIS love and hid them in the bosom of HIS SON with whom HE is well pleased. In order to demonstrate the glory of HIS grace, the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST (as ONE) did decree to create this world as a place where the beloved SON would come and purchase the eternal redemption of those people which HE declared were HIS before the world’s foundation.

In the actual redemptive work of CHRIST. This world is the realm into which CHRIST has come and demonstrated HIS purpose to save HIS people from their sins. In order to accomplish this purpose it was necessary for them to be plunged into the blackness of sin by Adam’s disobedience. But glory to GOD who loved HIS SON the REDEEMER and as HE had life “in HIMSELF” (see John 5:26) HE is able to give that life to all of those who are the objects of HIS love for which HE has now shed HIS precious blood. *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Heb 10:12-14)* mam