

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume VII

Issue 34

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

THE LOVE OF THE WORLD

And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

Luke 23:12

Truth is often much stranger than fiction. One would be hard pressed to understand the basis upon which Herod and Pilate could befriend one another since there are always rivalries among those in such political positions. Those who love the preeminence always gravitate towards those places wherein they can be in the limelight and certainly are not anxious to share it with any others regardless of their empty insistence that they are servants of the people. The only time that politicians tell lies is when they move their lips.

Herod was an appointed ruler over the Jews in Galilee which was considered a somewhat less than desirable station than that of Pontius Pilate who was the Roman consul over all of Judea to whom Herod must ultimately answer. Not only that but Herod was at least nominally a Jew and in town for the Passover celebration, Pilate was the final word and there seems to be little reason for him to cultivate a friendship with Herod, who, while a Roman citizen, was nonetheless considered somewhat inferior due to his Hebrew heritage.

Herod, while given a great measure of leeway to deal with Jewish affairs (note his treatment of John the Immerser (i.e.; the Baptist), was nevertheless a subordinate of Pilate. This most certainly grated upon him day by day. And the scripture plainly says that they were not on the best of terms prior to this day.

Next we see the chief priests of the Jews (who hated the Roman government) proudly and gladly declaring their undying allegiance to Caesar. (see John 19:15). What brought about this "love fest" one might ask? It was the same spirit that moved the multitude to cry out together in one voice, "*Crucify HIM, crucify HIM.*"

James said, "*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.*" (James 4:4) It is this common bond which galvanized political enemies, religious deceivers and lovers of religious tradition to band themselves together in order to (as they thought) destroy the SON of GOD.

Pilate seemingly recognized the innocence of CHRIST and knew HIM to be unworthy of death yet because he valued the praise of men above the truth of GOD he washed his hands but could never take away the stain of his own condemnation. He is typical of the supposed moral majority who while never speaking ill of CHRIST nonetheless never worship HIM who alone is worthy of praise. He who found no fault in HIM nonetheless sentenced the only just man who ever walked the earth to die in order to please men and preserve "peace".

Herod was a man who was intrigued by the presence of CHRIST, (see Luke 23:8,9) He was genuinely curious to discover exactly what CHRIST was about. Yet the LORD answered HIM not a word. He is typical of the religious seekers of our day who think they can discover the mystery of godliness by their own effort and study. When Herod discovered that

HE had nothing for HIM, he grew angry and then began to persecute HIM. These religious seekers are those which in time fall away and walk no more with HIM. (see Mat.13:20,21)

The chief priests were relentless in their hatred of CHRIST and would leave no stone unturned to destroy HIM whom the LORD had sent. HE was a threat to their status and traditions. They are typical of those who promote their own traditions and despise the simplicity of the gospel. They promote those doctrines that are pleasing to men but secretly and openly speak against the revelation of CHRIST as the LORD of all. They are always the proponents of man's supposed free-will and ability to be the sons of GOD by their own power. They are those to whom the LORD said, *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."* (Mat 23:15)

The religious multitudes were swayed by persuasive words even as they are in the present day. There was no soundness in them when the Pharisees convinced them to seek the release of Barabbas. Because the religious masses have no foundation they are easily blown about by every wind of doctrine that comes along. Because they dwell in perpetual darkness they cannot see anything but those things they are taught by religious deceivers and wolves who are intent on scattering the flock.

We live in a time when sound doctrine is considered too hard and not appealing enough to the masses. Some profess that they teach sound doctrine because they mention the sovereignty of GOD, the blood of the cross, and the need of sinners. Yet in the reality of all of their clerical distinctions, programs, and promotions they only testify that they really think that it all ultimately depends on man's choice to either serve GOD or not.

The sons of GOD are those that know they have no choice but to follow CHRIST. They testify with Peter, *"LORD to whom shall we go, THOU hast the words of eternal life."* (John 6:68) They declare with Job, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."* (Job 13:15) They can no longer be satisfied with the praise of men nor delight themselves in the friendship of this world.

They testify that this world is not their home. Though the world is as appealing as ever to their flesh yet they are compelled to confess that they have here no continuing city. They find themselves to be strangers in the land of their nativity. They discover that their foes are often of their own household. (see Mat 10:36) They cannot escape from the grace of the GOD who has called them and cannot help but to rejoice in the LORD's words, *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* (John 6:37)

The language of the sons of GOD is at odds with the language of this world. The world says we ought to have better self esteem than to speak of ourselves as worms and depraved creatures. The world says that it is unhealthy psychologically to dwell upon our unworthiness and imperfections, but each time we are given a glimpse of HIS glory and the awful price that HE paid to secure our redemption we cannot help but weep at the thought of our own wretched condition and lament the fact that we have nothing to offer which is of any value.

The world tells us we need to be well rounded and involved in all sorts of pursuits and activities but the sons of GOD find their greatest delight in the pursuit of HIS knowledge even as Paul said, *"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Phi 3:7-10)

We have no fellowship with the *"unfruitful works of darkness"* and find no comfort nor help in any advice or counsel given by the men of this world regardless of their sincerity or religious distinctions. *"Sir, we would see Jesus."* (John 12:21)