

# 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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## PHILIP, THE EVANGELIST

*We entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was was one of the seven; and abode with him.*

*(Act 21:8)*

The terms used in the scriptures are very descriptive, but it is amazing how some terms can come to take on meanings that are aberrations of the use of them in scripture. This is seen quite clearly here in this passage before us. If you asked the average person what an evangelist is, they would probably describe someone who is an entertaining speaker, likely somewhat flamboyant who is skilled in touching the emotions of his hearers. Thereby he is able to stir men up to action whether it be making a decision to "let" the LORD "save" them or forking over sums of money to fund the "ministry".

Evangelism has come to mean the feverish work of men, preaching to others with a formula for them to follow for the purpose of persuading them to "get saved". The idea is that the more preaching that can be done, then the more folks will be "saved." Those who would dare to question that such activity is ever illustrated or commanded in scripture or that the concept that preaching can minister life to those who are dead is taught there, are looked upon as those who don't care about the "souls of men" or in modern terms "unevangelical".

Philip is described in the scripture as an evangelist. We are confident that he was a preacher of the gospel, sent to that task by the LORD. (see Acts 8:26) He was sent to a specific man whose heart the LORD had opened even though he didn't know his name nor what he looked like. (see Acts 8:29) He could no more fail in his mission than that the ONE who sent HIM to perform it could ever fail to accomplish exactly what HE determines. The Ethiopian eunuch was a man in need of instruction. (see Acts 8:31) Philip was a prepared man sent to a prepared hearer even in the same way in which Peter was on the day of pentecost, (see Acts 2:47) or as Paul and Barnabas were at Antioch. (see Acts 13:48)

An evangelist is a declarer of a "good message" or "good news", which is what the gospel is to those who are hungering and thirsting in a land of famine. Philip spent his time declaring to this man the glories of CHRIST as the REDEEMER of HIS people. ( see Acts 8:35) That is the only message that an evangelist is sent with. He is not called upon to try to coerce men to believe, heal them, or teach them to babble or fall out on the floor, nor to collect money, but rather to declare the Kingship of CHRIST, the acceptable year of the LORD. The justifying righteousness of CHRIST which is applied according to HIS sovereign mercy to sinners. *"This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Act 4:11-12)*

Unless and until a man is acquainted with the bad news, of his own depravity and separation from GOD, can he have any appreciation for the declaration of that certain salvation which is purchased by the sovereign REDEEMER. This is a work which can only be performed by the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD as HE is pleased to awaken HIS people

according to HIS own time and purpose (see Eph.2:1). When a man is thus made spiritually alive every thought of his mind becomes focused on his certain and deserved destruction, (see John 16:8) not to mention his own barrenness and inability to perform any task to deliver himself. *"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner."* (Luke 18:13) *"Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."* (Mark 9:24)

It is unto such men as these that GOD is pleased to send the "good news", very often from the lips of one such as Philip the evangelist, a declarer of a good message. The evangelist does not minister life, but brings to the man's awareness (by the operation of the SPIRIT), the glorious truth that JESUS CHRIST is the SAVIOR of sinners and ever lives to make intercession for those who come unto the FATHER by HIM. *"Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, 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."* (2Tim 1:9-10)

Thus the sons of GOD rejoice to hear this good message, it is unto them a saving word which goes even to their conscience as it is applied by the SPIRIT, taking away their guilt and the fear of condemnation. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."* (Heb 9:14-15)

So we are convinced that the scripture indicates that some are indeed called evangelists and we rejoice to see this work performed in and through them by the power of GOD. Can any man hinder it; or cause that which GOD is pleased to send men to perform, to come to naught? Away with any such notion! HE is at this very moment calling HIS own unto HIMSELF and no man or devil can prevent it. *"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 sons of GOD are manifested in this world as they are given faith, which is not of themselves but is the gift of GOD. (see Eph.2:8) They believe the gospel of the glory of GOD, even as Paul declared to Timothy. (see I Tim.1:11) *"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* (Rom 10:13-17)

- 1 The gospel is good news indeed, To sinners deep in debt;  
The man who has no works to plead, Will thankful be for it.
- 2 To know that when he's nought to pay, His debts are all discharged,  
Will make him blooming look as May, And set his soul at large.
- 3 No news can be compared with this, To men oppressed with sin;  
Who know what legal bondage is, And labour but in vain.
- 4 Freedom from sin and Satan's chains, And legal toil as well,  
The gospel sweetly now proclaims; Which tidings suit them well.
- 5 How gladly does the prisoner hear What gospel has to tell!  
'Tis perfect love that casts out fear, And brings him from his cell.
- 6 The man that feels his guilt abound, And knows himself unclean,  
Will find the gospel's joyful sound Is welcome news to him.

# 528 in Gadsby's Hymns, by William Gadsby (1773-1844)