

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*

CONVERSATIONS FROM THE ARK

And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark. Genesis

7:23

There is probably no doctrine taught in the word of GOD that is more neglected or even ignored than that of the teaching of reprobation. I would dare say that less than five percent of those on the face of the earth today who call themselves Christians even believe such a teaching is in the word of GOD, let alone, have heard a preacher expound upon it. This doctrine sets forth the fact that GOD created a certain portion of the human race to be destroyed in the pit of hell. I can almost hear a collective gasp after having said those words, because this doctrine is so reprehensible to the flesh of men. Men are convinced that they possess some intrinsic worth which makes them of greater value than to just be cast aside like dung upon the scrapheap known as Gehenna according to the purpose of GOD.

Paul understood the revulsion of such teaching to the natural mind when he penned these words, *"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Rom 9:16-24)*

This is not a hard doctrine to understand (though it may be difficult to receive) when one is acquainted with the fact that the most high GOD rules in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and does all things according to the good pleasure of HIS will. If one believes that GOD has created the world and put it in some probationary period to find out what each man would do, then that man will balk and rail against the notion that GOD has determined the fates and destinies of all men according to HIS sovereign pleasure. Yet the man who is acquainted with the depravity of his own heart and his own worthiness of destruction can only say, *"even so FATHER for so it seemed good in thy sight."* (Luke 10:21)

The LORD JESUS spoke these very words right after thanking GOD for hiding the truth from the wise and prudent and revealing it to babes. HE spoke in parables in order to confound those to whom, was not given the privilege of understanding. (see Mark 4:11,12)

Just as surely as the scripture teaches that GOD in HIS sovereign purpose, before the foundation of the world chose to create a people in CHRIST, which were HIS children, HIS elect bride; so HE also did choose to create a people fitted for destruction and worthy of it. There is no time known unto men when the elect sons of GOD were not according to the purpose and will of GOD hidden in CHRIST their REDEEMER. So too according to the same unerring, divine purpose were those who were vessels of dishonor, fitted for the destruction to which they were ordained. (see Jude 1:4; II Thess.2:13)

When Noah and his family were shut in the ark by GOD, (see Gen. 7:16) I am sure that there were many things that they did not completely understand about the exact purpose of GOD. Yet one thing that they did comprehend was that the only reason they were in the ark while the rest of the multitude of the world was shut out, was the grace of GOD. *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."* (Gen 6:8)

I have often wondered what the topic of conversation was among those eight privileged souls as the rains beat down upon their vessel, tossed upon the stormy seas with no means of navigation or knowledge of their fate. We have no way of knowing but we can conjecture what they might have discussed and who their praises would be directed towards.

As the rains began to fall and the floodwaters began to rise I am sure that there were many of their acquaintances who began to weep and howl desiring to be let into the safe haven of the ark. Yet while they no doubt had compassion on those who were perishing at arms length, yet they could neither open the door of the vessel nor extend a helping hand because they saw the DOOR shut by the hand of GOD. *"Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep."* (John 10:7) They knew themselves to be like the five wise virgins who only had enough oil for their own lamps. (see Mat.25:9) *"And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"* (1Pe 4:18)

They perhaps contemplated the fact that they were in reality no different than those who were perishing outside the ark. *"For who maketh thee to differ from another"* "Why was I made to hear THY voice and enter while there's room, when thousands make a wretched choice and rather starve than come. T'was the same love that spread the feast that sweetly forced us in, else we had still refused to taste and perished in our sin." (Isaac Watts)

They had no way of knowing what lay ahead of them, but they were no doubt consoled that the same ONE who chose them to be shut in this vessel was indeed the very ONE upon whom all their hopes were cast. They were as Job who declared, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."* (Job 13:15) and as Peter who declared, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."* (John 6:68)

They had no thoughts toward their own ability to choose the way of the LORD, for they still remembered HIS command to come into the ark, and how inexorably they were drawn inside of it as HE sealed them in. *"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)

They knew that they could neither sail the vessel, nor open the door which the LORD had shut, yet they were comforted by this very fact (knowing the power of HIM who shut them in) and looked forward to the dawning of the day of their redemption when this tomb into which they were sealed was opened according to HIS sovereign power *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* (John 11:25-26)