

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

A PUBLIC DISPLAY

For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. Acts 26:26

The LORD JESUS prayed to HIS FATHER saying *"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things (i.e.; the truth of the gospel) from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes."* (Mat 11:25) Yet HIS whole ministry and work was put on public display. Though the truth of what HE was doing and the reason HE did what HE did, was revealed to only a remnant, whom HE called: "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," HE carried out HIS ministry and work in plain view of the religiously proud Pharisee's as well as the publicans, winebibbers, and harlots.

Paul was faithful to preach the gospel wherever he was sent. He did not pick and choose his audience nor did he preach a variety of messages. Regardless of who he stood before, whether in the Synagogue, before a Jewish court, in a gentile soldier's house, or before earthly kings, he preached but one message: JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified.

What a contrast this is to the rank and file "preacher" of today who is educated to tailor his message to his hearers so as to offend none and be as entertaining as possible in order to gain and hold a crowd. Many determine where they are "sent" by the amount of money they receive and like to get the financial arrangements in order before any preaching occurs. Paul had no concern for such matters but with singleness of purpose declared the gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD. He made it plain that he had *"coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel."* (Acts 20:33) Nor did he in any wise seek their approval; saying, *"I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."* (Acts 20:27)

The truth never changes and the gospel has no uncertain sound. We may not always be able to discern who the true hearers of the gospel are but we can most certainly determine what the gospel is and is not. Any message which tells men they must add something to what CHRIST has done or one which does not declare the total accomplishment of CHRIST in obtaining redemption for HIS elect, cannot be the same gospel which Paul declared.

I grow so weary of hearing the false prophets of our day declaring that CHRIST has only partially accomplished the salvation of men and has left the rest of it up to them to determine whether or not they will be saved, by adding their "faith" to the transaction. Such drivel is music in the ears of the religious man who delights to prove himself worthy before GOD but is no help at all to that man who is convinced that he is a lost and helpless sinner.

Such a man as that is like HIS disciples when they cried out, *"Lord, save us: we perish."* (Mat 8:25) or the Publican who smote upon his breast and said, *"God be merciful to me a sinner."* (Luke 18:13) These men understood that they had nothing to offer unto the LORD which was of any value and were totally dependent on HIS ability to deliver them.

No man can see himself in that lost and undone condition apart from the quickening and convicting work of the HOLY GHOST. Nor will the gospel of free grace appear altogether lovely unto any except those who are made to see CHRIST "lifted up" as the sinner's SUBSTITUTE. Some (which is actually a majority in the present day) think that men can be "persuaded" or "taught" to become followers of CHRIST, even as Agrippa declared, *"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."* (Act 26:28)

Yet there is no such thing as an "almost" CHRISTIAN. Except the LORD should totally convince a man of his ruined condition (see Paul's response to Agrippa in Acts 26:29) and bring him naked and bare before the throne of HIS mercy, a man will never be manifested as one of the sons of GOD by becoming a true follower of CHRIST. Believing the gospel of CHRIST is not measured by degrees of understanding and commitment but is the work of GOD in the heart of a man to give him both faith and repentance, thus manifesting the man as one of HIS sons chosen unto salvation from before the foundation of the world. These not only shall believe but can never perish, being the apple of GOD's eye.

Yet even as Agrippa was not "ignorant" of that which CHRIST did upon the earth, he is without excuse (as are all men) in his unbelief, since GOD has made a public display of the redemptive work of CHRIST. This unbelief demonstrates the reprobation of the unbeliever and the utter hardness of men's hearts to bow down at HIS footstool.

GOD has given plain testimony of HIS sovereign rule. *"Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. 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: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened."* (Rom 1:19-21)

GOD has plainly displayed HIS redemptive power. *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."* (Col 2:14-15) HE was crucified between two thieves on a Judean hillside in the plain view of the multitude, even as HE arose from the dead and had the stone rolled away to declare an empty tomb. This was not done in a corner.

GOD has sent HIS messengers into the earth to declare the gospel. *"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."*(Mar 16:15-16) *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* (1Cor 1:21) There is no place upon the earth which is without the witness of GOD. *"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."* (Rom 10:18) Men do not perish because they have not known the truth of GOD but rather because they have hardened their hearts and necks against HIM.

GOD will bring to pass a universal testimony to the LORDSHIP of JESUS CHRIST. *"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God."* (Rom 14:11) *"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* (Phil 2:9-11) *"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."* (Eph 2:7) What a public display of HIS grace and goodness to the sons of HIS everlasting love!

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