

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 HUT IN THE CUCUMBER PATCH

And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

Isaiah 1:8

It has pleased the LORD to establish HIS kingdom in the plain sight of the whole world, but yet at the same time to hide it so that it can only be seen by those to whom it is given. The LORD JESUS spoke on this very wise, when HE said, *"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him. And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."* (Luke 10:21-24)

This kingdom which HE has seen fit to manifest in the earth is not one which can be appreciated by the natural man. While the LORD is pleased to show the glorious nature of it to HIS elect, HE has purposed to hide it from the world in general by causing it to appear unto them as something which is quite insignificant or even despised. Paul described the disdain which the world has for it when he said, *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 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."* (1Cor1:18-21)

The kingdom of GOD which CHRIST came to establish occupies no real estate nor can its victory be measured by the standards which the world understands. HIS kingdom is built not with concrete and timbers but rather with living stones. *"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."* (1Pet 2:5) *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24)

HIS kingdom is manifested in HIS calling of that small remnant which HE is pleased to deliver from this present evil world. HE came as their REDEEMER and is presently calling them with an effectual call which can in no wise be nullified or resisted by those upon whom HIS everlasting love is set. HE brings each one to HIMSELF in a manner which is totally unaided and heretofore unknown by them. (see Isa. 42:16) The religious world despises such a message and is sure that man's free will must play a part in his salvation.

The world is greatly enamored of what it considers “magnificent” things. The fastest cars, the most expensive jewelry, architectural grandeur, athletic superiority, or great success in business, just to name a few. It is therefore no surprise that the natural religious bent of men would be channeled in the same direction. The erroneous thinking that GOD is impressed with the great endeavors and expenditures of men, (be it measured in money or effort) is a prevalent notion among all the world’s religions. All religions seek to stir men up to attempt and accomplish “great things” and “produce exciting results” which can be seen and appreciated by all around. It has always been thus and shall be till the time of the end.

Cucumbers are not meant to be the main course of a meal nor is there anything particularly outstanding about them. In some ways they are totally insignificant on the culinary chart. Few people spend time dreaming of the next opportunity they might have to eat a cucumber. On top of that; a patch of cucumbers is hardly regarded as a place of great delight, or a prime spot in which to dwell. The average man would walk by it without even so much as a glance or the least curiosity, preferring the grandeur of a cabin on a mountain slope or the roar of the surf at a seaside villa. A cucumber patch is quite rustic and unappealing to say the least.

Yet Isaiah speaks of the daughter of Zion as a *“lodge in a garden of cucumbers”*. The daughter of Zion is that remnant which the LORD has chosen. She is precious in HIS sight and HE will withhold nothing which is good for her. She is the apple of HIS eye and the object of HIS greatest affection. HE often describes her in the most affectionate of terms, such as we read in the Song of Solomon. *“Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves’ eyes.” (SofS 1:15) “O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.” (SofS 2:14) “Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.” (SofS 4:7) (see Eph.5:27)*

So, Isaiah is not describing her as she appears to the LORD, but rather as the world views her, disdaining the kingdom of GOD as without any endearing qualities. There is nothing which the world finds desirable about the true gospel of GOD’s sovereign grace. It is a despised message because it gives a man no place to glory nor any grounds upon which to display his exertion and devotion. There is no allure in this kingdom which stirs the flights of a man’s religious fancy; no souls to save by his efforts, nor rewards to be earned by his obedience. That which is all of grace holds absolutely no appeal to the man who considers himself able to gain an interest or share in the blessings of GOD, if not with an entrance into that kingdom at least with a greater standing in it by his compliance with various duties.

The kingdom of GOD is in many ways synonymous with HIS church. HIS church is not an organization or an institution which men can become a part of by carnal means, but rather it is that body for which HE shed HIS precious blood. HE is pleased to manifest that body in various places in the earth by gathering HIS remnant together in local assemblies where they are a mutual help one to the other. It is in the longing for these assemblies that HE is pleased to manifest those who are HIS disciples. *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:35)*

The religious world views the “church” simply as a place to go and hear some religious talk or “soul stirring music.” It is a place for them to attend when it is convenient and they don’t have more important things to do. However, the solemn gathering of the saints of GOD is the most prized dwelling place this side of heaven for those who can see the beauty of this *“lodge in a garden of cucumbers”* and find it a most precious place and consider its value to be above rubies or gold. *“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto you. For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the*

*plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which
run to and fro through the whole earth.” (Zec 4:9-10)* *mam*