

# 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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## FOR WHOM DID CHRIST DIE?

*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

*Hebrews 9:12*

We have lately made it through another of the religious world's celebrations of the supposedly noble festival of Easter. The average "Christian" gives little thought to the propriety of mixing a visit from the Easter Bunny with the glory of a bleeding and resurrected CHRIST. But such is the mindset of those who see no difference between the sacred and the profane.

Religious holidays offer an opportunity for the flesh to exhibit a bit of pomp and pageantry as it seeks to amalgamate the precious and the vile by its erstwhile demonstrations of piety. The seeming purpose is to elevate the vile by associating it with that which is precious, but the actual result is to devalue that which is truly precious and to make it appear appealing to the flesh, which is ultimately to take that which is holy and give it to dogs.

Man's carnal religion is never acceptable in the sight of GOD and all fleshly celebrations masquerading as spiritual endeavors are but manifestations of condemnation and revelations of the extent of darkness which the participants dwell in. *"A people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick; Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments, which eat swine's flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels; Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day."* (Isa 65:3-5) *"And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."* (Luke 16:15)

This is exactly the same thing which the LORD said to the woman at the well when she asked HIM about proper religious observances. *"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. 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 4:21-24)

Just the other day I read a marquee in front of a meeting house which said, "Jesus died for everyone." I am sure that the average person steeped in the religious culture of our area never gave a moment's thought as to whether or not that message was true or false as they read it in passing by. I am also fairly confident that the person who decided to place that message on that marquee did so because they sincerely believed it to be true. I am also fairly certain that they probably have never considered how blatantly erroneous such a statement is in light of what the scripture plainly reveals about the purpose of the finished work of CHRIST.

The message of a GOD who loves everyone the same and is just busy trying to do good for all who will let HIM help them is a very appealing message to the flesh. In fact it is so appealing that little thought is ever given to any other scenario by those who find great delight in carnal religious dogma. It just seems right that GOD would give every man a fair chance and a square deal, and

that HE would want to work in partnership with men in order to give them every opportunity to gain salvation out of that which they had fallen into by the unforeseen happenstance of evil. It gives the flesh comfort to think on a GOD who would do so much to gain the love and friendship of a creation gone awry. Not to mention the fact that man is such a noble and splendid creature as to be worthy of such aid abetted by the exercise of his free will.

Yet the scripture plainly indicates that there is absolutely nothing good in men (see Rom.3:10,11), and that the supposed free will of men is actually in total bondage to sin. It is also abundantly clear (to those who have been given eyes to see) that the love of GOD is a particular and exclusive love which is visited upon the objects of HIS choosing and withheld from those who are not. (see Rom. 9:13,14, John 17:9) The damnation of the reprobate is as much a part of the purpose of GOD as is HIS determination to redeem that people whom HE has chosen before the foundation of the world as HIS elect bride. (see Rom.9:17,18; Eph.1:4,5)

Those who embrace the religion of the flesh recoil in horror at the very thought that GOD even has the right to determine the destiny of HIS creation let alone would actually do so without consulting them. There is no more hated doctrine in that camp than that which declares that the redemption which was finished by CHRIST is exclusively accomplished for an elect people.

The statement, "Jesus died for everyone" cannot be true unless one of two things is true: Either we conclude that all men are saved or we conclude that CHRIST only made salvation a possibility by HIS death and in reality saved no one by HIS effort. We are certain that all men are not saved because the LORD JESUS plainly declared that all men were not HIS sheep and that some have the devil for their father. These are those who HE says HE does not know and are told to depart from HIM. (see Mat.7:21-23)

The writer of Hebrews plainly states that CHRIST has "obtained eternal redemption" for those for whom HE shed HIS precious blood. Even as the angel told Joseph, "*thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*" (Mat 1:21) There is no mention in the scripture of an ATONEMENT that does not atone, a JUSTIFIER which does not justify, nor a SAVIOR which does not save. HE is the SANCTIFIER and the SANCTIFICATION of all of those for whom HE has entered in once into the Holy Place with HIS own blood.

The redemption of the LORD's people is not a cooperative effort nor does it somehow become effective when they believe it. Those who are redeemed by HIS blood are redeemed by HIS blood. Their justification does not depend on what they do or do not do, but rather is completely based on what HE has done in their behalf. What they could not do HE has accomplished for them. HE has become sin for them that they might be made the righteousness of GOD in HIM on the basis of imputation which was applied before they were ever born.

There can be no true gospel preached where the work of CHRIST is presented as less than the complete salvation of those for whom HE died. There is no mixture of the profane and the sacred in the proclamation of the finished work of CHRIST. There is no place for men to glory in any wise in having been made the recipients of HIS grace and the objects of HIS favor. This gospel of free and sovereign grace will never appeal to the carnal religionist who would place the operation of man's will side by side with that which CHRIST has performed, and sees no egregious error in such considerations. JESUS CHRIST did not die for everyone, but HE has indeed saved every one for which HE shed HIS precious blood. "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*" (John 10:27-28)

Complete atonement thou hast made, And to the utmost farthing paid  
Whate'er thy people owed; How then can wrath on me take place,  
If sheltered in thy righteousness, And sprinkled with thy blood?  
If thou hast my discharge procured, And freely in my room endured  
The whole of wrath divine, Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand, And then again at mine. #227 Gadsby by Toplady  
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