

# 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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## A NEW COMMANDMENT

*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

*John 13:34*

What a man considers to be the law of GOD and its function most clearly reveals whether or not he has a true understanding of the nature of the kingdom of GOD and HIS righteousness. The Pharisees were the strictest sect on earth during the time that JESUS CHRIST walked upon the earth. They were strict keepers of Moses' law as they understood it to have been given. They as well had reverence to a multitude of additions and even modifications of that law which in their mind made it even more strict and (in their darkness) more desirable.

They thought that an open display of the letter of that law was to be greatly admired and even sought to teach other men to revere this display in the same fashion. The LORD despised their understanding and upbraided them saying, *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."* (Mat 23:15)

The Pharisees were typical of the natural descendants of Abraham at that time (and really of all men who take delight in any sort of fleshly religion) whom Paul described as having, *"a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."* (Rom 10:2-3)

The Pharisees viewed the law of Moses as a series of codes which they should implement and observe. They missed the whole purpose of the giving of that law and being ignorant of true righteousness thought that they could keep that law and therefore become acceptable to GOD. Their understanding lives on in the minds of those who would make the keeping of Moses law to be the ongoing duty of the children of GOD.

That man who is taught the true nature of that law is made speechless before its demands and stripped naked and bare in its presence. Rather than being able to recount his obedience to it or put on a display of that adherence he is humbled in the dust and made to lament the certainty of his own destruction by that which the "righteous man" (in his own eyes) delights in. By the law is the knowledge of sin. All those whom the LORD is pleased to instruct in true righteousness have no hope in being able to keep any coded law regardless of how simple it may be.

This is illustrated in the account of the lawyer who asked the LORD how he might inherit eternal life. *"And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?"* (Luke 10:25-29) He was smitten by the law yet sought to mitigate its

blow by supposing a difficulty in defining (technically) who his neighbor was, which the LORD clearly went on to do in HIS account of the Good Samaritan. The simplicity of HIS answer did not in any wise make this law any easier to perform but rather reveals the hardness of the human heart contrasted with the grace and mercy bestowed by HIM who is truly the GOOD SAMARITAN who pours in oil and wine and seeks out those left for dead, paying the price for their recovery.

It is this ONE who delivers a "new commandment" (or principle) to HIS children. This is totally unlike the summation of Moses' law by the "lawyer" which he gave in two parts. Both of which leaves man no basis upon which to be justified. For who has loved the LORD with his whole heart, soul and strength? Or who has loved HIS neighbor as himself? He that has not kept one part of the law is guilty of it all and stands condemned before the judgment seat of that law.

Even from the very beginning of the gospel there have always been those who have claimed to be the followers of CHRIST who have yet sought to bind the conscience of the free born sons of GOD with the principle of a coded law, being themselves in darkness as to the purpose and nature of such a law (or principle). Peter upbraided them saying, *"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10)* This spirit is still alive today as well meaning but weak men seek to lay the burden of duty works upon the backs of those whom GOD has forever set free, disregarding the very principle upon which the righteousness of the sons of GOD is established. *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (Rom 8:2)*

Here in HIS own words, CHRIST is pleased to deliver this principle to HIS disciples in what HE calls a "new commandment". This "new commandment" is not a "coded law" which carries with it a penalty for disobedience but rather is the very principle which the LORD has always dealt with HIS people in all ages. *"For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." (Deu 7:6-8)*

We are taught to love one another not as we love ourselves, but even as CHRIST has loved us. The design of this commandment is not to lay another impossible burden upon the backs of GOD's children but to establish once and for all that our love to one another is upon the same basis as that with which HE has always loved us.

This is a love which has its origins in GOD. *"We love him, because he first loved us." (1John 4:19)* *"And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." (1John 4:16)*

This love is the fruit of the SPIRIT of GOD in the people of GOD and for the people of GOD. *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." (1John 3:14)*

This love constrains the children of GOD to HIM and is the manifestation of HIS conformity of them to HIS image. *"Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children: And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor." (Eph 5:1-2)*

This love is not the product of the flesh nor can it be enhanced by anything which men can perform. *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." (1John 3:18)* *"And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment." (1John 3:23)*

This love is constant. *"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." (Gal 6:2)* *"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Phil 2:3)* *"We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." (Rom 15:1)*

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