

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

GABBATHA

When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

John 19:13

Men are without excuse before GOD. Each one that is brought into judgment before HIM cannot plead ignorance of HIS rightful place of glory nor can they find any just cause for why they have rebelled against HIM. All men are completely accountable for their own thoughts and actions regardless of what they might consider the cause of those thoughts and actions to be.

This is most clearly revealed in the religious bent of men (keep in mind that even atheism is a religion). Men will always worship something. Paul described the just anger of GOD towards them for their refusal to honor HIM alone, *"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed 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. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen."* (Rom 1:18-25)

We see in John's Gospel the account of the LORD JESUS CHRIST being brought before Pilate to be judged. HE was brought into judgment by men in a common court which was referred to in the Hebrew tongue as *"Gabbatha"*. This world literally means "a knoll or ridge" and is here specifically associated with this "highest court". It is very interesting that this particular court floor is made up of stones being called the *"Pavement"* in the Greek.

It is fitting that the LORD JESUS should be judged by men in a place made of many stones, for we read that HE is the CHIEF CORNERSTONE. The Psalmist said, *"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."* (Psa 118:22-23) Peter goes on to say; *"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed."* (1Peter 2:6-8)

JESUS CHRIST is the ROCK of OFFENCE, or "stone of division". The LORD JESUS said, *"And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will*

grind him to powder.” (Mat 21:44) It is impossible that a man can be indifferent to CHRIST, either he will fall upon his face and cast himself upon the mercy of the LORD or the wrath of GOD shall fall upon him. “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Act 4:12)

We read in Psalm 118:23, *“This is the LORD’s doing”*. The LORD JESUS CHRIST stood in this judgment hall (constructed by the hands of wicked men) according to the predestined purpose of ALMIGHTY GOD. When Peter preached on the day of Pentecost, he made reference to this very fact. *“Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” (Acts 2:23)* It was necessary to fulfill the purpose of GOD in the redemption of HIS chosen people that HE would be rejected by men and put to death as a malefactor. *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.” (Isa 53:3-4)*

The LORD would manifest and magnify the glory of HIS grace towards HIS elect in the appointment of some men to reprobation. (see I Pet 2:8) Though all men without exception are worthy of destruction for their sin and disregard for the ONE sent by GOD, yet the LORD does manifest HIS mercy towards the sons of GOD by obtaining their redemption and causing them to repent of their wickedness and look upon this CHIEF CORNERSTONE as *“precious”* (see I Pet.2:6) *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa 53:5-6)*

Man has no right to pass any sort of judgment at all upon the ONE who *“rules in the heavens and among the inhabitants of the earth” (Dan.4:35)* Nebuchadnezzar goes on to state, *“there is none that can stay HIS hand or say unto him what doest thou?”* (i.e.; question HIS doing much less HIS person.) Yet here at Gabbatha we see both Jews and Gentiles alike questioning and condemning HIM who is the *“fullness of the GODHEAD bodily”*. What arrogance that any worm of the dust should think it in any wise proper to judge the JUDGE of all the earth.

While it is clear that this examination was a contrived one which dared to put the LORD of all the earth on trial, yet in the common preaching of our day men are called upon to do the same thing as if they had that right and ability to continue to do so. We often hear men plead with others to “accept the LORD”, to “let the LORD in their heart”, or to otherwise make some sort of judgment on HIM whose way is past finding out. The underlying notion behind such “preaching” is that man is some sort of “sovereign” over his own “free will” and does indeed hold the LORD hostage until he makes up his mind as to whether or not to “allow” the LORD (who according to them is wringing HIS hands in hope that they will choose HIM) to save him.

The dire predicament that all men are in by nature does not afford them either the position, nor the ability to make such a “choice”. All men are “dead in trespasses and sins”, not merely wounded but without hope. Men cannot and will not choose the way of the LORD because they are bound in the very darkness of a Stygian midnight in which they cannot see spiritual things. *“Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)*

It is the height of arrogance for any potsherd of the earth to think that he might “contend” or bargain with HIM who has the power to *“destroy both soul and body in hell”*. This is why the LORD said that HE had hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes. None shall be saved except that man for whom the LORD JESUS CHRIST did obtain eternal redemption. They are those who are made manifest by a broken and contrite heart which are made to see their own just destruction played out before their very eyes and compelled to cast themselves upon the mercy of the Eternal JUDGE. *“Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee.” (Psa 65:4)*