

# 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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## WHAT THE SERVANTS KNEW

*When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom.*

*John 2:9*

In the natural thinking of men, it is quite common for them to consider that GOD is under some sort of obligation to give them answers to their questions. Not only that but that HE should make it easy for them to communicate with HIM and pay heed to their desires. When the subject of GOD's unconditional election of a people unto salvation is brought up, it is the natural reaction of the flesh to recoil against it, and then to grow even more angry when it is furthermore pointed out that HE has also created a people unto reprobation and destruction as well.

Men consider such an arrangement to be "unfair" and they generally will vent their spleen against such a notion because they are certain in their minds that GOD must give everybody a fair chance and a square deal (according to them). They completely reject the notion that HE has the right to do with HIS own as HE sees fit even as Paul declared in Romans; *"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom 9:20-21)* *"Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* (Rom 9:18)

They simply assume that GOD should have a favorable regard to men because they believe that men have some "inalienable right" or "intrinsic worth". Yet the fact is that men have nothing except that which has been given to them, and thus they have no standing which is not the gift of GOD. *"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1Cor 4:7)* Therefore it is of the LORD's mercies that we all are not consumed.

David understood the vast divide that there is between the HOLY CREATOR and the sinful worms of the dust when he said, *"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psa 8:4)* Even as did Job when he said, *"What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" (Job 7:17)* They understood that not only is it not wrong for GOD to choose a people, whom HE loved, unto salvation, but rather a consideration, that HS having loved any of wretched and rebellious mankind is incomprehensible.

Because of man's natural sinful condition he is completely dead insofar as any ability to comprehend and receive SPIRITUAL truth. Nothing has to change for him to perish. Apart from being "born again" he will die without any understanding or desire after GOD's truth. *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3) If it had pleased HIM, HE could have never given any man the ability to see the glory of that kingdom, yet as Daniel said, *"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets."* (Dan 2:28) To this end HE does show to those whom HE has loved from before the foundation of the world, the glorious mysteries of the reign of CHRIST as KING and SAVIOR.

This is beautifully illustrated at the wedding which the LORD attended in Cana of Galilee. Here, HE performed one of HIS most astonishing miracles, and yet HE did so in almost complete secrecy. While many at the feast enjoyed the wine which HE made, and one of them even congratulated the host on the superiority of it, only a few lowly servants and HIS disciples (probably five) knew how the wine came to be. There is no doubt that they were awestruck by this secret knowledge. In fact, John tells us, *“This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.”* (John 2:11) This was a glory that was hidden from the guests at the wedding.

During the LORD’s ministry, HE gloried in the fact that the gospel was hid from some and revealed unto others. *“In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and 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.”* (Luke 10:21-22)

The LORD said, *“Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”* (Mat 7:6) HE demonstrates this very principle, manifesting the absolute preciousness of spiritual truth by only putting it into those vessels which HE has prepared to receive it. *“That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,”* (Rom 9:23)

Only those who are convinced of their complete unworthiness to receive even the least of HIS mercies, are given the great and precious truths of the gospel. This preparation is completely of HIS doing. *“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.”* (Pro 16:1) Those that entertain the notion that they possess something of worth, in themselves, (be it free will, religious duty, or any form of righteousness) are unfit vessels in which to place this most precious truth. *“And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.”* (Luke 5:37-39)

The natural man prefers his own religion (old wine) to the truth (new wine). Men have devised hundreds of variations on the same theme, and like a hungry man at a buffet, he has chosen those dishes which suit his appetite. The common thread that runs through every religion that men have devised is the notion that they can approach GOD by and according to their own free will. In doing so they believe they can strike a bargain with GOD or at the very least influence HIM to pay heed to their requests and good deeds.

Those vessels which are prepared by the LORD to receive the TRUTH as it is in JESUS CHRIST, confess that they possess nothing which can gain them anything with GOD. They confess that they cannot even believe the TRUTH that HE proclaims apart from the gift of faith. They confess that they are covered with sin from head to foot and have no hope of gaining HIS favor apart from HIS mercy. They confess that they are worthy of destruction. They confess that they believe in the absolute sufficiency of the work of CHRIST as the REDEEMER of HIS people.

Just like the servants at the wedding feast they know themselves to be lowly beggars. Yet just like those servants they are given eyes to see the miraculous glory of the work of CHRIST which is hidden from the multitude. While many around them boast of having drunk the fine wine, they are privileged to see the work of HIM who turns water into wine and rest secure in the knowledge that HE shall supply all of their needs both in this world and that which is to come. *“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.”* (1Pet 2:6-8)

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