

# 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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## ACCEPTABLE

*For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.*  
*I Peter 2:20*

The English word “acceptable” appears eleven times in the New Testament. The first time that we see it is in Luke 4:19; where the LORD JESUS is describing the purpose of HIS ministry in the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy, (see Isa 61:1,2). *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”* (Luke 4:18-19)

The time which was appointed before the foundation of the world, had now arrived and the LORD was declaring it. The LORD JESUS did not come into the world, as an afterthought nor did HE come to solve a problem that had arisen in the creation. Rather the world was created for the very purpose which HE now announces.

When Mordecai was exhorting Esther to risk her life by going into the king’s presence he said to her, “Who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” (Est 4:14) This is quite in contrast to that which the LORD announces, for this “time” was created for HIM (and I might add, by HIM) and not HIM for the time.

So this “time” is said to be the “acceptable year of the LORD.” The meaning is that it is a time which was “approved or proper”. All that GOD does, HE does on purpose and according to the good pleasure of HIS will. So this was indeed the “proper” time since HE ordained it to come to pass when it pleased HIM. There was no selection process involved of several different opportunities but rather an appointed season. *“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.”*(Heb 1:1-4)

Then we find the word “acceptable” used in Romans 12:1,2 which is translated from a completely different Greek word. Paul exhorts the Romans *“by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”* (Rom 12:1-2) The meaning of “acceptable” here is “fully agreeable or wellpleasing”. This is the conduct which the LORD ordains and approves for HIS children as Paul describes to the Philippians, *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”* (Php 2:13)

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is the PERFORMER of all the good works which manifest themselves in the sons of GOD with which the FATHER is pleased and to which they are

ordained. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph 2:10)

HE is a perfect PERFORMER and "wellpleasing" in HIS FATHER's sight. Even as HE testified at the baptism of the LORD JESUS. *"And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* (Mat 3:17) (see also Mat.12:18; 17:5; I Pet.1:17) It is pure folly and pride which would cause a man to consider that he could perform or bring anything to the FATHER in or by his own power which would be considered "well pleasing". Yet even the vilest of sinners (see I Tim 1:15) is made pure in the FATHER's sight by that which CHRIST has performed in his behalf by HIS redemptive work and does presently perform in him by the operation of HIS SPIRIT until the final day when he is called from this lowland of sin and sorrow to his long home. This is "acceptable unto GOD."

In Philippians 4:18 there is a combination of the first Greek word, we looked at as being translated as "acceptable"; while the second one (which appears in Rom 12:2) is translated as "wellpleasing". The context of the passage relates both the ordination of the activity as well as the "approval" of it by HIM who brought it to pass. He describes a monetary gift which he received from the Philippians at the hands of Epaphroditus as *"an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God."* (Php 4:18) This is so because HE is both AUTHOR and the FINISHER of those things which HE is well pleased with.

If the SANCTIFIER of GOD's people is perfect and is that ONE (alone) whose righteous deeds are "acceptable" in HIS own sight, how could it be possible that the sons of GOD should ever become "more acceptable" by bringing some imperfect act of obedience regardless of its sincere motivation? *"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."* (Heb 2:10-11)

Then we find another Greek word which is translated as "acceptable" in Romans 15:16 where Paul comments on preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. *"That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost."* (Rom 15:16) The meaning here is "approved or favorable." I believe the sense of what he is saying is that he (Paul) preached the same gospel to the Gentiles as he did to the Jews. There is no other "approved" message which is to be preached by those so called to this purpose, which is not "*JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified*".

Paul plainly declared that there are many "gospels" which are preached in the world, but only one which is true, even as Peter proclaimed, *"there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Act 4:12) *"there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."* (Col 3:11)

The preaching of this gospel is that which is "acceptable" to GOD and is the very FOUNDATION of that spiritual house (the Kingdom) of which the sons of GOD are a lively (living) part. *"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."* (1Pe 2:5) There is no other basis upon which the sons of GOD have any footing. These "sacrifices" are "favorable" to the FATHER because HE delights in HIS SON.

Finally we come to our text where the Greek word is "charis" which is translated only once as "acceptable" and over 130 times as "grace" or "gift". The clear emphasis on Peter's exhortation to the saints is that it is truly a gift of grace and a mark of favor when HE enables HIS people to bear their burdens in the same SPIRIT in which CHRIST did HIS. *"Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."* (1Pe 2:21-25)

This is indeed "acceptable" to GOD.

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