

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

LIMITING GOD

Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the Holy One of Israel. Psalm 78:41

The scriptures tell us that the ONE true and living GOD is beyond the comprehension of men. *"Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."* (1Tim 6:16) *"Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."* (1Tim 1:17) *HE singularly dwells in a realm into which no man can enter. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity"* (Isa 57:15) HE alone is ETERNAL and IMMORTAL, having no beginning and no ending. Thus HE says of HIMSELF; *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."* (Rev 22:13)

When Moses asked to see HIS glory (i.e.; HIS countenance or face), HE replied, *"Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."* (Exo 33:20) Yet HE did hide Moses in a "cliff of the rock" (which is by illustration CHRIST) in order that he might behold the backside of HIS glory as HE passed by. Thus HE manifested HIMSELF as a GOD of sovereign mercy as HE said, *"I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."* (Exo 33:19)

In this HE revealed that HIS glory is in HIS sovereign mercy, which is the exact characteristic of the true and living GOD which the natural man hates the most. Men will line up to speak about the general mercy and love of GOD. Yet when the LORD reveals that HE dispenses mercy, not to every individual, but, to those whom HE wills, then rebellion begins to simmer and the carnal understanding of man recoils at the thought, and men grow angry and are ready to cast those who would so proclaim that truth, off of the nearest cliff. We see an example of this with the LORD JESUS HIMSELF. *"And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."* (Luke 4:28-29)

Now what was it that "they heard" which caused these great religious men to become so incensed? HE was preaching sovereign grace! *"But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian."* (Luke 4:25-27)

Natural religious men love to speak of GOD and HIS love and mercy as long as they can do so in a sort of generic sense, where all men get a "fair chance" and a "square deal." Yet the declaration that GOD's mercy is dispensed to whom HE wills, and withheld from whom HE wills (see Rom. 9:18) will usually generate paroxysms of bitter rage among them.

In order to aid man's limited ability to understand the ways of the "invisible" GOD, the scriptures often speak of HIM in terms which ascribe to HIM various "human traits". Thus we read that *"it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart."* (Gen 6:6) Yet we know that HE is immutable. *"For I am the LORD, I change not."*(Mal 3:6) Nor does HE ever truly "grieve" over the plight of the wicked whom HE has ordained unto destruction. (see Ps.2:4; Prov.1:26; Jude 1:4). HE does all things according to HIS own good pleasure and is never disappointed at any outcome since all outcomes are according to HIS purpose.

Since men cannot comprehend HIM who is incomprehensible, they do often make the mistake of thinking that HE is just like them. *"These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."* (Psa 50:21) Yet HE is not like men as we read in Isaiah, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."* (Isa 55:8-9)

Because of man's innate rebellion against the absolute authority and power of GOD, he often imagines that there are some "limitations" which he, being a creature, is able to impose upon HIM who is the CREATOR. The "trump card" which he always believes that he holds and can play at any time is that of "free will". Some men honestly believe that GOD is powerless to do anything unless they "will" to allow HIM to do so. Thus they look at passages such as the one before us and believe that it speaks of man tying the hands of GOD in "limiting HIM".

This is sheer folly of the highest order and ignorance of the plain meaning of this particular scripture as well as any others which they might point to such as "quenching the SPIRIT" or "hindering" the gospel. GOD has no "limitations" except those which are the result of HIS own purpose and character. HE is an absolute GOD whose will and way cannot be overturned or even questioned. (see Dan.4:35; Isa.46:9-11; Ps.115:3)

The only "limits" that there are upon the true GOD are those which men imagine because of their unbelief, complaint and rebellion against HIM. The Psalmist (in Ps.78) reiterates over and over the LORD's dealings and deliverances of natural Israel, yet they were always questioning HIS provision for them and doubting that HE would be faithful. Thus they "limited" HIM (in their own mind) or did not believe that HE was ever faithful. *"They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy."* (Psa 78:42)

This is a damnable trait which is found in all men by nature. HE is faithful and true unto HIS people yet in the flesh they constantly doubt HIS mercy and longsuffering to them. The love and mercy of the LORD to HIS elect people is completely without condition or limitation of any kind. Why should we ever doubt it or question HIS goodness except that we think HE is like unto us and has some "limitation" upon the extent of HIS longsuffering.

Thus the gospel of free grace is to be proclaimed without reservation. *"There is therefore now, no condemnation to those who are in CHRIST."* HE said, *"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. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* (John 10:27-29) Be gone fear and unbelief, has HE not both promised and demonstrated HIS purpose to redeem HIS elect by suffering and dying in the behalf of those HE has come into the world to save? *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?----- Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Rom 8:35-39) *"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."* (Heb 1:3) An unlimited GOD indeed! mam