

# 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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## THE CART AND THE HORSE

*For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?*

*Psalm 56:13*

There is a certain and proper order in which all things are done in the kingdom of GOD. When a man confuses that order or seeks to rearrange it, he becomes a perverter of the truth and is found to be fighting against the truth rather than for it. We have all heard the familiar idiom, "putting the cart before the horse." Even though few people in the present day have ever ridden in a horse drawn cart, much less been involved in harnessing such a combination, yet this is a simple phrase that is still used to describe getting things out of order.

We can laugh at the thought of such an oddity of expecting to go for a ride in a cart which is in front of the horse rather than behind it. Yet it is no laughing matter when men reverse the order of the work of GOD in the salvation of HIS people.

There is no shortage of those who would declare that GOD works in men who first exercise faith and obedience to the commands of GOD. In fact it is considered an oddity by the masses of deluded souls to hear someone teach the scriptural doctrine which states the exact opposite.

Today's salvation peddlers go about the country side telling all who will listen that GOD will deliver them if they will only believe. In fact most set forth the notion that a man can receive and believe the gospel anytime he so chooses. They say that if a man is faithful, then GOD will bless him. They picture the LORD of heaven and earth waiting with hands tied; just hoping someone will believe the gospel so that HE can open the windows of heaven to them. This line of thinking does not only get the cart before the horse, but actually shoots the horse and expects the cart to move by itself.

Faith is not the cause of GOD's blessing to men. Rather, faith is the evidence of GOD's blessing given to those whom HE is pleased to save. "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:*" (Eph 2:8) We see this order illustrated in the book of Acts where Luke says, "*And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*" (Acts 13:48)

Many today would seek to confuse the saints by changing the order of salvation which has its basis in the election of a people whom the LORD loved in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. They will take the word "*foreknowledge*" and purport that GOD chose HIS bride on the basis of having looked down through the eons of time and upon HIS "knowing ahead of time" what men would do HE made HIS choice of them. This makes the Sovereign GOD of the universe to be a mere fortune teller.

This confuses the order of "choice" and makes men to be the first "choosers" and GOD to be merely a Pavlovian benefactor. The LORD set forth the proper order when HE said to HIS disciples, "*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father*

in my name, he may give it you.” (John 15:16) The word “foreknowledge” means to “love (i.e.; know) beforehand” or to “ordain according to purpose”. Luke uses this word when he says, “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) We get the English word “prognosis” from this Greek word.

David understood this proper order when he declared, “Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.” (Psa 65:4) Even as the hymn writer has penned these words; “Tis not that I did choose THEE, for LORD that could not be, my heart would still refuse THEE, had’st THOU not chosen me.” (by Josiah Conder, 1836)

In Psalm 56 David sets forth his desire and purpose to trust the LORD. “In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me.” (Psa 56:4) In this he gives evidence of being a true child of GOD. It is a characteristic of those who have been born again to both delight in the word and teaching of GOD and to cast oneself upon HIS mercy. In whom else can their trust be found?

He repeats himself in verses 10 and 11 and then declares HIS intention to praise the LORD. “Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praises unto thee.” (Psa 56:12) Whom else do the sons of GOD desire to exalt but HIM who is worthy of all praise. The Psalms are full of this language of praise. “Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the people his doings.” (Psa 9:11) “I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the LORD.” (Psa 27:6) “But I will declare for ever; I will sing praises to the God of Jacob.” (Psa 75:9) “Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.” (Psa 146:1-2)

This language of praise is that which is fluently spoken by those who have been brought out of darkness and into the LIGHT. It would be easier to find darkness emanating from the Sun than it would be to find those who are made alive in CHRIST JESUS without any desire to praise that NAME which is above all names.

The prevailing notion of the present day is that the blessings of GOD are poured out when and if men praise HIM. Yet this is putting the cart before the horse. The reason that any man praises the LORD is because the LORD has already blessed HIM by giving HIM a desire to praise HIS name. Life must precede action and it is only those who have been quickened and made alive by CHRIST who will ever have any desire to praise HIM in the highest. Men do not influence GOD, rather, GOD moves men according to the good pleasure of HIS will. “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” (Psa 110:3)

Many teach that man can and must be convinced to believe the gospel through the persuasive and oratorical preaching of it. Yet dead men cannot hear. They must be quickened by a power which is totally apart from any words which can be spoken by men. Men hear and believe because they have been awakened from the dead by the power of the HOLY GHOST. “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;” (Eph 2:1) To say that men are born again because they believe is to put the cart before the horse.

GOD is the first cause of all events and the salvation of HIS people is an event which is totally performed by HIM for HIS glory and their benefit. HE shows mercy to whosoever HE wills. Men cannot cause themselves to be the objects of that mercy by any endeavor, prayer, or act of so called faith.

GOD is rich in mercy to all who call upon HIS name. None who ever come to HIM with a broken and contrite heart shall ever be turned away. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37) Yet none will call upon HIM until and unless HE is pleased to give them life. And those upon whom HE is pleased to show this mercy shall both hear and believe. “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” (Acts 2:39-40) mam