

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

CUSHI AND AHIMAAZ

Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

Philippians 2:16

Paul is here commenting on his desire to be found as a faithful witness to the truth which was delivered to him. He knew that the labor which he had bestowed upon the Philippian church would be manifested as that of a “*workman that needeth not to be ashamed*”; only if it produced in those who were given ears to hear it, a desire to walk in the same truth and to witness a good confession before the men of this world. As he describes in verse 15. “*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world.*” (Php 2:15)

The age in which we live is characterized (in my opinion) by the greatest rise in the outward (Christian; so-called) religion that has ever been seen in the world. This is described by Daniel, when he said “*many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.*” (Dan 12:4) There is no lack of “knowledge” since it seems that on every street corner there are churches of one type or another, and in every town and hamlet a Bible school or seminary, along with multitudes of Bible-book and trinket stores whose shelves are creaking with an overload of books which cover every topic found in the scriptures and quite a few which are not. These are exaggerations to be sure but the proliferation of supposed bible knowledge is set forth by an ever increasing multitude of teachers and would be experts of scriptural scholarship of one type or other.

Yet in the midst of all of these megachurches, worship centers, and family churches, the truth can hardly be found as the multitudes flock to be entertained, excited, and ultimately fleeced. The radio and TV airwaves are constantly abuzz with various prophets, bishops, biblical psychologists and self-help psychoanalysts, reverend doctors, pastor kings, and tellers of prophecies concerning the moon and stars, horses, and seals. Conservative politicians and patriots spout off about the so-called Biblical foundation of our nation and confuse the difference between that which is holy and that which is profane, and the people love to have it so.

The one thing which binds all of these various sects, denominations, and orders of one sort or another is an abiding and unshakeable belief in man's free will and GOD's necessary acquiescence thereto. Those who would question this are looked at as out of touch and those who would preach that GOD is an absolute GOD who causes all things to occur according to the good pleasure of HIS will, are seen as relics of the past, heretics, or worse.

The preaching of the truth as it is in CHRIST, which declares a SAVIOR who actually saves helpless sinners who cannot participate in their own salvation and a work of the SPIRIT which actually produces a people who love the truth and one another (see II Thess 2:10-12; I Pet 1:22) and who will settle for nothing less. Even as Peter confessed, “*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*” (John 6:68) and as John declared, “*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in*

death.” (1John 3:14) There is a contrast between those who preach the truth, (i.e.; the whole truth, and nothing but the truth) and those that preach a message which may contain some truth. We see these two types of messengers compared and contrasted in the case of Cushie and Ahimaaz. (see II Kings 18:19-32)

Ahimaaz was anxious to be the one who would bring the news to King David. One cannot help but wonder if he was not motivated in some measure by a desire to garner fame and notoriety in this task or to ingratiate himself to the king. James speaks a warning against such desire in James 3:1. In fact he also said, *“If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man’s religion is vain.”* (Jas 1:26) Some desire the preeminence even as the LORD warned his disciples. *“But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.”* (Mat 23:8) The love of titles, such as Reverend, Elder, Pastor or Bishop, etc. is commonly found among the descendants of Diotrephes.

Cushie on the other hand sought no notoriety and was perhaps even reluctant to step forward to the task at hand, yet was recognized by Joab as a faithful messenger, and once sent to the task did not shrink from it. Even as Paul declared, *“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”* (1Cor 9:16)

Ahimaaz was not content to let Cushie bear the message but thought himself better able to bring this word to the king and therefore continued to press Joab to allow him to run. In him I see that man who determines his own call to preach because of his innate abilities and scholarship and assumes that he can prepare himself for the task at hand by attending upon the schools of men. He is like the man who chooses the “ministry” as a vocation and prepares himself as he would with any career which men might pursue.

Cushie merely ran to the task at hand because of his selection by Joab and gave little thought to the enormity of the task or the distance before him. While the true messengers of GOD may be taught in some measure by other men (see II Tim 2:2) yet the root of the matter instilled in their heart by the HOLY GHOST is of much more importance than that which is put in their heads by the teaching of men. As Paul said; *“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”* (Gal 1:11-12) Though all are not apostles as he was, yet all who preach truth must receive it from the same source.

Ahimaaz ran more swiftly than Cushie, in part because he took the path of least resistance *“Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushie.”* (2Sam 18:23) So too are those who preach a soothing, message which appeals to the flesh (especially the religious flesh) often more readily received than those who come clad in a leathern girdle and eating wild locusts and honey. A message which exalts man by reminding him of his ability to do good and please GOD in the process is much more appealing than a message which faithfully declares man’s total depravity and inability to perform anything which is good in the sight of a HOLY GOD.

Ahimaaz arrived more quickly than Cushie and told King David many things which were true. Even as there are many sincere preachers who declare many truths unto their congregations. Yet the one thing which was needful; that one thing that King David needed and desired to know, Ahimaaz failed to deliver. He feared the King’s reaction to “bad news” and in the process was an unprofitable messenger. There are many preachers who claim to believe in the absolute sovereignty of GOD, HIS unconditional election of a people, HIS definite substitutionary atonement for that elect people, and HIS determination to bring all of HIS elect unto that salvation, who nonetheless will not proclaim it because of the fear of men and their position among them.

Cushie arrived later than Ahimaaz but he was the only faithful messenger of the two, because he would do nothing but deliver the truth regardless of the consequences. He did not deliver a message which King David wanted to hear nor did he know how he would react to that news. Yet he was compelled to speak that which was true. *“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.”* (1Tim 1:15) *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Gal 6:14) mam