

# 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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## NOT IN WORD

*For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*

*I Corinthians 4:20*

As this year draws to a close we are reminded of the fleeting nature of those years which have been allotted to us by an all wise and sovereign CREATOR. Not one thought or breath can be carried over from one year to the next; nor can a man lay up anything in store which shall not pass away as a dream dies at the rising of the sun. We have come into the world naked and shall pass from it in the same fashion. The longer we are upon the earth the more clearly do we understand the words of Solomon as he said, *"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."* (Ecc 2:11)

The *"pride of life"* (see I John 2:16; which I believe this is the same as *"will worship"*; see Col.2:23) causes a man to reject the notion that all of his labor is for nought. It is this same opinion that is at the heart of all of man's self-righteousness and forms the basis for his consideration that he can somehow earn or merit the blessings of GOD or at the very least, cause GOD to have respect unto his ways or *"faith"*, and to take notice of him on that account. This concept is at the heart of the belief that a man, by his own wisdom, can search out and find GOD.

Those who are steeped in the modern philosophies of *"the power of positive thinking"* and *"self-help"* gurus, scoff at the words of Solomon and consider him to possess no wisdom at all, preferring their own *"optimism"* as an antidote to the truth which he declared. They consider a realistic analysis of man's condition to be *"pessimistic"* and relegated to the realms of negativity, while they glorify the power of men to do whatever they set their mind to..

The LORD has basically spoken unto man twice. Once in the beginning as HE created man in the flesh, and declared unto him that he would surely die, in the day when he would surely eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which the LORD had forbade him to do. Adam displayed his innate contempt of GOD's law and demonstrated his love of his own (as he supposed) *"free will"*, even as he fulfilled the decree of GOD.

The subsequent delivery of the law to Moses and HIS word spoken by the OT prophets is really just an extension of that initial message which declared what man is by nature and will continue on that path, unto his own destruction, apart from the mercy of GOD to deliver him from it. Throughout the Old Testament, the LORD delivered this same message as HE manifested HIS word to the prophets who foretold the coming of the DELIVERER, yet even those who died *"in faith"*, died not having received the promise.

Thankfully, the LORD has spoken unto men, the second time as we read in the book of Hebrews, *"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) We read in John’s gospel, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:17-18)*

Thus HE has brought forth that WORD which is the culmination of HIS purpose for the creation of the world and HE who spoke in times past has now spoken in these last days (i.e. the end of the world) through ONE MESSAGE by ONE MESSENGER. There is not another nor do we wait for any other mystery to be unfolded, insofar as GOD’s purpose for the redemption of that people which HE has loved with an everlasting love.

The first message that the LORD delivered was unto man in the flesh, yet this second and final message will only be received by those who are given ears to hear it, and rejoiced in by those who have eyes to see its glory. This is a message which is not for the wise, the learned, nor the powerful, but rather for those whom the scripture describes as babes, the weak, the poor, and the helpless. *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10)*

We see this demonstrated as an angel first appeared unto a ragtag bunch of shepherds on a Judean hillside, declaring, *“For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” (Luke 2:11)* Is it any wonder that the host of heaven then praised the LORD, saying, *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14)*

Yet, as glorious as this declaration of HIS nativity was, it was but the means to an end for HE came into the world, not specifically that man might remember HIS birth, but HE came primarily to die upon a cross of shame and ignominy, in order to redeem that people which HE loved from before the foundation of the world, fulfilling the TRUTH which is attached to HIS very NAME which was told to Joseph by the angel of the LORD. *“Thou shalt call his name JESUS (i.e.; JEHOVAH is SALVATION): for he shall save his people from their sins.” (Mat 1:21)*

This is the very essence of the gospel message which Paul summed up by saying, *“For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” (1Cor 2:2)* It is that which the world by wisdom cannot receive. *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.” (1Cor 1:18)* *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching (i.e.; the thing preached) to save them that believe.” (1Cor 1:21)*

Many have confused this issue over the years by considering that the skill and methodology of the one doing the “preaching” is of the greatest import. Yet Paul clearly dispels this notion by declaring that *“neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.” (1Cor 3:7)* No art or persuasion of men can cause faith to occur in those to whom the word of GOD is preached.

Nor is the reciting of the words which can be read from the pages of the Holy Bible, an instrument in causing a man to pass from death unto life. Rather, it is the power of GOD, wherein the SPIRIT of GOD awakens a dead man that he might hear that which he could never have heard otherwise, and it is the POWER of this same ONE who grants the gift of faith that a man might be enabled to embrace that which he has heard, by the gift of grace..

In vain do men preach (even sound doctrine, which is truly in short supply), expecting that their “activity” of preaching is an instrument of power. Apart from a visitation from HIM who has all power, the activity of preaching, even, sound doctrine is as useless as that of false doctrine which is declared by the purveyors of darkness. Men can and do believe “false doctrine” very readily yet the ability to embrace truth in the inward parts only comes by the application of the SPIRIT’s power as Paul declares, *“For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” (1Cor 4:20)*

In the flesh, men will wrangle over points of doctrine and affiliations with this or that sect (even as these Corinthians, (see I Cor.3:1-7)) often strutting and preening, with great desire to make their positions and titles known among men. Yet we know nothing as we ought to know. May we be found not simply as those who are sound in doctrine and walking according to a proper order: not puffed up but rather in humility which is a manifestation of the SPIRIT’s “power”. mam