

# 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 HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

*A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach. I Timothy 3:2*

Sprinkled throughout the scriptures, which we know as the Bible, is a wealth of information and instruction on various topics which touch every aspect of the lives of humans. Yet, while all men can profit from the truth found in those scriptures, (in a practical and natural sense;) one would be mistaken to consider that the purpose of the scriptures is to provide instruction to men in general, to offer them remedies for their various maladies, or to lay out a course which they can follow in order to gain favor in GOD's sight.

Rather the truth is that the scriptures are primarily given to the sons of GOD for their particular benefit. Since the scriptures found in the Bible are the very breath of GOD, their true meaning cannot be received, except by SPIRITUAL revelation and such is hidden from the understanding of the natural man as Paul tells the Corinthians,. "*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*" (1Cor 2:14)

Paul mentions this very fact to Timothy when he describes both the application and purpose of the written WORD, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*" (2Tim 3:16-17)

Now while Paul tells Timothy that the scriptures are given for this stated purpose, he does not tell Timothy that this is the "only" reason that the scriptures are given, nor that this particular purpose is the main or sole purpose for which they are given.

The Bible is given to the sons of GOD, primarily, as the "testimony of JESUS CHRIST". HE is the ETERNAL WORD and HE would testify unto those whom HE gives ears to hear, of HIS majesty, glory, and total dominion over heaven, earth, and hell. This is a book by HIM, about HIM, and ultimately for HIM since HE is the POSSESSOR of all things and the absolute SOVEREIGN who does according to HIS will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth.

Throughout its pages HE does manifest HIS determined intention to show mercy to the fallen sons of Adam according to HIS sovereign prerogative. When HE would reveal HIS glory to Moses, (following his request to be shown that), 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)

The declaration of the gospel stretches from the beginning of the book to its very end. In that pronouncement, HE would demonstrate HIS purpose to redeem sinners, and to call them from the darkness and into the LIGHT. The first glimmers of this LIGHT, broke upon mankind in the Garden, (like the sun begins to dispel the darkness at dawn,) when HE cursed the serpent and prophesied, to Eve, "*Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*" (Gen 3:16)

That LIGHT continued to shine, though often obscured by the clouds as HE demonstrated HIS faithfulness to the nation of Israel as the type and foreshadow of that true Israel which HE has loved from before the foundation of the world. It has continued to shine more fully, (like as the sun reaches its meridian splendor at noonday), in the sending of JESUS CHRIST into the world as the REDEEMER of HIS people.

In the unfolding of that redemption, HE has shown that HE has not only made provision for HIS people for the ages to come, but HE has given them such things as they stand in need of in the present time as they make their sojourn through this world of sin and sorrow.

One of those provisions was in the institution of marriage, between the man and the woman. In this union, they were blessed first by the natural benefits which each could supply to the other and also the means whereby they could produce children after their own kind to populate the earth and thus in time to see the HEIR of all things, and their DELIVERER, brought forth from the womb of HIS mother. Then according to the same mercy to behold the CREATOR of the worlds and the SAVIOR of HIS people, as an infant of days, wrapped in swaddling clothes. What great blessing was visited upon humanity, that such a ONE as this should walk in their midst, healing their diseases and relieving the downtrodden.

Yet an even, greater blessing is manifested to those whom HE has given faith; thus revealing HIMSELF to be the SAVIOR of all of those who believe. So are all of HIS blessings poured out upon the household of faith who are HIS followers even as HE said, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me"* (John 10:27)

While mankind in general has benefited greatly from the institution of marriage between men and women, an even greater blessing is set forth when we are given to see the actual purpose of marriage which is revealed by HIS SPIRIT. After describing the roles that the husband and the wife are to fulfill, Paul then sets forth the true reason that marriage was given, *"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."* (Eph 5:31-32)

The LORD has used the institution of marriage as a means to illustrate the relationship which HE has with HIS bride, the Church, which is HIS elect, HIS beloved, the object of HIS everlasting love. As such she is precious to HIM and all that HE has done as the REDEEMER and SAVIOR has been for her benefit alone.

Thus when Paul instructs Timothy concerning the qualifications of those who would be set apart as elders or bishops in the various churches, he says that they are to be *"the husband of one wife."* The reason for this is to emphasize by way of illustration; that specific and solitary relationship which the LORD has with HIS bride.

Polygamy was a somewhat common practice (even as it is today in some places) among some of the people that Paul and Timothy preached the gospel to, baptizing disciples and establishing churches in CHRIST's name. Yet those who are to be examples to the flock (see I Pet.5:3) must not be polygamous, else they could not teach (by example) the relationship which CHRIST has to HIS chosen Bride.

JESUS CHRIST is the HUSBAND of one wife. To her only is given HIS love. For her only did HE suffer, bleed, and die on Calvary's cross. CHRIST's love is not divided among many wives, but is specific and particular to that one wife which he loves with an everlasting love.

It is impossible to rightly teach the purpose of HIS redemptive work, apart from teaching the particular nature of that work. CHRIST came into the world, not to attempt the salvation of all men, but rather to accomplish the full and free redemption of that Bride which HE loved from before the foundation of the world. Thus the instruction was given to Joseph by the angel, *"Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* (Mat 1:21)

Having accomplished her redemption, the prophet says that HE is pleased. *"He shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."* (Isa 53:10-11)