

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XV

Issue 11

*Published occasionally for Zion's mourners*

*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*

---

## HAVE YOU BELIEVED IN VAIN?

*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*

*I Corinthians 15:1-2*

The LORD raised Paul up to be an Apostle and equipped him with the necessary gifts he needed to perform the very task which the LORD ordained him for. The LORD always prepares those messengers whom HE sends as well as preparing those whom HE gives ears to hear the message which HE is pleased to send. Thus we are given the letters of Paul to the various churches and individuals which form a large portion of the New Testament scriptures.

These letters are not just general thoughts which are put out in some random fashion for whoever may come along and read them but are specific words which are sent for particular persons. Now it is true that Paul had a particular people in mind when he wrote them, yet the LORD had a much greater audience in mind when HE sent them. Thus while Paul wrote to specific churches and individuals, the LORD designed the whole body of Paul's work for the benefit of all of those whom HE would be pleased to give faith in all ages.

While the eons of time have not ceased to progress, and many situations have arisen which are not specifically addressed in these letters, yet the truth which changes not is designed to meet the exact needs of all of GOD's children in all ages. Many, supposed teachers, have come along over time and tried to tell us, that the sons of GOD need new revelations and explanations of truth which are relevant to these more modern and enlightened times. Yet the fact is that the very same basic truth which the LORD gave to the apostle Paul, is the exact message which is to be declared in all ages and never ceases to be relevant to those who are given ears to hear.

Paul was a very learned man, even sitting at the feet of Gamaliel, who was one of the premier teachers of the Jewish law in his time. Thus Paul had a very analytical mind and was skilled in setting forth his premise and his conclusion. Yet the power of Paul's declaration was not in his skill nor in his learning, but rather in the power of the HOLY GHOST who is able to apply the truth which he proclaimed unto those whom the LORD is pleased to cause to hear and believe.

Having said that, let us be absolutely clear about this, that what Paul declared were the unequivocal facts concerning the life, death, and resurrection of JESUS CHRIST. He never strayed from this message, and all of his exhortations and admonitions, to the sons of GOD, stem from his unwavering confidence in that TRUTH and his belief that GOD's people cannot be encouraged by any other message nor can their lives be enhanced by the requirements of law and duty, however presented.

Paul says, "if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." Many look at this verse as though Paul is exhorting the saints to stir themselves up to faith, lest they be found to have not believed strongly enough and thus "believed in vain". Not quite making the grade and ultimately being lost as a result.

This is not at all what he is saying. Rather he is reminding them of that Gospel which he preached and the basis of truth, upon which their hopes were built, which if those things which he preached and they believed were not so, then their faith would indeed be in vain. His point is that there must be a basis upon which a man's faith rests and this is the gospel he preached and they believed. This is the exact same thing which he declared in the book of Romans when he said, "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom 10:14)

He goes on to build his case for the certainty of the resurrection of CHRIST as being the very basis upon which the whole gospel as the Corinthians had come to believe it rested upon, but some had raised questions about. "*But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (1Cor 15:13-17)*

So we must ask ourselves this question. Have we believed in vain? True faith is not measured on the basis of how sincere a person may be in what they believe. It is not measured by how long they have believed it, nor does it matter how many people may believe it. That faith which is "in vain" is faith which does not rest solidly upon an incontrovertible foundation.

This is that of which Paul speaks when he says; "*I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand." (1Cor 15:1)* That which he declared is the absolute truth of JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified, buried, risen from the dead and ascended back to the FATHER, apart from which no man has any basis upon which to stand. This is the "*faith of CHRIST*" upon which the life which we now live in the flesh rests and in which we are now encouraged and blessed. (see Gal.2:20)

Paul defines this "*faith*" in the rest of this 15 Chapter of I Corinthians, but he gives a synopsis of it in verses 3 and 4, as he reminds them of exactly what he preached to them, night and day.

He says "*I delivered unto you---that which I also received*". Paul was a faithful preacher of the gospel, because he never lost sight of the SOURCE from which all of his knowledge and understanding came. How much in contrast this is to the present day when men have great regard to a man's education and oratorical skills, in the matter of preaching. Paul had no regard to such and confessed that "*by the grace of God I am what I am*" (1Cor 15:10)

Then he clarifies the truth that he received "*how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.*" It is important that we rest in the fact of CHRIST's death as we read in the scriptures. Yet many have "believed in vain" because they have disregarded or counted as not being of great importance the "how" of HIS redemptive work. CHRIST died for our sins as a MEDIATOR and SUBSTITUTE. Multitudes will soon gather on the day which is designated as Easter Sunday by the religious world. Lip service will be paid concerning HIS crucifixion and resurrection. Yet such will largely be "in vain" because no mention will be made of the fact that HIS death and offering for sin was for a particular people. No declaration will be made of the fact that HE has obtained eternal redemption for that particular people, satisfying the law completely in their behalf. Men will be satisfied to be told that they can partake of this redemptive work by an action of their own free will, and they will believe in vain in a general work of atonement which saves none.

He continues his litany of the truth which he declared to them saying, "*And that he was buried.*" It is important to note this fact to prove two things. One is that HIS death was real and not a ruse. The other is to prove that HE walked in human flesh and was tempted (i.e.; tested) in all points like as we are. HE became acquainted with the grave in order to triumph over it.

Which HE did, as Paul continues, "*and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.*" (1Cor 15:4) The rest of this chapter is devoted to contending for this vital truth, which cannot be disregarded or modified lest men depart from the faith once delivered to the saints and become those who have no basis upon which their faith could rest. "*And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*" (1Cor 15:17) Have you believed in vain? mam