

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

THE GOSPEL WHICH IS NOT AFTER MAN

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

Galatians 1:11

There is an old conundrum which asks, "which came first the chicken or the egg?" Of course anyone who has even a small knowledge of the scriptural record of creation understands the folly of such human reason, since HE who made the worlds out of nothing, created the chicken, immediately, just exactly like HE intended it to be and not by some natural process which is easily recognizable and acceptable to men..

There are some who claim to believe that the LORD created the earth and all living creatures over a long period of time through the process of evolution. Such a line of reasoning denies the plain truth of the scriptural record, and is but an attempt to reconcile the theories of man with that unchanging record.

Such theories are designed by (often well meaning) men who would desire to make the scriptural record more palatable to the natural thinking of men. Thus they would seek to have a mixture of the science (falsely so called; see I Tim.6:20) of the worldly wise with the revealed truth of the scriptures. In so doing they wind up denying both and only proving the confusion and rebellion that is in the heart of man by nature.

Any child can be taught the truth of the scriptural record of creation by the hand of an Absolute CREATOR. That some men hold onto to this fragment of truth is not, in itself, remarkable. In fact a man actually has to deny his own personal observations of the intricacies of the world around him in order to deny the work of creation by a Sovereign GOD. (see Rom.1:19,20)

Yet while a man can be taught the "facts" of such a "creation", it is only by grace that this same man can be brought to embrace the glory which surrounds his CREATOR and to bow before HIM as he worships in SPIRIT and TRUTH. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews stated it like this, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." (Heb 11:3) This "faith" is the gift of GOD and cannot be arrived at by natural reason or understanding. *"Ye must be born again."*

That man who is taught this truth by the LORD does not need the explanations of creation set forth by natural men, nor can he be caused to deny this truth which the LORD is pleased to write upon his heart. He cannot be made to believe it more than he already does by visiting monuments and displays or by hearing debates which are designed for that purpose. Such displays can certainly be of benefit in the natural sense, but have nothing at all to do with true faith which is communicated to men solely by the operation of the SPIRIT of GOD upon them.

It is with this principle firmly upon our minds that we look at this truth which is set forth by the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, as he tells them the origin of that truth, known as the Gospel, which he has declared unto them. *"that gospel which was preached of me, is not after man."*

The true Gospel (there are many false gospels, but only one true one) springs from ONE SOURCE. Paul says that he did not confer with men concerning it, (see v.16) but rather received

it by the “*revelation of JESUS CHRIST*” (see v.12) Now surely he is speaking of his own personal experience as an appointed “apostle”, yet every man who has ever received any understanding of the Gospel, has gotten it from the exact same SOURCE. The LORD does indeed use human instrumentality in the declaration of the gospel, but all knowledge of it and the calling thereto comes directly from HIM who is the AUTHOR and FINISHER of our FAITH.

This gospel is not “*after man*” in the fact that the primary purpose of preaching it, is not the salvation or benefit of mankind, but rather to testify of the glory of the grace of the blessed GOD who sent HIS only begotten SON into the world to redeem HIS people, justifying them in the sight of the law. HE will have glory in this redemption. “*To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*” (Eph 1:6-7)

This gospel is not “*after man*” in the fact that the gospel of HIS grace, as HE is pleased to make it known, is completely at odds with the natural man and his worldly religious pursuits. By nature men are convinced that they can choose to follow the way of GOD by an action of their “free-will”, and by their own efforts, cause HIM to take notice of them.

Thus the natural man will grow angry and rebel against the truth of GOD’s sovereign and unconditional election of a people in CHRIST. The natural man judges the sovereign prerogative of GOD to show mercy to whom HE will, and to harden whom HE will as being “unfair” and “unjust”. Shall not the GOD of all the Earth do right? “*Who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?*” (Rom 9:20-21)

This gospel is not “*after man*”, in the fact that HE shows mercy to the undeserving and those who do not measure up to the standards which men regard as being worthy of HIS favor. The LORD JESUS said, “*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*” (Luke 5:32) Man in his natural religious state (as manifested by the older brother in the parable of the prodigal son) desires to raise a certain standard of moral behavior which would make a man to be accepted before the LORD. If such were the case who among us could stand? We are made to confess with Paul and rejoice as he said, “*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.*” (1Tim 1:15) “*If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*” (Psa 130:3-4)

This gospel is not “*after man*” in the fact that the SUBJECT of this gospel is a STONE OF STUMBLING to the natural man. While man is in natural revolt against the laws and precepts of GOD, his greatest point of rebellion is seen in his hatred of CHRIST JESUS. “*As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence.*” (Rom 9:33)

The natural religious tendencies of men cause some of them to pay lip service to HIM, but in reality they will not have this MAN to rule over them. They will observe times and seasons in supposed worship of HIM, but they receive not the love of the TRUTH that they might be saved.

By nature they deny that HE is the true and living GOD and that no man can come to the FATHER except through HIM. They will often have regard and respect unto other religious persuasions as alternative paths of service to GOD. Yet the LORD was quite clear that it is impossible that any man could know or approach unto GOD apart from declaring that JESUS CHRIST is ONE with the FATHER. To believe the gospel is not simply to endorse HIS moral teachings, but rather is to see HIS glory and embrace HIS LORDSHIP as Peter confessed, “*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.*” (John 6:68) That man who believes the gospel despises and rejects any other ground of hope but that which he finds in CHRIST.

This gospel is not “*after man*” in the fact that its triumph and success in no way rests upon the ability and action of those who are by grace its recipients. “*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) “*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*” (John 10:27)

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