

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

WHERE IS HE?

Knowest thou not this of old, since man was placed upon earth, That the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a moment? Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds; Yet he shall perish for ever like his own dung: they which have seen him shall say, Where is he?

Job 20:4-7

I knew a fellow who was fond of saying, "even a blind hog can find an acorn every now and then." He was being descriptive of the fact that sometimes even those who have little spiritual understanding can speak the truth, even though they might make a misapplication of it or fail to see the forest for the trees. The LORD used the Pharisees to point this truth out upon more than one occasion.

One instance that comes readily to mind is regarding the subject of "tithing". HE said, "*But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.*" (Luke 11:42) HE did not condemn them for tithing, but rather making a big deal out of it while ignoring far more weighty matters which the Kingdom of GOD is concerned with.

Another is as HE taught HIS disciples concerning prayer, using the Pharisees as an example of praying for the wrong reason. "*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.*" (Mat 6:6)

The one which stands out most starkly was when they brought to HIM the woman taken in adultery. They were exactly correct in stating what the law said. This woman was indeed worthy of death by stoning. Yet HE (being the LAWGIVER; see Rom. 2:13-15) made full application of the law to each one of them, and they went away smitten in conscience like a dog with its tail between its legs slinking back in their darkness.. HE then used this incident (which they intended to showcase the law of GOD) to demonstrate HIS mercy to this fallen sinner who had no excuse and felt the just condemnation of the law. (see Rom. 7: 10-12) Only the LORD can bring a clean thing out of an unclean and use justice as an occasion to show mercy.

Thus we read Zophar's declaration to Job.(which comprises chapter 20) Now indeed, Zophar spoke much truth if we simply look at what he said out of the context in which he said it. Zophar, however was in reality seeking to take Job down a notch, rather than simply glorying in that which upon its face value, one could not disagree with. His purpose in describing the end of the "hypocrite", was to accuse Job of being just such a man, and to explain to him that all of these calamities had come upon him because of this reason.

Had Zophar any true understanding, he would have spoken words of encouragement to Job, rather than loading him with condemnation. The reality is that those who are the greatest discoverers of "hypocrisy" in others are generally greater hypocrites in the process. Who among the sons of men, when illumined by the SPIRIT of GOD, would not confess to seeing his own hypocrisy on shameful display, whenever he is able to uncover it in someone else.

Of late we have had great examples of such in the political realm as many of our august "statesmen" adopt a "holier than thou" attitude as the sin of other politicians is brought out, by stinging accusations if not actual fact. Rather than weeping at the manifestation of sin, they see it as an opportunity to make gain for themselves, until the shoe is found to fit on their own foot,

and then they as quickly begin to make the same excuses which they earlier condemned. The more that I observe those in places of government in action the more I am convinced and reminded of the truth which Nebuchadnezzar proclaimed, *"That the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men."* (Dan 4:17)

Augustus Toplady said that "hypocrites are like dunghills covered with snow." (thanks DP) One may look at the white landscape and remark of its undulating beauty until the sun comes out and the snow melts away. Had Zophar merely been recounting the just desserts of wicked men and the certainty of the fact that all men must stand before the judgment of GOD, we should have had no reason to take issue with his claims.

The *"triumphing (i.e.; shouting) of the wicked"* may often be very loud, even as Zophar demonstrates. There is no shortage of those who have "spiritual advice" for the multitudes or of those who are adept at pointing out the failures of men, most especially in comparison to their particular standards of "holiness". *"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity."* (Mat 23:24-28)

The *"triumphing of the wicked"* is indeed short. As Job says, *"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."* (Job 14:1-2) The Psalmist said, *"For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told. The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."* (Psa 90:9-10) *"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: (Heb 9:27)*

The *"joy of the hypocrite"* is *"but for moment"* (i.e.; the blink of an eye). That very transgression which he accuses others of is often that which captures him. *"The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips"* (Pro 12:13) So does this then mean that there is never an occasion for rebuke or instruction in righteousness? Not at all, but those who would do so, must first consider their own weakness and the propensity of the flesh to excuse oneself while accusing others (see Rom. 2:15) *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted (i.e.; to self-righteousness) Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."* (Gal 6:1-2)

David said, *"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"* (Psa 8:3-4) Is this not that very question we read here in Job, *"Where is he?"*

Man has no standing with GOD. The moralists and humanists of the world opine that man has some great intrinsic value which in essence requires GOD to take notice of him and to reward him for the good things which he does. But, the only thing which is "owed" to man, is his destruction, according to the dictates of that holy law, which says; *"the wages of sin is death."* The LORD will indeed meet that payroll and all shall step up to the window to receive that which is his.

That would be the end of a very sad and calamitous story were it not for the grace and enduring mercy of HIM who saves sinners from the dunghill. For the sweet and wonderful sound of the gospel of the glory of the Blessed GOD, informs us that there is ONE who has stepped up to the head of the line, *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man (i.e.; those for whom HE has stood as a SUBSTITUTE.)* (Heb 2:9)

HE has gladly received that "reward" of death and the grave in the behalf of an undeserving rabble of hypocrites, profligates, and religious pretenders. Now when the question is asked, "where is HE", we reply, *"And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* (Php 2:8-11) mam