

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

RAGING, MOVING, AND MELTING

The heathen raged, the kingdoms were moved: he uttered his voice, the earth melted. Psalm 46:6

The LORD revealed HIS true identity to HIS disciples on a gradual basis even though HE hid nothing from them; teaching them plainly of the establishment of HIS kingdom and HIS mastery over all things. We see an illustration of this when HE was sleeping in the ship and a storm arose, tossing the ship to and fro as his disciples began to fear greatly for their safety. HE was aroused from HIS slumber by their fearful pleadings. HIS first words to them were a rebuke for their fearfulness and unbelief. Then HE commanded the wind and sea to *“be still”* and immediately there was calm. They marveled at what they had just seen; exclaiming, *“What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!”* (Mat 8:27)

By this time, they had already seen HIM turn water into wine, heal lepers, raise up Peter's mother-in-law, heal the centurion's servant without even entering his house. They had heard the testimony of John the Immerser saying *“Behold the LAMB of GOD which taketh away the sin of world.”* They had listened to HIM preach the gospel of HIS kingdom in HIS sermon on the mount. Yet they still did not know exactly who HE is. They knew that HE was a MAN from Galilee and were moved to follow HIM, by a power they did not fully comprehend, but they still were amazed and wondered as to HIS true identity. For they were as intrigued by the fact that HE could sleep in the midst of such life threatening conditions as they were that HE calmed the elements.

They were much like the woman whom the LORD met at the well in Samaria. She was puzzled when HE (being a Jew) asked her (a Samaritan) for a drink of water. She did not know that HE had designed all of the events which preceded and led to HIS appointment with her, nor that HE sought her (specifically) out of all the inhabitants of Samaria. Then HE told her, *“If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.”* (John 4:10) She was indeed ignorant of who HE is, yet HE persisted in the conversation, for HE would bring light into her life.

She left that meeting and went back into the city saying *“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”* (John 4:29) She was given some knowledge of HIS prophetic office as she said, *“Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.”* (John 4:19) She also had some understanding of HIS being the CHRIST. Yet she was not yet aware that HE is much more than a PROPHET or that HIS office as the MESSIAH exceeded any understanding of what she or others expected that the MESSIAH would accomplish.

For at the very end of HIS earthly ministry among HIS disciples, even they asked HIM, *“Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?”* (Acts 1:6) This was much akin to the bewilderment of John as he languished in Herod's prison and sent emissaries to ask HIM *“Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?”* (Mat 11:3) They each had their preconceived notions of what the purpose was which CHRIST came to perform. They did not know exactly who HE is nor did they fully comprehend HIS redemptive work nor the nature of HIS Kingdom, which is not of flesh and blood.

Yet perhaps the chief place of their blindness was in being unable to behold HIM, not simply as a MAN with great wisdom and power, but as the ABSOLUTE GOD who rules and reigns in the heavens, the earth, and all regions beyond. We see their lack of understanding, illustrated for us in Phillip's unmet desire, *“Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.”*

(John 14:8), as if HE had not done so, already. The LORD responded to Phillip with a specifically poignant reply, *"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?"* (John 14:9) This was not clarified in their minds until the day of Pentecost as Peter, led by the SPIRIT of GOD testified, *"This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."* (Act 2:32-36)

Thus we see Peter speaking with an even greater revelation than that which was given to him when he testified, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."* (Mat 16:16) For while his fervor was no less when he said those words, his understanding was much greater when he declared these words to the whole nation of Israel, gathered in Jerusalem. Not many days hence he would declare the sovereign power of this same JESUS as the lame man was healed at his command, *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk."* (Acts 3:6)

We rejoice in a consideration of HIS HUMANITY, each time we remember HIS death until HE comes again. But it is because HE has also taught us of HIS absolute DIVINITY, that we are made to rejoice at the consideration of HIS resurrection and all of the benefits which have been bestowed upon that people which HE has loved from the beginning as its result. HE has indeed led captivity captive and given gifts unto men, all of which are dependent on HIS REDEMPTIVE work as a perfect MAN. But HE is able to fulfill HIS promise because HE is the Eternal GOD of all that is or shall ever be and has demonstrated HIS sovereign prerogative by the ordination of wicked men to carry out HIS determinate purpose. (see Acts 2:23)

The Psalmist speaks of the raging of the wicked men of this world. Each one acts according to his nature and pursues the lusts of his own flesh and is thereby without excuse before the GREAT JUDGE of all the Earth. Even as we read of Pharaoh who hardened his heart and would not let the children of Israel go out of Egypt. Or in the same wicked flesh, descended from Adam, was Judas moved by his own seditious, selfish, and unfaithful nature to betray the LORD JESUS CHRIST into the hands of HIS captors, for the sum of thirty pieces of silver.

While the "heathen rage", the LORD is the MOVER of all things and the intent of wicked men is designed by HIM who works all things after the good pleasure of HIS will. *"Surely the wrath (i.e. evil intent) of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."* (Psa 76:10) Thus we read that the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart having raised HIM up for the very purpose of demonstrating HIS power over the wicked and HIS mercy to the sons of GOD. (see Rom.9:17-18)

Did HE not direct the steps of Judas from the beginning and was not the price of the LORD's betrayal set before Judas ever drew HIS first breath. But did not the LORD rightly bring him to judgment for his wickedness. *"The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."* (Mat 26:24) *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."* (Jer 10:23)

Not only does the Psalmist speak of HIM as the MOVER but also as the "MELTER". *"he uttered his voice, the earth melted."* The thought that immediately comes to mind is Peter's description of the coming of the LORD in the final day, *"But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."* (2Pet 3:10)

Yet I do not think this fiery conflagration is exactly what the Psalmist had in mind. The context would lead me to conclude that he is speaking of the fact that the earth is "molten" in HIS hands to shape and fashion it and all that transpires therein exactly according to HIS purpose, whether it be the raging of the heathen or the events which must align in order that HE might demonstrate HIS mercy to those whom HE loves. (see Rom.8:28)

HE said of HIS chosen, *"For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee."* (Isa 54:10) *"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."* (Isa 54:17) mam