

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

A GREAT TRANSFORMATION

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. *John 16:20*

Everyone loves a “rags to riches” story. A tale of the success of a man (whether fact or fiction) who has long been hindered and then finally triumphs at the last warms the heart of those who have felt the angst of defeat and suffered through many of life’s set backs. If the main characters in these stories could have foreseen their ultimate triumph, then they (perhaps) would not have endeavored as hard to attain their goals, and in the human scheme of things, might not have achieved the end for which they labored. So even in these scenarios we can clearly see the necessity of trial and the enhanced benefit of delayed gratification.

When the LORD deals with HIS children, HE works in them; both to will and to do; of HIS good pleasure. While HE is their PERFORMER in all things, HE performs HIS perfect work in their consciousness and they are exercised by those things which HE is pleased to perform. For instance, when HE causes them to pray, they are not in an unconscious state but rather are moved in the depths of their heart and mind to cry out to HIM who alone is able to meet their needs. David most surely would not have poured out his heart unto the LORD (in Psalm 51) had the LORD not wrought within him a work of repentance as HE revealed to David the depths of his depravity, and caused him to fear being cast away from HIS presence.

Thus David prayed, with the SPIRIT, and also with his understanding. (see I Cor.14:15) He was not simply carried along like a mindless leaf blown to and fro by the wind. When Paul was beaten with many stripes, he actually felt each blow, and each one was ordained by the LORD, even as his “thorn in the flesh” to bring about the desired purpose of humbling him and teaching him that the LORD’s grace is sufficient and that it is by our weakness that HIS strength is made manifest. In turn we are strengthened thereby as we read in Hebrews “*Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*” (Heb 12:11) (see Heb.5:14)

The LORD could have created man in any fashion which HE chose, but in order to magnify the glory of HIS grace and to manifest HIS mercy towards that people which HE loved in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world, HE created the world and mankind to be as we see them. HE could have given HIS children complete knowledge of the nature of HIS Kingdom and have unfolded HIS purpose completely to each one from the very beginning, but that is not what we see revealed in the scripture that HE chose to do.

Rather, HE has given, small amounts of knowledge, to HIS people, (over the course of time) concerning the revelation of HIS Kingdom and HIS redemptive work in the behalf of its subjects. “*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*” (Rom 15:4). The knowledge of that HOPE which we have presently been given is much clearer than the knowledge of that same HOPE which was given to the saints in ancient times. “*Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was*

revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.” (1Pet 1:10-12)

We can safely say that the saints of GOD who have been born since the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST, following HIS crucifixion on Calvary’s tree, are the most blessed people to ever have lived in this world. Those who are alive in these “*last days*”, are not struggling to discover the hidden things of HIS Kingdom, for HE has plainly delivered HIS TRUTH to HIS church. “*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Heb 1:1-3)*

The “*mystery of GODLINESS*” which was kept hidden from the beginning of the world is now made known, and we await no further “*revelation*”. “*But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.” (1Cor 2:7-10)*

The deep things of GOD are made manifest in the gospel of JESUS CHRIST which Paul and the rest of the Apostles declared, having been eyewitnesses of HIS MAJESTY. This is that same gospel which is preached today by those who are sent by HIM for this purpose. “*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” (1Tim 3:16)* If any man preach something else, then he is a deceiver and is most surely not one who can give further revelations or unfold prophecies and other hidden messages. Paul summed it up when he determined to preach no other message, “*but JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified.”*

The disciples of the LORD walked with HIM for approximately three years, during which time HE taught them many valuable lessons about HIS Kingdom and the life to which the sons of GOD are called. Yet they were still in many ways wandering in darkness for it did not please HIM to reveal to them the glory that would soon follow, which HE speaks of here in John 16:20. HE had spoken to them of HIS crucifixion and HIS resurrection but they could not grasp the full meaning thereof. HE knew that the days were coming when they would be greatly saddened by HIS death, but HE also knew that HE would yet appear unto them in the upper room and their fears and sadness would be assuaged, “*weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” (Psa 30:5)*

Even then, they were still greatly of the mindset that if HE was indeed the MESSIAH (of which they seemed to have little doubt) then HE would deliver them from Roman oppression and establish in Israel, a kingdom of flesh and blood. We know this by the questions they asked at HIS ascension, and the thoughts expressed by those travelers on the road to Emmaus.

HE told them that such things were not given for them to know but that they would receive “*power*” unlike anything they had known heretofore and when this occurred they would be filled with an abundance of joy which would cause them to declare the unsearchable riches of CHRIST as the SAVIOR of sinners. “*But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8)*

This was brought to fruition not many days hence as the day of Pentecost was fully come and HE caused men to hear the TRUTH of GOD in their own tongue, as HE empowered Peter to boldly declare the gospel of JESUS CHRIST. Indeed “*their sorrow was turned to joy.”*

While we await no “*revelations*” of TRUTH concerning JESUS CHRIST we are yet privileged to expect to experience an even greater joy than that which we have known in the present time. As the apostle says, “*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” (1Cor 13:12)* The fullness of joy that awaits the sons of GOD when they shall stand in HIS bodily presence, shall eclipse all joys we may have experienced in this world. All of the trials which have beset us in this lowland of sin and sorrow shall be forgotten as HE wipes away our tears, and the former things are forgotten. For indeed, HE who sits upon the throne says, “*Behold, I make all things new.” (Rev 21:5)* mam