

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XVI

Issue 21

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

A BRASS FENCE

And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall: and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD.

Jeremiah 15:20

Jeremiah is often called the weeping prophet. For the LORD sent him to bear witness of HIS truth to a nation (Israel) which was stiff-necked, disobedient, and unwilling to heed the warnings of their own impending destruction. The nation of Israel is typical of those who embrace outward religion and are content to walk in their own ways, relying upon the traditions which they are comfortable with. Though Israel (as a nation) is often identified as the "people of GOD", it is also true that the LORD ordained their downfall, "*For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.*" (Rom 9:6-8)

In order to differentiate between those who are the "*children of the promise*" and those who are the "*children of the flesh*", the LORD makes it clear that HE has a "remnant" among the sons of men (even the nation of Israel as well as the Gentiles) who alone shall be saved, according to HIS divine purpose. This "remnant" shall be saved while the multitude shall perish in everlasting destruction. Not one among those that perish can accuse GOD of not doing right, for they are all guilty and worthy of death, and HIS justice demands satisfaction.

That "remnant" which HE is pleased to deliver are equally worthy of death, but, according to HIS mercy and grace, alone, they are granted life. Not a one among them can discover any reason that they should not be destroyed with the multitude but must confess with Jeremiah, (who had a front row seat at this conflagration of Israel), "*It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.*" (Lam 3:22) As Robert Murray McCheyne penned these words, "When I hear the wicked call, on the rocks and hills to fall, when I see them start and shrink, on the fiery deluge brink, then LORD shall I fully know not till then how much I owe. Chosen not for good in me, wakened up from wrath to flee, hidden in the SAVIOR'S side by the SPIRIT sanctified, teach me LORD on Earth to show by my love, how much I owe."

So the LORD sent Jeremiah (as a lamb among wolves) to bear witness in his generation to that people which would not listen to his warnings and who despised his message and even his person. The LORD ordained him for this work before he was ever born. "*Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations.*" (Jer 1:5) Thus are those whom the LORD is pleased to send with the words of the "*everlasting Gospel*" (see Rev.14:6). A man cannot apply for this position, learn how to perform it, or get his commission for it from men. It is not bestowed upon the learned, dependent upon human ability, or entered into by free will, as Paul said, "*For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!*" (1Cor 9:16) A man thus called cannot do anything else but perform it. He is not to be exalted or patted on the back for he must simply do that for which he is sent into the earth, and he must preach the message with which he is sent. This is not a position, a professional career choice, or a part-time occupation, but a calling which cannot be escaped.

Therefore we see Jeremiah going forth to declare the truth to a people who would not listen to him. The LORD said that they were guilty, mainly of two things. *“For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”* (Jer 2:13) *“They have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.”* (Jer 1:16)

This is an apt description of the present day religious multitude which call themselves by the name of CHRIST. They have forsaken the absolute GOD (who reveals HIMSELF in the scriptures) in favor of a weak kneed deity who can do nothing without the cooperation and permission of men.

They have concocted a system and a so called gospel which makes a man's salvation to depend upon his willingness to receive it rather than the blood of CHRIST who with it redeemed for HIMSELF a bride which HE loved from the foundation of the world. This man centered and man reliant system is indeed a broken cistern which can hold no water. It only promises salvation to those who are able to gain it by their own activity and by a faith which they supposedly must bring to the LORD. and have designed their own means and methods of worshipping HIM. Yet the scripture tells us that HE saves the weak, the poor and blind among men. A man who can bring faith to the LORD does not stand in need of salvation.

On top of that they tell us that the salvation of men depends on the works of men to preach it to the multitudes and the money of men to send them forth to do that. They believe that many shall perish for whom CHRIST shed HIS precious blood. This is a travesty of thought and completely contrary to anything which can be discovered in the pages of the Bible. CHRIST said HE would lose none of those which were given to HIM by HIS FATHER. HE gives to them eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of HIS hand.

These broken cistern hewers tell us that it really doesn't matter what doctrine we preach as long as folks are "getting saved". The error in this thinking is that men do not "get saved." Salvation is a gift which is bestowed by GOD and not something which a man might obtain by his own effort. The awful part of a message which centers itself in what men need to do to "get saved" is that it robs the LORD of the glory which is due to HIS NAME (alone) as the SAVIOR of sinners, turning the whole matter of a man's salvation from that which the LORD obtains and applies into a cooperative effort between dead men and the LIVING GOD. The other terrible result is that multitudes are caused to rest in a false hope of salvation only to one day hear the LORD tell them to depart from HIM for HE never knew them.

The LORD's complete provision for HIS people is manifested in this promise that HE gave to Jeremiah as HE sent him among those who hated him and his message. HE told him that he would make him to be as a brass fence or wall which could not be broken, even though many should rise against him and even seek to overthrow him and his message. HIS promise of deliverance to Jeremiah is the same promise which comes to the sons of GOD through the LORD JESUS CHRIST. HE does not make the deliverance of Jeremiah to depend upon anything that he would perform nor any amount of faith which he might presume to possess.

Rather, the deliverance of Jeremiah and subsequently all of HIS elect, depends, only, on the promise which is given to JESUS CHRIST as the SUBSTITUTE and SAVIOR of HIS people. HE came into the world with the express purpose of being their SAVIOR and HE will not in any wise fail to accomplish exactly what HE purposed to do. *“For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”* (John 6:38-40)

Those who believe do so because of the promised deliverance and do not believe in order to participate in it. The LORD is the STRENGTH of HIS people and it is HIS work in them which causes them to be as a "fenced brasen wall" which cannot be scaled or breached by any but HE who designed it. *“The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.”* (Psa 110:2-3)

What a glorious truth we see revealed in this promise to Jeremiah. The gracious LORD who is full of mercy to all who call upon HIM does indeed cause HIS people to trust in HIM. HE is the GOOD SHEPHERD who watches over HIS sheep, calleth them by name, and provides pasture and shelter for each according to their needs. HE will never forsake them. mam