

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 SCOURGE, A CROWN, AND A ROBE

Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him. And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe, And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

John 19:1-3

The world, as it lies in the darkness of the curse due to Adam's sin, is in outward and inward rebellion against the GOD who rules the Heavens, the Earth, and hell. The judgment which is come upon mankind is because they preferred darkness to the LIGHT which manifested their sin. "And this is the condemnation (i.e. judgment), that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:19) They dwell in darkness because they reject the LIGHT and they reject the LIGHT because they are in darkness due to the fact that they are dead in trespasses and sin and have no means whereby to extract themselves from this dilemma.

Those who are proponents of "free will" ignore this dilemma and act as though men can remedy their own situation. Any man who has ever been taught by the SPIRIT of GOD, the depths of his need, knows this to be true (i.e.; that he cannot even embrace the LIGHT apart from the mercy of GOD visited upon him), even when he may be instructed otherwise. This is exactly what the LORD said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." (John 6:44) "Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." (John 6:65) "Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word." (John 8:43) "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." (John 3:7)

John goes on to speak of this situation, in his first Epistle, pointing out the contrast between those who are made the recipients of the LORD's grace and those who yet perish in their sin, "And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1John 5:19-20) This "understanding" is the difference between those who embrace CHRIST and those who continue on in their own way, most especially their own religious darkness which they hold to tightly with little if any honest scrutiny as to truth. This was manifested most clearly in the Jews who went about to establish their own righteousness while, roundly crying out, "crucify HIM."

We are certain that the betrayal, suffering, and crucifixion of the LORD JESUS CHRIST was ordained (i.e.; predestined) to occur. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God: ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." (Acts 2:23). We also see that it was carried out by wicked men who unwittingly fulfilled the exact will and purpose of the very GOD which they despised. By this we learn two things: (1) Whatever the LORD wills to occur shall be done in the Earth as it is purposed in Heaven; and that even the wicked actions of men are ordained to fulfill that purpose which can in no wise be altered. (2) The wickedness of men and their innate hatred of HIS rule and glory will be demonstrated and wicked

men will always act according to their nature apart from the restraining grace of GOD. *“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” (Psa 76:10)*

Men often look upon acts of extreme cruelty which they see around them, (such as these senseless shootings which have recently occurred) and wonder why someone would do such things. Yet seldom do they pause to consider that such activity is actually in keeping with the nature of men, and that the fact that this is not more commonplace is simply a testament to the restraining grace of a merciful GOD. Every man, if left to himself would do far worse. Through such events the LORD would remind us of the wicked imaginations which are in all of us who are born of Adam’s race. Most will grow angry when such a truth as this is set forth as they consider themselves too “righteous” to do such a thing. *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer 17:9) “How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinketh iniquity like water?” (Job 15:16) “For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” (Mat 15:19)*

Never has the wickedness of men and the righteousness of GOD, ever been put on clearer display than when the spotless LAMB of GOD was roughly and unjustly taken, cruelly treated, and ultimately subjected to a most barbaric form of execution to the delight of the onlookers who demanded HIS crucifixion and would be satisfied with nothing less than HIS humiliation and death.

Nothing can mitigate their guilt. No good reason could be brought forth as to why this gentle MAN who went about doing nothing but good, should be treated so. They are without excuse, and we too would have joined with them except that the LORD had kept us from it. *“He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.” (Isa 53:3)* Yet all the while these tormentors gladly pursued HIS destruction, due to their wicked and dark hearts, their every action was ordained by HIM who sent HIS only BEGOTTEN SON into the world to obtain eternal redemption for that people whom HE loved with an everlasting love.

Every lash of that whip which tore at HIS flesh and caused HIS blood to pour from HIS wounds, was numbered according to the predestined purpose of GOD. *“But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.” (Isa 53:5)* None eye did pity HIM, for even HIS FATHER whose chief delight was in HIS SON, could not look upon HIM as HE became sin for us. O dear friend; pause and consider HIM who would be both just and the JUSTIFIER of that people which HE gave to HIS SON in the eternal covenant of redemption.

They platted a “crown of thorns”, and placed it upon HIS head, mockingly calling HIM a king as they brought forth a “purple robe” (a sign of royalty). What they meant as a means of disdain testifies against them as HE has been revealed as the KING of kings and LORD of lords. Their humiliation of HIM is actually HIS glory as HE came to bear witness of the TRUTH. They mockingly called HIM a king, yet that crown of thorns which caused HIM great pain, was ordained to manifest HIS victory over the powers of darkness as HE came into the very pit of hell and triumphed openly over all of HIS foes. No king, resplendent in a golden and jeweled diadem was ever surrounded with the glory which is HIS by virtue of HIS triumph; wearing a crown of suffering for those HE came to save. *“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” (1Pet 3:18)*

This “purple robe” was a temporary covering for HIM which they did not intend that HE should wear, for they stripped HIM of it exposing HIS nakedness to the world. Adam and Eve, sought to cover themselves with fig leaves in a futile attempt to hide their shame. The LORD in mercy clothed them with the skins of animals. Yet none did cover the LORD JESUS as HE hung naked and bare before the LORD as a stark reminder of the manner in which all men shall stand before HIM who judges the living and the dead. HE was judged a guilty man, taking upon HIMSELF the sin and imperfection of HIS elect bride, that she might be covered with HIS perfection and righteousness. *“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2Cor 5:21)*

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