

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XVIII

Issue 37

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

PRESUMPTION

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. Deuteronomy 18:20

We live in a day when men speak of faith as if it is a commodity which all men possess and exercise according to the dictates of their own free will. Carnival barkers masquerading as "gospel preachers", seek to stir up men to "have faith", "demonstrate faith", and especially "sow seeds of faith" which is a catchword used to extort money from those easily duped by their banter and deceptions. These are those who are described by the LORD in Deuteronomy 18:20.

These "*prophets of Baal*", would "presume" to speak in the NAME of the LORD, and many who hear them "presume" that they are sent by GOD, since they are looking for excitement and entertainment, rather than the soul searching and flesh withering work of the HOLY GHOST. (see Luke 3:16,17; Zech 13:9) Many modern day churches are like the marketplace of Athens where men gathered to "*tell, or to hear some new thing.*" (Acts 17:21) They presume that such things as they desire must be those things which the LORD is pleased to give them.

They "presume" that the LORD must need their money to enable HIM to accomplish HIS work, just as they presume that HE needs men to perform the same. Because they presume that HE has HIS own limitations and can only do what men will let HIM do. They presume that the LORD is "trying" to teach them things if they will just listen and give HIM permission to lead them in the path which they presume they are able to devise.

The Hebrew word which is translated as "presume" and "presumptuously" in the KJV literally means to be "insolent; or to deal proudly". Pride is at the root of "presumption"; as men value their own thoughts above the TRUTH. Paul struck a blow at the very base upon which men might take pride in their "knowledge". "*And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.*" (1Cor 8:2) The context of his admonition is that many of the Corinthians, rejoicing in their freedom in CHRIST, thought nothing of eating meat sacrificed in pagan rites of worship, for they had no regard to the idols to which these offerings were being made. Indeed, they had that freedom, for no food or drink in this world is unclean of itself to those who are set free from the law of sin and death by the law of the SPIRIT of LIFE in CHRIST JESUS. (see Rom.14:14)

Yet, they presumed, that because they could eat this meat without bringing themselves into condemnation, that it was therefore fine for them to indulge their own desire. Yet Paul pointed out that this was a false presumption, since the first concern that they should have had as to the indulgence of their freedom, was to consider how this might affect their weaker brethren who might not have as clear a view of these matters and might be emboldened to have some consideration of the idols to which this meat was being offered. In all things therefore we are to seek wisdom from the LORD that we might be led to use the knowledge that HE has given us in a godly fashion and not to consume it upon our own lusts even as James warns of praying amiss.

Presumption has been the downfall of man since the beginning as Eve, while being deceived, nonetheless presumed to listen to the lies of Satan. Adam presumed that she was probably right and that they would surely be better off with the knowledge of good and evil than without it. Cain presumed to bring an offering to the LORD of the labor of his own hands. He presumed the LORD would be pleased with him and his offering. He presumed he was justified in being angry with the LORD's favor shown to Abel.

Once again Paul admonishes the brethren concerning this very attitude which caused Cain to stumble. *"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself."* (Gal 6:3) *"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"* (1Cor. 4:7) When the LORD is pleased to apply this truth to the heart, then "presumption" is driven away for it has no basis upon which to stand.

There is a natural tendency in man to presume that he has the right and ability to call upon the LORD whenever he pleases and that the LORD is patiently and even expectantly waiting and hoping that he will do so. Most men "pray", (especially in times of distress and need), and presume that GOD hears them. Yet most of this "praying" is of the same sort which the Pharisee demonstrated. *"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess."* (Luke 18:11-12)

He presumed that GOD would be impressed with his tithing and acts of devotion, not to mention his holy living in comparison to extortioners and adulterers. He was blissfully unaware that even his "righteousnesses" were but dung in the sight of a HOLY GOD. By nature, men presume, that the LORD will reward them for doing what they presume are acts of great sacrifice and duty. Yet the LORD said, *"So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."* (Luke 17:10)

Men presume that there are many avenues through which a man might find a measure of acceptance and commendation from the LORD. Yet the scriptures are quite clear that there is but ONE WAY as the LORD admonished Thomas, *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* (John 14:6) Even many who have heard this message with their ears, presume that they can find this WAY by their own understanding and feel confident that they are in this WAY because of some confession which they have made.

Yet the LORD plainly said, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."* (John 6:44) True faith does not rely upon presumption but solely upon HIM who is the FAITH of GOD's elect. True faith, does not find comfort in its exercise, but rather in the ONE who is the FOUNDATION of that FAITH. Even as Peter confessed, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."* (John 6:68-69)

It is quite common in the present day for men to presume that CHRIST died for the sins of every individual upon the earth, since they read that HE loved *"the world"*. They presume that *"the world"* has reference to every single person in it. They will disregard the plain context of that which the LORD taught Nicodemus, as HE pointed out the LORD's determination to save men from every tribe and tongue in the earth.

When men presume that CHRIST died for the sins of every individual, they must of necessity accuse HIM of failing to secure the salvation of men by HIS redemptive work, since it is clear in the scriptures that not all men shall be saved. Thus, they presume that HE only made salvation a possibility and presume that men have the wherewithal to complete that work which CHRIST only attempted. Such "presumption" is that which denotes those false prophets which Moses records in Deuteronomy. To deny CHRIST's completed work of "obtaining eternal redemption" for HIS elect is to speak a lie, regardless of one's sincerity. It is to shatter the basis upon which a sinner might hope for SALVATION. Do you presume to know the TRUTH? Or are you like those noble Bereans, who searched the scriptures daily to see if these things were so? mam