

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XVIII

Issue 42

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

FABLES

For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. II Peter 1:16

Most people have probably heard of Aesop's Fables, which are a collection of symbolic stories designed to teach moral lessons. These "fables", (not all actually written by Aesop who was a story-teller while yet a slave in ancient Greece), have been handed down from one generation to the other. These "fables" do, in some measure, serve a useful purpose to reinforce various practical lessons of life.

The "fables" which Peter speaks of, however, are not designed to be helpful, but rather to turn the eyes of men away from the TRUTH. He says they are "*cunningly devised*". While Aesop's fables express some truth, these "*cunningly devised fables*", which Peter refers to, are designed to pander to the natural understanding and bent of men, and to soothingly encourage them to believe a lie. The word that is used here by Peter, literally means, "a tale of fiction, or a myth". Peter also describes Satan as a "*roaring lion---seeking whom he may devour.*" I Pet. 5:8.

The cunning nature of Satan is seen in his lie which deceived Eve into disregarding the plain commandment of the LORD. In showing the Jews why they did not believe HIS word, the LORD said, "*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*" (John 8:44)

While Satan may not be the direct cause of all of man's deceptions, he is nonetheless, quite busy in sowing the field with tares and does indeed mold and shape religious men into willing (and gullible) emissaries of many fables which take root in the fertile soil of the natural man's innate rebellion against the sovereign headship of CHRIST over all things. Satan does not need to dictate every error which is espoused by his emissaries, because, by their very nature they will embrace and declare those errors which seem right in their own eyes. "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*" (Prov 14:12)

This is why Peter says these fables are "*cunningly devised*". Satan knows the nature of men and uses it to his own (as he supposes) advantage. Paul was quite aware of his devices and warned about those who are duped into promoting these deceptions. "*For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.*" (2 Cor 11:13-15) These promoters of deceptions are those who Paul describes as: "*Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.*" (2Tim 3:5-8) Wherever a fable exists you will always find men who will promote it.

Now if we know that such "*cunningly devised fables*" do exist, and we know that there are willing and ready messengers waiting for the opportunity to deliver them, it would be wise for us to seek

to determine those "fables" and to identify those who would "lie in wait to deceive." *"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* (Eph 4:14-15)

One of the safeguards which the LORD has put in place for the benefit of HIS children is the local assembly where each part of the body is seeking to supply that which the body is in need of. This "ministry of the saints" (one to another) is that means whereby the saints are strengthened and encouraged in sound doctrine which helps each to identify the tellers of fables. *"Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted."* (1Cor 14:29-31) *"Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety."* (Prov 11:14)

The LORD warned HIS disciples of those deceptions which would come in the earth, *"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."* (Mat 24:24) Yet, HE also comforted them with the knowledge that those whom HE would guide into all truth would not be deceived.

The greatest and most "*cunningly devised fable*", that has been foisted upon the unsuspecting religious men of this world, is any message which does not have "*JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified*", as its only component. Any other message is superfluous and will ultimately lead men away from CHRIST to embrace numerous competing doctrines. Such superfluous doctrines are often prefaced with, "we believe in JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified, **BUT**." Ferrell Griswold said the goats are always, "butting". "*CHRIST is ALL*". All other doctrines are useless apart from the firm FOUNDATION of the redeeming work of CHRIST.

Another "*cunningly devised fable*" is that GOD loves every person in the Earth, with the same degree of love. This flies in the very face of the scripture which declares *"Jacob have I loved but Esau have I hated."* (Rom.9:13) The stark and simple truth that the LORD loves a particular people of HIS own choosing, forms the very basis of the purpose for which CHRIST came into the world as the REDEEMER. HE came to save that people which were given to HIM in the eternal covenant of redemption. For them HE prayed and died, *"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them."* (John 17:9-10) *"And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."* (Heb 9:15)

Yet another "*cunningly devised fable*" is that men have the ability to "have faith" as a function of their own will and choice. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* (Eph 2:8-9) To deny that faith is the gift of GOD, quite apart from any work of the will or flesh, is to deny the necessity of the redemptive work of CHRIST. To assert that by "having faith" as a product of his will, a man denies HIS need of CHRIST's work and/or HIS sovereign prerogative to show mercy to whom HE will.

Another "*cunningly devised fable*" is that we must wait for some future date to see the LORD sitting upon the throne of HIS kingdom. HE came into this world as the LION of the tribe of JUDAH with the specific purpose of saving HIS people from their sins. As a triumphant KING HE has made a show of all of HIS enemies openly. To think that HE must wait to occupy some Earthly throne, in order to be a King is to fail to see that HIS Kingdom is one of RIGHTEOUSNESS which HE has demonstrated by the redemption of those whom HE has loved with an everlasting love. *"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."* (Psa 2:6)

Another "*cunningly devised fable*" which Peter speaks directly of is to deny that HE alone is the REVELATION of GOD in the Earth *"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) CHRIST, alone, is the true MESSAGE and MESSENGER. mam