

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 TERRIBLE ARMY

*Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as an army with banners. Song of Solomon 6:4*

Natural man in his pride, presumes that every man is entitled to an opinion and that each one of those viewpoints are valid to a greater or lesser extent. Now there is a measure in which that may be true when comparing men (and/or women) among themselves. Yet even then it is easily recognizable that some have greater levels of expertise, knowledge, and understanding which renders their opinions to be of greater worth, or at least, a greater level of dependability of the accuracy of those sentiments. For instance, the opinion of a brain surgeon is of greater reliability when diagnosing head injuries than an automobile technician, while the technician's opinion is of far greater worth in diagnosing a miss in an engine than even the greatest surgeon.

The Bible is a book which records absolute TRUTH. No "opinions" carry any weight to alter or enhance that TRUTH. That TRUTH stands alone, and men are warned to neither add to nor take from it. (see Rev.22:18-19) This warning is quite often ignored by those who would seek to coerce men to follow them in their lies and subterfuge. *"As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction."* (2Pet 3:16) The LORD JESUS (who is the LIVING WORD) testified, *"In God I will praise his word, in God I have put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me. Every day they wrest my words: all their thoughts are against me for evil."* (Psa 56:4-5) This was graphically illustrated as the Pharisees (futilely) sought to confound HIM.

We live in an age when there is a proliferation of new "versions" of the scriptures, which are touted by their "authors" as being more readily and easily understood. Each one adds and takes away various words and phrases which are more to their liking. Some add in the thoughts and "explanations" of what various scriptures "mean" in the margins. They all assure us that their version is more "accurate" than the "antiquated" version which has been around for about four hundred years.

I would not desire to get into any debate about the merits of the KJV, nor would I presume it was not translated from other languages by fallible men. But there can never be any improvements on the TRUTH which is found in the Bible, nor can men "improve" it or enable men to "understand" it, since the TRUTH changes not and only the SPIRIT of GOD can grant to a man the "understanding" that is needful. No printing press can produce such a document, nor can any committee of "qualified" scholars enable men to lay hold upon the TRUTH of GOD. *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (1Cor 2:14)

We all see through a glass darkly and surely none of us knows anything as we ought to know. Yet the LORD does clearly state HIS TRUTH in a fashion which cannot be escaped by those whom HE is pleased to give "eyes to see and ears to hear." When a man boasts of what he "knows," he most often is lifted up with a measure of pride. Those who truly "know" the most are likely to be those who are swift to hear and slow to speak. This does not mean that those who declare the WORD of GOD are to be "timid," or apologetic for boldly proclaiming the TRUTH, but rather to recognize from whence

their understanding comes, acknowledging that only the LORD can grant understanding. The eloquence and “opinions” of the preacher does not bring this to pass. *“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.”* (2Cor 10:17-18) The TRUTH of GOD is “absolute” and stands in stark contrast to the “opinions” of men, which are so readily declared in our corrupt and contemptible (by GOD’s STANDARD) society.

With that in mind we turn to a consideration of the LORD’s “opinion” of HIS spouse or that bride which HE calls HIS “love”. Throughout the WORD of GOD, the LORD has stated HIS determined purpose to manifest HIS love to that people which HE chose in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. Paul often refers to them as the “elect” or the “election of grace”. In order to set forth this determined purpose, the LORD raised up the nation of Israel to be, by type and foreshadow, the example of that people chosen by HIM. HE declares HIS unconditional determination to set that nation apart from all of the others upon the planet. *“I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness.”* (Mal 1:2-3) *“The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”* (Deu 7:7-8) Thus we see HIS unconditional election of that chosen people which comprises HIS bride in all ages and nations upon the Earth. *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”* (2Tim 2:19)

The LORD sees HIS bride as she really is for, HE sees her as she is hidden in CHRIST. In CHRIST she has no flaws and is possessed of a beauty which is beyond compare, even exceeding that which belongs to the angels who are privileged to behold HIS glory night and day. *“That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”* (Eph 5:27) Whereas men look upon her and see a rabble of imperfect, sinful, and unthankful creatures, yet HE beholds her in the perfect beauty which HE has bestowed upon her from the very beginning.

When the LORD looks upon her, HE sees the righteousness of CHRIST. *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”* (1Cor 1:30) Men see her unrighteousness, yet HE beholds, in her, no fault at all and finds no grounds upon which she might be condemned. *“No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.”* (Isa 54:17)

When the LORD looks upon her, HE sees one who is perfectly sanctified (i.e.; set apart, made holy). *“But, ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”* (1Cor 6:11) Nothing can add to that standing which she has in CHRIST, and nothing at all can diminish that which is perfect.

When the LORD looks upon her, HE sees that perfect possession which CHRIST has redeemed with HIS own blood, standing in her place, so that her sins are remembered no more. Though she willingly sold herself into bondage and slavery, all is forgotten, and the REDEEMER alone is seen. *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”* (Rev 5:9-10)

When the LORD looks upon her, HE sees that ONE who has triumphed gloriously over all of HIS enemies. *“And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”* (Rev 19:14) This is a “terrible army” indeed, for it is led by HIM who is “FAITHFUL and TRUE. *“And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”* (Rev 19:16) Do you tremble at this sight?

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