

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

THE REVELATION OF CHRIST

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

John 12:37-40

I grew up hearing a message which was purported to be the gospel. In this message we were told that the LORD wanted everybody to be saved from the pit of hell and had basically done all HE could to provide a means whereby men could escape that awful place if they would just avail themselves of it. A good deal of effort was made to try to persuade men to just "let" GOD save them, or at least just give GOD a chance. Try HIM out like you would test drive a new car. Then if you didn't like what you let HIM do for you, you could always go back to your old comfortable way. Those who taught this message were willing to try all kinds of persuasive methods to try to give men every opportunity they could to "allow" HIM to do what HE really wanted to do anyway. Lots of money had to be collected from time to time to be sure that there would be plenty of folks to "win souls" and convince men that what the LORD wanted for them was really in their best interest.

Quite often great "crusades" and "revival meetings" were held. Eloquent men, well versed in the latest soul winning techniques, were brought in to ply their trade and reap a big harvest of souls which was accomplished by convincing them to walk forward at end of one of these meetings while the music played and they were reminded that they might not have another "chance" to be saved. Not much has really changed over the years as these puppeteers and soul merchants exercise themselves and woo their listeners with modern technology at their fingertips. Many of them can even tell us in dollars and cents exactly what it takes to "win a soul" for CHRIST. They "*compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, (they) make him twofold more the child of hell than (themselves).*" (Mat 23:15) They tell us what a great effort they are making to be sure that heaven is inhabited and are quite certain that many shall perish unless they (or someone like them) go out and try to persuade men to "let the LORD in their heart." It occurred to me one day that if these men were sincere in their quest, (i.e.; that it was up to men to persuade other men to enter the kingdom of GOD, and that multitudes would perish otherwise) then they would not take time to sleep, take vacations, or anything other than constantly going from one "soul" to the next with incessant labor lest one who could possibly have been "saved" might be missed.

Isaiah knew that it was not within man by nature to “know the LORD” but was only able to see and embrace the truth of GOD as the LORD saw fit to show it to him. John understood the same thing as he realized that the glory of the LORD JESUS could not be seen nor the way of the LORD desired by men unless it pleased the LORD to open their eyes and reveal to them the “*arm of the LORD*”. In fact he plainly says that the LORD “blinds the eyes” and “hardens the hearts” of some so that they cannot see. I have never heard any “soul winners” comment on these verses since they don’t quite fit their twisted concept of the will of GOD.

We are quite certain that the LORD shall accomplish exactly what HE is willing to do. HE has chosen an exact number of the human race which by HIS mercy HE will reveal HIMSELF to. They will see HIM for who HE is and bow before HIS presence, seeking mercy and calling upon the name of the LORD. When the LORD JESUS rose from the dead, had HE wished to reveal HIMSELF to all men, HE could have simply appeared in the temple or in the Sanhedrin on the third day. Everyday, thereafter, HE could have gone about the city and countryside showing men that HE was risen from the dead. But HE only showed HIMSELF to his disciples. Even they could not “see” HIM until HE revealed HIMSELF (see Luke 24:13-32)

Men desire to usurp the glory of GOD in whatever way they can. Well meaning but mistaken men think that they can “assist” the LORD, and in doing so become (in their minds) a vital part in the salvation of the LORD’s elect. Man plays no active role in his or anyone else’s salvation in any sense. “*But the salvation of the righteous is of the LORD: he is their strength in the time of trouble.*” (Psa 37:39) The true sons of GOD find a great delight in this fact. The LORD JESUS CHRIST is the absolute SAVIOR of HIS people. HE has known them, HE has loved them, HE has purchased them, HE has triumphed over death in their behalf, HE has imputed HIS righteousness to them and their sin to HIMSELF; HE is presently revealing HIMSELF to them, HE is calling them, HE has sent HIS SPIRIT to guide and comfort them, and HE shall return to gather them to HIMSELF. All of the glory belongs to HIM. We have no time nor interest in hearing any message other than that one which speaks of an accomplished salvation for the sons of GOD, in the person of JESUS CHRIST, the RIGHTEOUS. How is the “arm of the LORD” revealed? :

To those whom the LORD is pleased to reveal it. “*All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.*” (Mat 11:27) If any man gains a knowledge of the LORD and the salvation wrought by HIS hand it will be because HE alone intends to open that man’s eyes and HE shall accomplish exactly what HE intends to do. The fact that HE has been pleased to show men HIS salvation and give them an interest in it is evidence of HIS great mercy. What has or can any man do to deserve or earn it?

To those whom the LORD has not hardened or blinded. Very few doctrines stir the ire of religious men anymore than the doctrine of reprobation. Paul gives the example of this with Jacob and Esau saying, “*For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth.*” (Rom 9:11) On the one hand reprobation is an active work by the LORD to deny any of those who HE has rejected any sort of access into HIS knowledge. On the other it is accomplished passively by allowing them to go on in the way which their very nature causes them to desire to go. We see this clearly in the scripture when the LORD said that HE hardened Pharaoh’s heart yet at the same time Pharaoh hardened his own heart.

According to the time appointed by HIM. “*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me.*” (Gal 1:15-16) “*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven*” (Ecc 3:1)