

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 WEAKNESS OF FLESH AND BLOOD

For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you. 2 Corinthians 13:4

Men are idolators by nature. Paul said, they “*changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*” (Rom 1:23) Almost from the very beginning man has sought to envision GOD like himself or like some part of HIS creation. He has sought to deny the glory of GOD, preferring to view HIM as some lesser being rather than as a sovereign ruler who shares HIS glory with none. Man is much more comfortable with a limited god who is either of grandfatherly characteristics and wouldn't (or couldn't) hurt a flea or a god whose wrath can be assuaged by some sacrifice or offering made by men.

The average man today is quite convinced that he knows god and that everything will work out for his best in the end. It is ingrained in the heart of sinful man that he has the ability to please GOD by some moral or religious activity. Men are (by and large) content to live their lives without much of any consideration of GOD except as a creator and they see little reason to fear HIM except that HE might withhold some blessing they desire. It is rare to find a man who trembles at the mention of HIS name and fears HIS presence.

The natural man cannot conceive of a GOD who will not allow imperfect men into HIS presence under any conditions and it is impossible for him to have any perception of the ONE who “*only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.*” (1Ti 6:16) It is beyond human understanding to fully comprehend the ONE whom Paul describes as “*the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.*” (1Tim 1:17)

The true and living GOD is both inapproachable by men and invisible to any efforts they may undertake on their own to discover HIM. Yet this has never stopped man from devising religions and myths designed to satisfy his quest for the unknown. In fact it is this very desire that fuels all of man's futile devotions. But in all of this men will not bow down and worship the Eternal GOD because their sin has blinded their eyes to HIS glory and their natural enmity toward HIM has stripped them of any desire to worship HIM in Spirit and truth. So men have carved out an image of a god which suits them, they have given god different names and characteristics in every culture and religion around the world.

This natural religion causes men to believe that all good and religious men are ultimately all on the same journey to the same destination because they worship and serve the god of each ones imagination. This is demonstrated in our midst by the fact that the most popular doctrines among those who call themselves “Christians” today are those which exalt the free will of men and make GOD subservient to the choice of men rather than men being at the mercy of a Sovereign GOD. It is practically unthinkable for the average so called “Christian” today to even consider the bible doctrines of election and predestination.

The GOD of the Bible reveals HIMSELF as the ONE who is an absolute GOD who needs no one and is dependent on nothing in HIS creation. HIS thoughts are as high above the thoughts of men as the heavens are above the earth. HIS creation adds nothing to HIM and no member of it may even so much as question HIS doing. There are no necessities upon HIM except those which arise out of HIS own character and purpose. In other words HE does not have to do anything that HE does not want to do. It is this GOD, the eternal and pure Invisible SPIRIT, who has robed HIMSELF in flesh and blood and dwelt among men. *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” (Rom 8:3)* This is a most glorious truth that causes us to pause in adoring wonder and to fall at HIS feet and worship.

Idolatrous man has long sought to make GOD like the creature in order to hide HIS glory, but GOD has clothed HIMSELF in flesh and blood and while doing so divested HIMSELF of none of HIS deity, establishing HIS glory. Yet in doing so, becoming so much flesh and blood as to be subject even to the weakness of sinful flesh who *“was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb 4:15)* It pleased the LORD to undergo all of the sorrows and heartaches which are common to mankind in order to become the perfect substitute and SAVIOR of HIS people. HE walked among men, not as ONE robed in the glory of HIS deity, but *“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)* But to the man who has been given eyes to see, it is here in this ignominious suffering that HIS ultimate glory can be seen. *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2Cor. 4:6)*

HE could have come in the power of the flesh as an apparent conqueror, with bulging biceps, steely eyes, and a swashbuckling demeanor. HE could have run roughshod over every man who dared stand in HIS way. HE could have destroyed HIS enemies on the field of battle and triumphed over them in such a way that no one could have doubted HIS power. In fact the Jews were looking for just such a deliverer and they did not know HIM when HE came even though the prophet of old had said, *“He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.” (Isa 53:7-10)* Even HIS disciples were expecting that HE would fight the oppressors with the arm of HIS flesh and were dismayed and distraught when it appeared that HE was led to HIS death and in their fleshly minds to an end of their hopes.

The LORD will allow no man to glory in the flesh so it is in the weakness of the flesh that HE came in order to hide HIMSELF from the wise and prudent. Had HE come as an apparent champion then many would have clamored to stand by HIS side. But HE came in such a way and accomplished exactly what it was HE intended to do in such a fashion that no man could glory in HIS flesh or their own. HIS body was bruised and gashed because of our sin, but it is not the gore of HIS broken humanity, aggrandized in movies and multitudes of sermons that is at the very core of HIS suffering for us. Rather, HE made HIS very soul an offering for our sin, HE agonized in the garden over the burden laid upon HIM, sweating as it were great drops of blood in the anguish that gripped HIS very being as a man. HE became sin for us and underwent the terrors of being cast out and forsaken by HIS FATHER for our sake not that we might glory in HIS flesh but that we might be acquainted with the weakness of our own. *“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (2Cor 12:9)*