

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 WONDER OF IT ALL

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?
Psalm 8:3-4

I have had many advisers of late who told me that walking was good for the health of a man my age. I had no reason to doubt their advice and they finally wore down my commitment to a life of ease and laziness; so about a month ago I started taking a walk in the afternoon after coming home from work. For the first few weeks I walked in the twilight as the sun was just beginning to set. But for the last few days, since the switch from daylight savings time, the sun has already dipped below the horizon and its last glimmers of light are all but extinguished when I begin my journey; and completely gone before I am halfway finished. Tonight as I walked along I noticed that there was not a cloud in the sky and the stars were spread over the vast expanse of the universe, twinkling like a handful of diamonds scattered across a black velvet cloth by the expert hands of a master jeweler.

While walking along staring up at this array and marveling at the beauty of it all I was struck with a feeling of my own comparative insignificance within the vastness of that creation which stretched beyond my vision. Almost inexplicably at the same time as I pondered the immensity of the creation of our Sovereign GOD, my heart was filled with a sense of peace and gratitude for the grace that has caused my very soul to have a hope in HIM. Words cannot fully express the wonder of it all, nor can I recreate that moment in my mind as hard as I try. David evidently experienced much the same thing when he was moved to write the eighth Psalm. Though that peace which passeth understanding cannot be shared with words yet there are lessons indelibly planted in our minds by such a blessed event which we can set forth by way of observation. As we survey the heavens we can see.

The beauty of GOD's creation. *"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:3)* Even a child can see this. All men without exception, regardless of their position in life or where they are born, can make this observation. *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." (Rom 1:20)*

The enormous expanse of the universe. *"Is there any number of his armies? and upon whom doth not his light arise?" (Job 25:3)* Is our GOD not HE who *"stretchest out the heavens like a curtain." (Psa 104:2)* No one has any true comprehension of the immensity of that which the hand of the LORD has created. One can sit and count the stars which can be seen by the eye of men, yet beyond that ability to see are even greater numbers of stars which cannot be counted nor even discovered. For the ways of GOD are too high for men even in the natural realm. We are made to sit in awe and wonder at that which HE spoke into existence. How many worlds exist in all of that which GOD has made, we will never know for the secret things belong to HIM and only those things which are revealed belong to us.

The comparative insignificance of men. This is a very difficult observation for men to make and cannot be fully arrived at and most certainly not willingly embraced except by revelation. *"All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."* (Isaiah 40:17) In his natural mind man is convinced that he has some intrinsic worth in himself. This is the root of all of man's philosophies and forms the basis for modern psychology. The last thing on earth that the natural man wants to do is to consider himself as insignificant. The ego of men is the source of their pride and pride has its chief fulfillment as men glory in their supposed freewill. Yet that man who has been awakened by the spirit of GOD to see his own sinful nature and his rebellion against the GOD who made him, finds himself marveling that GOD should take any notice of him at all, except to cast him away like so much refuse.

Most modern preachers give no thought at all to the wonder of David's expression, *"What is man that thou art mindful of him?"* Or literally "why do you even bother with men?" They are more concerned with making sure we are told that GOD gives every one a chance and an opportunity, as if HE is trying to accomplish something which depends upon men to carry out. When one is brought to the place of understanding the absolute wickedness and helplessness of men, then and only then can he be given a right understanding of the wonder and amazement which accompanies a vision of the grace of GOD bestowed on such unworthy creatures.

The truth that man cannot bring himself to GOD. *"Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell; what canst thou know?"* (Job 11:7-8) It is true that we can survey the stars in the heavens or look upon the rolling hills and mountains that HE has formed by HIS own hands but we can (in our own power) no more gaze upon the true glory of GOD than a man blind since birth can describe the sunset. It is not in us, (fallen and depraved by nature), to look upon HIM who is holy and without spot. *"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."* (Psa 139:6) Even those creatures which surround HIS throne must cover their eyes as they cry out *"Holy, Holy, Holy"* night and day without ceasing.

Had not the LORD in mercy revealed HIMSELF to us in the person of the LORD JESUS CHRIST we could never have known HIM. Our sin had separated us and we were blind to the glories that surround HIM. *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by (grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."* (Eph 2:4-6) We love HIM because HE first loved us.

All things are the product of HIS purpose. *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."* (Psa 115:3) As I pondered the heavens expanse I noticed the lights of probably half a dozen airplanes crisscrossing the sky. They were suspended underneath that vast canopy lazily moving along for destinations unknown except for those individuals intimately involved with their schedules. Each plane was the product of some group of engineer's designs and put together by a myriad of workers supervised by those who knew the ultimate purpose of every part and how they fit into the whole. No part was left out nor was anything included that was not specifically for the purpose designed.

As I thought on these things I was reminded that every one of those planes were moving according to the predestinating purpose of HIM who directs all things that come to pass in the earth according to HIS master design. Not a star occupies a place in the universe nor does a blade of grass grow in a well manicured lawn except that it is placed there by HIM to fulfill HIS will. There is so much that we shall never know, it is but a wonder of amazing grace that it has pleased HIM to reveal the glory of HIS person and HIS purpose for the creation of this world in which we live and move, in the manifestation of the redemption of HIS elect bride by the shedding of HIS SON's blood, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, in their behalf. *"That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."* (Eph 2:7) O the wonder of it all!