

# 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*

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## FOLLY IN ISRAEL

*And the sons of Jacob came out of the field when they heard it: and the men were grieved, and they were very wroth, because he had wrought folly in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter; which thing ought not to be done.*  
*Genesis 34:7*

The LORD has made it clear that HE has put a distinction between that which is holy and that which is profane. Light cannot be mixed with darkness nor is that which is holy to be given to those for whom it is not intended. *"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine."* (Mat 7:6)

To this end HE gave direct commandments to the children of Israel that they were not to intermingle and marry with other peoples of the earth. *"When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor shew mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."* (Deut 7:1-4)

In somewhat the same light HE has instructed HIS followers not to have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (see Eph.5:1-11) and on a practical note which manifests that exact same principle, that believers should not enter into any partnerships or marriages with unbelievers. *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord."* (2 Cor 6:14-18)

The LORD has given this instruction in order to illustrate the fact that HE has a chosen people which are not *"of this world"* even though it has pleased HIM to cause them to occupy it for a season having subjected them to *"vanity"*. (see Rom.8:19-23) Yet all the while they are in this world, their bodies are the temple of the HOLY GHOST, and as such are set apart in the midst of it, by the operation of HIS SPIRIT working in them both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. Thus John reminds his hearers, *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* (1John 2:15) These are strong and flesh withering words which manifest the difference between those who are chosen of GOD and those who are not. *"If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."* (John 15:19)

*"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4)*

The religion of the flesh is the same in all cultures and nations. Man by nature has devised many acceptable (to himself) means and methods by which he assumes he might approach unto GOD. Yet there is only one acceptable fashion in which the true and living GOD has revealed that HE will be worshipped. *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24)

While there is only one fashion in which a man might truly worship GOD, there is also only one way in which a man can be made to approach unto HIM 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."* (1Tim 6:16) The LORD alone can give a man that privilege and he can in no wise devise a method on his own. *"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* (John 14:6) *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."* (John 6:44) *"Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts. (Psa 65:4)*

Shechem, the son of Hamor, thought that he had the right and ability to join himself unto the people of GOD. Dinah appeared beautiful in his sight and he took her by his own power and joined himself to her. In this I am reminded of Simon (see Acts 8:13-23) who was outwardly desirous of the power and glory of the HOLY GHOST but whose heart was yet *"in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity"*. It is not unusual that some religious men should be outwardly attracted to the gospel. There have been false believers, apostles, and teachers in every age. Paul said that we should not marvel at such. (see II Cor.11:14)

Shechem and his whole tribe (a multitude) were willing to adopt the religious practices of the nation of Israel and did even submit themselves to the pain and suffering of "circumcision", just as religious men are often willing to make great sacrifices, thinking thereby to enhance their standing in the kingdom of GOD or at the very least to gain blessings thereby. These are those who are *"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof."* (II Tim 3:5) They are those who are *"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (II Tim 3:7) who, *"received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."* (II Thes 2:10)

Shechem's whole purpose was self centered and self serving. Though he was enamored with Dinah, he sought not her glory nor her benefit but rather his own. His longing was totally unlike the desire of Job, who said, *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."* (Job 13:15) and not akin to the joy of the Peter and James, who were *"rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name."* (Acts 5:41) The religious men of this world glory in their teachers, doctrines, traditions, and numbers but the followers of CHRIST are those who seek only HIS glory. As Paul said, *"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."* (Gal 6:14) May HE ever increase and all of our names and exploits be forgotten. We are unworthy of the least of HIS mercies.

Shechem's destruction was sudden and without remedy as the elder brothers of Dinah arose to defend her honor and slay the wicked. So too shall CHRIST return in the last day *"In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."* (II Thes 1:8) Our ELDER BROTHER has already demonstrated this resolve as HE has restored the honor of HIS beloved "sister and spouse" (see Song of Sol.4:9-12) by conquering her enemies, bearing her sins, and imputing HIS perfect righteousness to her. She stands before the throne of a HOLY GOD *"who will not at all acquit the wicked,"* (Nah. 1:3) as a chaste virgin, without spot or blemish. She has no accusers and is without condemnation. *"He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him."* (Psa 103:10-13)

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