

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 UNASKED QUESTION

Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Luke 13:23-24

If there was ever a question which would be unlikely to be asked in the modern day it would be this one, *"Are there few that be saved?"* Most church goers and "professed Christians" assume that they are indeed among the saved because most believe that their "salvation" is procured by an act of their own free will. They look around them and see the multitudes which have come down the same "assembly line" which they have.

Salvation has been reduced to a simple formula by many preachers of the present day. They tell us that GOD is anxious to save every man on the earth and that if men will just let HIM save them; HE is more than willing to do so. The god which is preached from most pulpits is more of a beggar than a SOVEREIGN. This god is pleading with men to let him help them and has made salvation so easy that even a caveman could do it. Just make a decision, sign on the dotted line and enjoy the bliss of heaven forever. What could be easier than that?

Multitudes cram into "churches" which feed them a steady diet of how much the LORD needs their service, money, and souls. All the LORD asks for is a little bit of cooperation and for folks to accept what HE has provided for them, get a positive attitude and show the world how much faith they have. They are assured that they have within their own hands the golden key that can unlock the shackles on the hands of the LORD's blessings, who would otherwise never "violate their free will", and open up this channel by HIMSELF. Thus it seems rather an outdated idea to ask *"are there few that be saved"*. It seems obvious that there are vast multitudes who will be; since it is considered a matter which is left up to men: after all who wouldn't choose heaven and immortal bliss over a pit of destruction?

A companion error which goes hand in hand with this "easy believeism" is the equally erroneous notion that men can be saved (or at least demonstrate their salvation) by fulfilling certain requirements and meeting certain conditions. Those who set forth these "conditions" and "requirements" scoff at the notion that mere "belief" in CHRIST is enough. They say that men must be baptized in water, speak in other tongues, wear their hair a certain way, adhere to some particular theological order or confession of faith, etc.

Both of these errors, share the same root which is the belief that men are the ones who can determine their eternal destiny by their own choice and obedience. The LORD plainly destroyed this notion when HE said, *"Many will seek to enter in and shall not be able."* HE said essentially the same thing when HE said to the Pharisees; *"Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come."* (John 7:34)

Yet of all the scriptures which lay the axe to the root of man's notion that he has the power to effect his own salvation, none is any clearer, nor might I say more disturbing than this parable from Matthew's gospel; *"And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which*

had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.” (Mat 22:11-14)

The LORD painted a word picture of the Kingdom of GOD which HE likened to a wedding feast which a King had prepared for invited guests, (having reference to the Jews; see John 1:11;) who not only refused his overtures but slew his servants. Then he destroyed those original invitees and sent his servants into the countryside to compel men (good and bad) to come to the wedding feast. Many came into this feast but there was one who had gotten in with the rest who was not clothed in the proper garment (which represents the righteousness of CHRIST) and was cast out.

The salvation of sinners is not based on whether or not men choose the LORD but rather on whether or not a man is chosen by GOD. *“Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple.” (Psa 65:4)* There is no place given for trust in ones religious affiliations, performance of duties, or adherence to various doctrines, as a basis upon which a man might have some hope of inheriting the Kingdom of GOD.

This Kingdom is one in which the grace of GOD alone is magnified and men are made to be bereft of all hope except that which is based upon the finished work of CHRIST for sinners. The work of the SPIRIT of GOD in the sons of GOD causes them to flee from any other foundation than that which is laid by CHRIST. HE said *“And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.” (John 10:5)*

The true children of GOD can find no comfort in their own actions, decisions, prayers, and devotions nor do they find any solace in the words of the “physicians of no value” who try to encourage men “not to doubt” yet have no real basis upon which to give such encouragement except their own (supposed) ability to believe. The true sons of GOD are made to cry out constantly for sustenance and help from the only ONE in whom they are caused to trust. They don’t have confidence in their own ability to believe, knowing the deceitfulness of their own heart and understanding that they are full of unbelief and wickedness. (see Mark 9:24)

Even as Job who said *“though HE slay me yet will I trust him”* and as Peter who confessed, *“Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)* So the sons of GOD are driven to CHRIST and are compelled and enabled to *“strive to enter in at the STRAIT gate.”* Yet they are often without comfort (though never without a COMFORTER) and many times find themselves in a dry and thirsty land where no water is. The thought of the preciousness and rarity of true faith in CHRIST is ever upon their mind and they have no rest in any except HIM who is TRUTH itself. They cannot be satisfied with substitutes for that faith, which is the gift of GOD, nor with platitudes spoken by the angels of light who would deceive the very elect if it were possible.

“Are there few that be saved?” The LORD said, *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” (Mat 7:13-14)*

What think you of Christ? is the test, To try both your state and your scheme;
You cannot be right in the rest, Unless you think rightly of him.
As Jesus appears in your view, As he is belovèd or not;
So God is disposèd to you; And mercy or wrath is your lot.
If asked what of Jesus I think, Though still my best thoughts are but poor,
I say, he’s my meat and my drink, My life, and my strength, and my store;
My Shepherd, my Husband, my Friend, My Saviour from sin and from thrall;
My hope from beginning to end, My portion, my Lord, and my All.