

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

DO WISE MEN SEEK HIM?

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

I Corinthians 1:18-21

Around this time of year one often sees the phrase, "Wise men still seek HIM" on Church marquees and Holiday greeting cards. We know that this is a play on words which has an obvious reference to the biblical account of the Wise Men who, having seen the Star of the LORD, traveled from the East to worship the ONE who was born a KING.

The implication of the phrase is that since these men discovered this star in their wisdom, and decided to seek out the LORD, that, accordingly, men of the present time can and should do the same if they are truly wise. This sort of thought process is totally opposite to that which is revealed in the scriptures and is actually an arrogant statement which attributes to men an ability and desire which they do not have by nature.

Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians, "*the world by wisdom knew not God*". He said to the Romans, "*there is none that seeketh after God.*" The fact is that these ancient Magi or "wisemen" did not seek HIM because they were "wise-men", nor did they make any "discovery" by the power of their own understanding, but rather were given this knowledge of the birth of the KING by divine revelation.

The scriptures clearly state that those who are "wise" consider the gospel to be foolishness and cannot believe it nor will they seek to know HIM who is the SOURCE of all knowledge and wisdom. In fact the LORD said that HE had "*hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes.*" In the same fashion, we read in the scriptures that those among men who are considered to be "wise" are the exact ones whom the LORD says do not seek him.

The preaching of the cross is foolishness to natural men. The simple declaration of the work which CHRIST has performed on Calvary does not seem complex enough to satisfy the thinking of natural men. They desire to bring their own works and duties of obedience into the mix. Surely man must play a part in his salvation. Therefore wise religious men set out to improve that message of a completed salvation in CHRIST, by employing every trick and gimmick of reason they can imagine to try to persuade men to believe the "gospel".

The prevailing thought is that men can be caused to decide to follow CHRIST if we can somehow or other appeal to their carnal understanding and reason. It is thought that men with great skill of oratory and persuasion can thus convince men to become believers by an act of their own free will. So the gospel is "offered" by them (as if it was on sale at Kmart) to the masses with the hope that some will be convinced to embrace it and make a decision.

Yet the Apostle Paul plainly said that by “the foolishness of preaching” the LORD would save them that believe. The LORD uses the preaching of the cross of CHRIST, (which is the gospel) to bring to light the life and immortality which HE is pleased to bestow upon dead sinners by the work of the HOLY GHOST. This is none other than that salvation which the LORD JESUS purchased for HIS elect which HE does make manifest by causing them to believe it.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST said, *“Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of GOD.”* The need of dead sinners is not the persuasive words of the most skillful of those who are called “soul winners”, but rather the life giving power of the HOLY GHOST to awaken them from the spiritual death which they are in by nature. Unless a man is quickened by the LORD he cannot hear the truth nor will he ever embrace it. But when the LORD is pleased to give a man ears to hear it, he is then compelled to believe it, because the words which the LORD speaks to him are life itself. *“And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (John 8:32)*

In their quest to prove that men have the power to believe and become the sons of GOD whenever they please, we often hear preachers quote John 1:12 *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”* Yet the very next verse describes the sole source of the power to believe as being a miraculous birth which has nothing at all to do with the will of men, *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

Without this work of the SPIRIT of GOD, men will continue down the pathway of destruction completely oblivious and unconcerned with approaching judgment even though they might adopt a religious affiliation. Yet those who are awakened by the HOLY SPIRIT confess themselves to be sinners, and cry out for mercy from the hand of a sovereign GOD. They cast themselves at HIS feet and say *“LORD I believe, help thou mine unbelief.”* Wise men will not seek HIM, but those who are caused to see themselves as beggars by the SPIRIT will indeed hunger and thirst for a morsel from HIS table. *“LORD evermore give us this bread”* is their sincere desire.

Religious men, especially, scoff at the notion that it is not within their own power to believe the gospel and obey the word of GOD. They are satisfied with their recipes for salvation which mix one part of GOD’s grace with one part of effort by men, and then shook up with emotional appeals, and thereby supposedly produce a complete salvation. This is not merely an error but is ‘another gospel’ which is not “the” gospel. That one which Paul preached, saying, *“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)* CHRIST is ALL.

That which is foolishness to men is synonymous with the preaching of a salvation which is:

1. Completely purchased by the work of JESUS CHRIST. *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb 9:12)* *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” (Heb 10:12-14)*

2. Wrought in the behalf of a people given to HIM before the foundation of the world. *“But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (II Thess. 2:13-14)*

3. Dispensed by Sovereign grace alone. *“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” (Rom 9:15-16)*

4. Giving glory to none but HIM whose righteousness alone is accepted in the heavens. *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” (Titus 3:5-7)*