

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 GOD OF ALL GRACE

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. *I Peter 5:10*

There is nothing more delightful and at the same time comforting to the sons of GOD than a contemplation of the perfections and accomplishments of their REDEEMER and LORD. It is in HIM that every shred of their hope rests and by HIM that all of their expectations in this world or that to come are fully met.

The religious world finds great delight in pursuing and discovering their own descriptions of obedience unto the precepts which HE has taught. The non-religious world has their delight in the fulfillment of the lusts of their flesh. Most of those who call themselves “believers” in the present day find satisfaction in a mixture of the two and label as “libertines”, “antinomians”, “oddballs, and “heretics”, those who declare that nothing but the obedience of CHRIST is counted as righteous before an absolutely holy GOD.

Ever since Cain sought to bring an offering to the LORD of his own design, men have followed in his footsteps in thinking that they are able in some fashion to contribute their own righteousness as a suitable gift to HIM. It is quite common to hear religious men speak of performing acts of obedience and service to HIM as a means of gaining HIS favor or at the very least of seeking to repay a debt that they owe unto HIM, as if they possessed some currency which would be recognized in that Kingdom which cannot be inherited by flesh and blood..

Yet that man who is convinced by the SPIRIT of GOD that he is a hopeless and helpless sinner with not one shred of righteousness to bring before the LORD, can find no help at all in exhortations unto obedience which do not find their perfect fulfillment in the obedience and work of that ONE who is the SAVIOR of sinners. He must cringe in despair when he hears men say “Salvation is all of grace, BUT---”; and then any number of additions are made describing this or that activity which men must perform in order to “receive” it or maintain it.

The mention of grace which is accompanied with a “BUT” is no “grace” at all but is rather a “deal” which is offered to men wherein they can fulfill the terms and gain that which they seek. Such an arrangement is fine for religious men who are convinced that they are able to meet those terms in their own power and exercise faith by the operation of their own free will. Yet such an “offer”, “plan”, or “arrangement” can do nothing but minister fear in the heart of that man who is convinced that he is bereft of faith or any ability to fulfill any terms requiring true righteousness. He knows he must believe and be obedient but finds no power in himself to do so.

What such a helpless and hopeless sinner can find comfort and solace in, is a description and ministry of a perfect SAVIOR who has completed the work of salvation having obtained eternal redemption for all of those who are called by HIS grace. His consolation is found as he reads the clear declaration of free grace which says, “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God *is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:* That, according as it is

written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”(1Cor 1:30-31) Such a place as this is truly the holy ground upon which he can live and prosper. The more that the SPIRIT teaches him about himself the more lovely do all of the perfections of CHRIST appear unto him, by way of contrast. And all the more vital is Paul’s declaration, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.”(Rom 8:1-2)

Peter says that HE is the “GOD of all grace”. Grace that is not sovereignly dispensed cannot be “grace” at all. *“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” (Eph 4:7) “But by the grace of God I am what I am”. (1Cor 15:10) “For I say, through the grace given unto me, -----, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” (Rom 12:3) Thus the testimony of Paul bears out Peter’s declaration as Paul goes on to say, “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1Cor 4:7) “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) ----- As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” (Rom 9:11-13)*

Peter says that HE is the “GOD of all grace” Grace can be found nowhere else. In vain men will attempt to access the grace of GOD by their own endeavors. Men need faith but have none. “Faith is the gift of GOD”. The only FAITH that is acceptable in the sight of a holy GOD is perfect and unwavering. That is found nowhere else but in CHRIST who is our FAITH. *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” (Heb 12:2) A sinful man cannot produce that which is perfect, but HE who is perfect already has produced that which HE has required.*

The sole basis upon which the sons of GOD are seen as righteous is the imputation of the righteousness of CHRIST to them. HIS account has become theirs, as they are made heirs and joint heirs with JESUS CHRIST, solely upon the grounds of this imputation which can come to them in no other way than through HIS grace. They cannot purchase it nor in any wise influence the transfer of it.

Peter says that HE is the “GOD of all grace”. A simple definition of “grace” is “unmerited favor”. Yet when we see the grace of GOD displayed and made manifest in the calling of sinners, we realize that HIS grace is not merely unmerited by those HE has chosen to be its recipients, but that these objects of HIS grace are actually rebels against him and enemies in their minds by wicked works. Not only have they not merited HIS favor but they have actively warred against HIS goodness and despised HIS overtures of goodwill towards them. In short they are worthy of destruction, yet HE has bestowed great kindness towards them.

Peter says that HE is the “GOD of all grace.” Grace in order to be grace must be purely grace. There can be no mixture of grace and works or else grace is no longer grace. *“Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.” (Rom 11:5-6)*

GOD’s pure and sovereign grace is made known (i.e.; demonstrated; manifested) by “calling”, as Peter said, *“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus.”* The same GOD who does “call” a people out of darkness and into the light does provide all things necessary unto their salvation even as Peter concludes, *“after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” “Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.” (1Thess 5:24)*

O you who tremble and fear beneath sin’s heavy load. You who are exercised daily with the awareness of your own depravity and unsuitableness for the kingdom of GOD; you who would do good but find no ability to perform it. How came you into such a state? I tell you that HE which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST. HE is the SAVIOR of sinners. *“The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Psa 34:18) HE is the “GOD of all grace”.* mam