

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

A CAKE OF BARLEY BREAD

And when Gideon was come, behold, there was a man that told a dream unto his fellow, and said, Behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian, and came unto a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.

Judges 7:13

Those who are familiar with the scriptures will readily recognize Gideon as the leader of a triumphant army which was of a very diminutive size. He started off with a formidable host of thirty two thousand men. Yet the LORD told him that he had too many men, for if they were allowed to win a victory they would surely attribute their success to the strength of their own hands. *"And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, Mine own hand hath saved me."* (Judg 7:2)

So according to the word of the LORD, Gideon dismissed those who were fearful and afraid. This left him with what was still a sizable army of ten thousand men. Yet the LORD told him that he still had too many men. *"And the LORD said unto Gideon, The people are yet too many;"* (Judg 7:4) So he brought the ten thousand down to the water and those who lapped water from their hands were marked out as those appointed by GOD to go with Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites. Thus he was left with only 300 men with which to do battle with approximately 135,000 Midianites who had joined forces with the Amalekites. (see Judges 8:10)

I am sure that Gideon was quite perplexed when he thought about the disparity between the size of his own army and that of his enemies'. No doubt he had second thoughts about the wisdom of proceeding in what (to the flesh) had all the makings of a debacle of failure. Yet the LORD gave a man a dream about a *"cake of barley bread"* which flattened a tent to the ground.

This LORD used this dream to cause Gideon to take courage, worship, and to encourage his little band of 300, who were probably just as bewildered as Gideon was. *"And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the LORD hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian."* (Judg 7:15)

It is quite often true that we become overwhelmed with what seem like insurmountable problems which face us from time to time. Yet the LORD is pleased to remind us of that which HE taught Jonathan, *"for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few."* (1Sam 14:6) Of course this is the exact revelation which the LORD showed the servant of Elisha as he saw, *"the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."* (2Kings 6:17) even as Elisha had testified to him. *"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."* (2Kings 6:16) Is this not exactly what John said, *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."* (1John 4:4)

The deliverance which the LORD has designed never seems sufficient to the flesh because it always appears "too small", thus he believes he needs to improve upon it. Neither can the spiritual man be strengthened by the power of his own "will" to "overcome" or be strong regardless of the multitude of exhortations unto that end.

There are many in our day who think that the "power of positive thinking" will suffice to bring the knowledge of deliverance to the sons of GOD. To this end we have a whole array of psychologists and charlatans masquerading as "gospel preachers", who merely reinforce the natural reliance of the flesh upon its own ability. Though they might use such scriptures as "*I can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me*" (Phil. 4:13); it is this same spirit of "self help" which is at the heart of those who go about to establish their own righteousness.

Only a revelation of the power of HIM who is the GOD of "small (i.e.; seemingly insignificant) things can suffice to calm the troubled breast of the man who is beset by the fears of his own inadequacy to stand before the LORD. So that such a man is not encouraged by someone trying to tell him what he can do, but rather by that which describes what the LORD has done even though it appears to be insufficient to his flesh.

CHRIST alone is the SUFFICIENCY of HIS people. HE is that "*little cake of barley bread*" which has flattened the tents of the enemies of the people of GOD. HE has accomplished their utter and complete salvation by HIS own action and needs no input by anything of the creature to make that salvation absolutely effective and complete.

The finished work of CHRIST is despised by the flesh. "*He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*" (Isa 53:2-4) The natural man will not believe that the work of CHRIST alone is sufficient, convinced that he must add something to it, even if be nothing more than some act of his own will. In fact the multitude of those who supposedly preach the gospel in the present day, make the ratification (of what CHRIST has done) by the free will of man to be the means whereby HIS work is made effective.

The work of CHRIST will not be relied upon by the flesh, for the sanctification of the redeemed. Even though the scripture plainly says that HE is "*made unto us -----sanctification*" (I Cor 1:30), the natural man will suppose that there is some work which he must participate in order to be "sanctified". This may be prayer, bible study, dedication, devotion, purity of life, etc, yet a man cannot improve upon that which is already "perfect". The spiritual man is renewed every day by that which is supplied by the SPIRIT, even though the flesh would desire to supply itself.

The work of CHRIST to supply "obedience" will not be relied upon by the flesh, which would rather look at a list of duties and requirements to be met. Yet what obedience can any man supply which is completely without any mixture of error, and what "partial" obedience could ever be accepted in the courts of heaven. Did not the LORD answer David's question "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?*" with this answer; "*He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*" (Psa 24:3-4) This sounds like perfect obedience to me, which can only be satisfied by CHRIST HIMSELF. Thus did Paul write, "*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.*" (Gal 2:20)

This "CAKE OF BARLEY BREAD" has indeed toppled all of the enemies of GOD's elect. As we are enabled to understand this vision, we are indeed encouraged and must worship at HIS footstool. "*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.*" (John 6:32-35) mam