

# 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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## THE TIME WILL COME

*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.*

*II Timothy 4:3*

Throughout the scriptures the LORD has demonstrated the fallibility and weakness of man in his natural state. Starting with Adam in the Garden; the LORD declared the inevitable failure of man to obey the plain commandment of GOD, and the certainty of his demise. *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* (Gen 2:16-17)

The most popular view of this passage is that man was put on “probation” in the garden and the LORD was waiting to find out what he would do. The reality is that there are no “ifs” in the decree of the LORD, to Adam, but rather a prophecy of the fulfillment of the purpose of GOD as HE would show what man is by carnal nature and how far he is from being able to enter into the presence of the LORD upon his own merit and by his own will.

This is the very manifestation of that which Paul meant when he said, *“flesh and blood”* cannot inherit the Kingdom of GOD. It is clearly described by the Preacher, *“Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”* (Ecc 7:29) And then reiterated by Paul, *“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.”* (Rom 3:10-12)

If we understand the innate wickedness of man as he comes forth from his mother’s womb then we are not surprised to see his continual failings, which are in part recorded for us upon the pages of scripture. From the beginning until the present there is ample record both in secular history and in the Bible, of the bent of men to embrace corruption and wickedness. How foolish it is for men to entertain the notion, (as many do) that men in the flesh are changing, will change, or even can change themselves for the better. There have been periods of time in history when the outward morality of men has improved, yet there is always some interruptions of those halcyon days in which is ushered in the stark reminder that corruption is in men by nature.

The nation of Israel was constantly (like a yo-yo) having periods of relative obedience to the commandments of GOD, followed by outward disobedience and departure from the ways of GOD back to their natural, heathenish tendencies to worship other gods and to disregard that which was holy, just, and good. These periods of “disobedience” were not aberrations, but rather demonstrations of their natural bent, and their innate love of their own sinful inclination. Apart from the LORD in mercy calling them back to HIMSELF, and delivering them from their oppressors, they would in all cases have pursued their own preferred pathway to destruction.

The whole nation of Israel was benefited by the faithfulness of the LORD to preserve HIS own elect remnant which was in their midst, while that elect remnant was exercised by the very same troubles that beset the nation as a whole. HE did this that HE might demonstrate to them (i.e.;

the remnant) their own innate wickedness and at the same time HIS utter and absolute faithfulness to preserve and deliver those upon whom HIS love was set from before the foundation of the world, in the very midst of those who were not included in that number..

The natural man is content in his natural state and wishes not to be disturbed, desiring to continue on his downward spiral to destruction, willingly oblivious to it. Yet when the LORD is pleased to awaken men by HIS grace in the new birth, they become desirous of fleeing from the wrath to come, because HE makes it vivid before them and acquaints them with their natural bent towards destruction. They have no reason to trust that they could ever deliver themselves from it, even as Paul laments and ultimately rejoices in Romans chapter 7.

When we look at Paul's words to Timothy, *"the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine"*, we are reminded that man in his natural state remains unchanged and will depart from the TRUTH if left to himself. Many times men try to use this passage of scripture as though it is a prophecy which is waiting to be fulfilled at some time in the distant future, as a sign of the approaching "end". Yet it appears, quite plainly, to us that Paul is describing to Timothy the inevitability that there will be those in his lifetime who will turn aside from truth, even though they have professed to believe it and even walked among the saints.

None of those churches to which Paul and Timothy faithfully ministered to are in existence today or in point of fact, continued much beyond their own lifetimes. The messages given to the churches in the second and third chapters of the Revelation seem to have gone unheeded or at least ultimately forgotten, for again none of those churches are around today. Natural attrition can account for some of that but the reality is that while many churches perpetuate themselves by the efforts and skills of men; it is a rarity to find churches that continue, zealously, in sound doctrine much past a couple of generations. Most churches simply devolve into religious organizations which are held together by a love of tradition and ingrained habits rather than a love of TRUTH.

The LORD would ever remind us that it is *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts."* (Zec 4:6); that HE is pleased to preserve that which is HIS until the end. We are reminded that they are not all Israel which are of Israel, throughout the New Testament as we read of multitudes who have the appearance of being the sons of GOD in outward form, but do not have the root of the matter (see Job 19:28) in them, even as that seed which fell on stony ground and that which fell among thorns.

The LORD gave an interesting parable, which is often referred to as the "Parable of the Tares". HE said that an "enemy" sowed tares (a virulent and destructive weed) among the wheat in a good man's field. Then HE said that the tares should be allowed to grow until the time of the harvest, lest in trying to pull them out, some of the wheat might be damaged or destroyed. The value of the wheat was much greater than the tares. (see Isa.43:4)

HE likened this field to the world and the wheat to the children of promise, while the tares are likened to the "seed of the devil" (i.e.; the reprobate) even as HE spoke to the Pharisees, saying, *"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. -----for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not."* (John 8:43-45)

In this same fashion as the seed of Satan is sowed among the "seed of CHRIST" in the world at large, so too is it true that there are some among the true churches of CHRIST, who have neither ear nor appetite for the truth of GOD, though they are drawn to religion. In time they will fall away, even as many of the disciples of CHRIST did during HIS ministry. (see John 6:66)

They are spoken of by Paul, *"they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: (2Th 2:11) "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* (2Ti 4:4) We know of but ONE TRUTH. We have but ONE MESSAGE. HIS NAME is above every name that is named. *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God."* (1Cor 1:18)

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