

# 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 WORD OF LIFE

*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. I John 1:1*

Those who were appointed by the LORD as HIS Apostles were granted a privilege which, in turn, has benefited the entire family of GOD. They were made witnesses of such things as they had seen and heard. The message which they came to see as the Gospel is summed up, here for us, in the words of John.

Down through the ages, many, who have called themselves HIS followers have gone off on diverse doctrinal tangents, divided themselves into various sects and parties, and consequently adopted a variety of practices and commandments which they each hold sacrosanct and proudly display as signs of their distinction. Yet as the LORD admonished Martha when she became cumbered with much serving, "*ONE thing is needful.*" John tells us that ONE thing.

It is foolish to consider that the subject of "life" could be discussed apart from the centrality of thought, being focused on HIM who is the "LIFE". HE does not simply possess life (which indeed HE does) but HE is the sum total of life, apart from whom there is no life of any kind. Whether it be that of plants, animals, angels, devils, or humans. "*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*" (John 1:3-4) "*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*" (Col 1:16-17) There is no form of life which has not sprung from HIM according to HIS purpose.

Now while it is clear that all natural life springs from HIM as the CREATOR, this is not the type of "life" which John, particularly, refers to in his first epistle.. For all natural life must of necessity come to an end because all creation is by its very nature finite and cannot be sustained by anything which resides in the creature itself. The Eternal SON of GOD, alone, is without beginning and without ending and the ONE possessor of ETERNAL LIFE. "*For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*" (John 5:26-27)

The FATHER and the SON possess one LIFE because they are ONE without separation, not two entities with two lives. HE is "*The blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*" (1Tim 6:15-16) So there is no variation in that LIFE which is of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. No creature can possess or participate in this LIFE which is of the very essence of the GODHEAD.

Man was not created with eternal life but was placed in the garden as a finite creature appointed to perform the exact purpose for which he was created. As such he has manifested the corruptible nature and state in which he must dwell and according to that nature demonstrated his own weakness and inability to obey the commandments of GOD or to eat of the TREE of LIFE.

Dying, he died, according to the declaration of the LORD, *"For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Gen 2:17) He could not escape that to which he was bound by his very nature, even as men in the present time cannot gain life by any activity of their own. This is the exact reason that the LORD said to Nicodemus, *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3)

In order for a man to *"see the kingdom of GOD"* he must be "born from above", or given LIFE which he does not; and cannot, possess by nature. This LIFE is granted according to the sovereign will and purpose of GOD, to those who are the heirs of the Kingdom, appointed as such from before the foundation of the world, based upon the everlasting love (foreknowledge) which the FATHER has for HIS SON and all who are hidden in HIM. This election of grace stems from that mysterious union between those who are chosen in CHRIST and CHRIST HIMSELF.

We must never mistake the LIFE which CHRIST has as the ETERNAL SON of GOD and that which is granted to the elect according to HIS purpose. For HE has LIFE *"in HIMSELF"*, whereas the sons of GOD are those who have this life bestowed on them and sustained by HIM who is that very LIFE. They live because HE lives, yet HE lives because HE is LIFE.

This union is a sublime subject whose depths cannot be fully plumbed nor its heights be scaled by human reason. We simply bow before HIS footstool and praise HIM for the glories of HIS grace which is manifested in the work of the SAVIOR who came into the world to redeem that which was HIS and to bestow upon them this everlasting LIFE through the work of HIS SPIRIT. *"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins."* (Eph 2:1) *"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."* (John 1:13)

In the Gospel according to John, he says *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* (John 1:1) The SOURCE and BASIS of the Gospel is summed up in his opening statement and is an adjunct to his opening statement in his first epistle as he makes reference to the *"WORD of LIFE"*. The Greek word for "WORD" here, is "LOGOS", (from which we get the word "logic") which denotes that which is spoken or declared. Men could have no knowledge of GOD apart from this "LOGOS". *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."* (John 1:18) *"Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."* (1John 1:3)

The fashion in which the glorious work of CHRIST is made known unto the sons of GOD (who are the objects of HIS redemptive work) is in the unfolding of the gospel itself as it is declared through preaching (not the prepared sermons of men, but the SPIRIT indited word of GOD delivered as the LORD sees fit to send it.). Even as we read in Paul's letter to Timothy, *"But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."* (2Tim 1:10)

The gospel is not a message which confers life, but it is most surely that message which declares *"the LIFE"* which is found in JESUS CHRIST. Those who are given an ear to hear, rejoice in HIM who is the "declaration" of the GODHEAD bodily and the REDEEMER of sinners, who has borne our sin in HIS own body, on Calvary's cross. Apart from HIM we have neither a message about the LIFE nor can we in any wise be said to have life.

John tells us that he, along with the other Apostles (later to include Paul), had seen and touched that ONE who is the "WORD of LIFE." This is no wild fancy of his mind, nor even a message which is designed to try to persuade men to become HIS followers. Rather it is the personal testimony of a man who was translated from darkness to LIGHT, by the power of the very ONE of whom HE is speaking.

John had no desire to set up spheres of influence or to impress anyone with his oratory. Rather, he was compelled to bear witness to the TRUTH, even as Paul affirmed, *"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!"* (1Cor 9:16) HE is not simply the WORD, but is the "WORD OF LIFE." *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* (1John 5:11-12) mam