

# 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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## AN AFFLICTED AND POOR PEOPLE

*I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people,  
and they shall trust in the name of the LORD.      Zephaniah 3:12*

In this politically charged season we have many voices vying for our attention. Some tell us everything in our nation is going fine and happier days are just around the corner if we will only keep on with the same plans and schemes of greater government that have brought us to this juncture. Then we have the opposers of those concepts, assuring us that they have a better plan that will surely result in a greater tomorrow and a brighter future, if we will adopt their notions, strap on our guns, get back to our "roots", and pick ourselves up by the bootstraps.

Never do we hear anyone, either "the conservative bastions of freedom", or the "liberal gift givers", who ever properly identify the reality of what is happening in this nation. Neither of them have a clue as to how to correct the "problems", because neither group understands the reality of GOD's certain judgment nor do they grasp the concept of a sovereign GOD who orders all things according to HIS purpose.

Then there are some well meaning souls who see "religion" as the "solution" and opine that we need to get back to our roots as a "Christian nation". There never has been or can there possibly be such an entity in this world. True "Christianity" is the manifestation of GOD's kingdom in the earth, and "flesh and blood" cannot inherit it. Nations cannot be "Christian", and ours is no exception, regardless of the faith which may (or may not) have been embraced by some of the founding fathers in general or what catchy slogan might be on our money.

Some, on the other hand, see religion (especially Christianity) as a "problem", and promote the notion that secularism and tolerance of idolatry is the true god we should all worship. They have no trouble enlisting multitudes with the promotion of the brotherhood of mankind and the rejection of all moral absolutes as long as everyone is happy and doing their own thing. Both "conservatives" and "liberals" alike embrace these concepts to varying degrees.

Time and again throughout the pages of scripture we read about various nations whom GOD raised up, and then brought down in order to manifest HIS certain judgment. Thankfully, HE has also done the same in order to manifest the glory of HIS grace in the deliverance of that people which HE has scattered among the nations of the earth, even as the wise SOWER has cast HIS seed upon the ground, or as HE does scatter jewels; hiding them in the earth, until such time as HE is pleased to uncover them, and present them as the precious stones of HIS kingdom.

Carnal man (whether religious or not) is constantly looking for a carnal deliverer, someone to ride in on a white horse or more likely a "chrome horse with his diplomat". Yet in the midst of the men of these troubled nations, the LORD has a people whom HE loves with an everlasting love, and will, in HIS own time, make them known unto men and angels. Those things which can be shaken must be, in order that those which cannot be shaken might remain.

The natural man would assume that the deliverance of this people will be manifest by keeping them from the fires and troubles which arise as HIS judgment falls all around them. Yet, HE does not demonstrate those that are HIS by keeping them from trouble, but rather by keeping them

while they are in the midst of trouble, as we see with Daniel in the lions den or his companions in the fiery furnace. Of course this is not a popular view among those who rant on about a “secret rapture” and seek to mollify carnally minded “professors” by assuring them that they will escape earthly “tribulation” which they identify as some age yet to come.

This is demonstrably untrue as we see the saints in all ages persecuted, tortured, and hated for HIS NAME’s sake, for as the LORD said, *“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”* (John 16:33) This was the message of Paul and Barnabas as they went about, *“Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.”* (Acts 14:22) The trials of GOD’s people are as much ordained for their good and HIS glory as is HIS sustenance of them while all hell breaks loose around them. *“A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.”* (Psa 91:7).

The natural, religious man assumes that GOD will save those who are strong, full of faith, morally upright, and who go about performing various services in the name of the LORD. The Jews were certain of this and the LORD demonstrated the folly of this thinking in Matthew 7:21-23. Yet this is not at all how the sons of GOD are described. They are not a people who in any wise would fit the natural man’s concept of those who are GOD’s people.

The LORD JESUS shocked the religious world of HIS day when HE said *“It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.”* (Mar 10:25) By nature, men think that outward blessings are an indicator of GOD’s favor and that man can perform various deeds and adopt various attitudes which will precipitate HIS blessings and cause HIM to have great favor upon them. The TV and radio is full of those who continually preach that the key to heavenly blessings is to “have faith and send money.”

The natural man can never embrace the basis of GOD’s kingdom. He is convinced that there must be some merit in those whom the LORD would receive. Just as the crowd sought to silence the blind beggar, Bartimaeus, as he cried out for mercy; so too does the natural religious crowd think that the LORD is more inclined to help those who can and will help themselves than such a one as this who is deformed and unable to offer anything.

Some will reject the false message of the health and wealth, name it and claim it crowd, (i.e., have faith and send money), yet will embrace the same false doctrine which is at the heart of these damnable lies. Which is believing that faith is some action which man presents to GOD with which HE will be pleased. Yet the scripture clearly defines “faith” as the gift of GOD. The only “faith” with which the LORD is pleased is that which is *“the faith of CHRIST”* which is granted to the infirm and lame, rather than expected from them. There is absolutely nothing in men which can cause them to merit one iota of favor before GOD.

This is manifested as the LORD describes HIS people to Zephaniah as a *“poor and afflicted”* people. Men will turn out in droves to see and hear rich and famous men. While they may express some pity towards those who are “poor”(in this world’s goods) and “afflicted” (with the diseases of this realm), they will essentially seek to rid their minds of such people and clamor for those who have some skill and power which they admire, even as the religious men of this world exalt and honor those who they judge to be “faithful”, “strong”, and “able.”

The children of the Kingdom are *“poor in spirit”*, having nothing of value which they can add to that which is required of them. They are the epitome of those who depend upon a “handout”. They freely confess that they will perish apart from the sovereign mercy and grace of GOD.

The children of the Kingdom are *“afflicted”* with the most loathsome of diseases. The foul odors of which emanate from them day and night, causing them to be sick of their own selves. They can be found crying out with other blind beggars for mercy from the hand of the SON of David. *“And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”* (Isa 35:10)