

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XVII

Issue 32

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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 COMMANDMENT GIVEN TO CHRIST

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

John 12:49-50

The Jews (i.e. the Pharisees primarily) ascribed the power of the LORD JESUS to heal and perform miracles to Satan, as they said, "Now we know that thou hast a devil." They rejected the very essence of HIS message as they continued; saying, "Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death." (John 8:52) They were primarily incensed at HIM, not because of the healing or the miracles which HE did, but because HE told them that they were blind to the TRUTH. They were convinced in their own minds that they were serving GOD, and this MAN, JESUS, had the audacity to tell them they were not the children of GOD. They rejected HIS teaching, which HE said proved that they were not the children of GOD. "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. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: 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)

A man who rebels, continually, against the truth and will not hear the teaching of CHRIST, gives evidence that HE is ordained to destruction. Apart from the mercy of GOD, all men would rightly manifest that condition. Yet in HIS kindness and according to HIS purpose, HE is pleased to grant to some the gift of faith, as HE opens their eyes to the glory which belongs to HIM. Thus, HE said, "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me." To know the SON is to know the FATHER, and to reject the SON, is to reject the FATHER. "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)

So, the Jews were angry as HE revealed this truth to them, for they considered themselves proud professors of the faith of Abraham, like so many today who presumptively call themselves the followers of CHRIST because they have made a decision to be. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:12-13) The "power" to become (or be manifested as) the sons of GOD is not bestowed as a result of the free will of men, but rather of the "free will" of GOD. Many today grow just as angry at hearing this as the Jews did when CHRIST pointed this out to them.

The LORD JESUS continually spoke of being "sent" by HIS FATHER, to perform a specific work. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:4-5) HE stood in the Synagogue at Nazareth, and read the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19) HE

closed the book (i.e.; scroll), sat down, and said to HIS expectant hearers, *"This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears."* (Luke 4:21) The crowd was amazed at HIS teaching, *"And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."* (Luke 4:22)

As HE expounded upon the sovereign work of GOD to show mercy to the Gentiles, using Naaman the Syrian and the widow of Sarepta (to whom the prophet Elijah was sent) as examples, they became uneasy and soon erupted in anger as they realized HE was preaching the free grace of GOD apart from the works of the flesh, and taking away any grounds upon which they might glory. *"And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong."* (Luke 4:28-29) HE demonstrated HIS own fitness to be the MESSENGER of the Kingdom, by simply walking through their midst without harm.

Later on, HE made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem, on a colt, the foal of an ass, in order to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah (see 9:9). HE once again declared the very same truth which had angered the Jews (see John 8) as HE cried out, *"He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."* (John 12:44-46) HE boldly declared HIS authority and equality with the FATHER. This is the same thing HE would later say to Phillip after his request to be shown the FATHER. *"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father? (John 14:9)* Did not Isaiah prophesy the same; as he said *"his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. (Isa 9:6)?*

It is comforting (somehow) to the minds of many to consider HIM as some sort of secondary figure in the GODHEAD, yet HE is clearly ONE with the FATHER being the *"FULNESS of the GODHEAD bodily."* Men cannot know or approach unto the ETERNAL GOD apart from knowing HIM, nor can any recognize HIS glory apart from worshipping HIM as the *"Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."* (Rev 22:13)

The LORD startled many who claimed to be HIS disciples when HE told them *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."* (John 6:53) HE further clarified HIS teaching which manifested the unbelief of many (see John 6:64) as HE said, *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."* (John 6:63)

The LORD JESUS CHRIST came into the world, clothed in the *"likeness of sinful flesh"* to do the will of HIS FATHER. HE was sent by the FATHER and manifested the ETERNAL LIFE of the FATHER (see John 1:1,2). *"For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."* (John 5:26) This is the *"commandment"* that was given HIM. That HE might give eternal life to all which were given to HIM. *"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."* (John 17:2-3)

This comprises the entire work of CHRIST in the behalf of that people which HE loved with an everlasting love. To this end the FATHER has bestowed upon the SON all power in heaven earth and hell. *"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand."* (John 3:35) *"And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."* (John 5:27) The purpose for which CHRIST came is that HIS people might be given *"life more abundantly."* Thus HE declared the glories of this *"everlasting life"* as HE preached the gospel of the Kingdom, and in no uncertain terms, identified those who have this LIFE as those who believe on HIM, who declared of HIMSELF, *"I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."* (John 11:25-26)

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life." (1John 5:20) *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."* (1John 5:11) This is the *"commandment"* of CHRIST. mam