

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 POOR AND AFFLICTED 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*

When Solomon listed the seven things which are an abomination to the LORD; pride or a proud look was the very first one. *“These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.”* (Pro 6:16-19) Thirteen of the Proverbs have to do with pride.

The last of these abominations is *“he that soweth discord among brethren.”* He describes the cause of this “discord” or “contention” as being “pride”. *“Only by pride cometh contention.”* (Pro 13:10) *“Proud and haughty scorner is his name, who dealeth in proud wrath.”* (Pro 21:24) Pride is the precursor to most of our problems in human relationships and is that which causes our rebellion against the commandments of GOD. *“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall. Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”* (Pro 16:18-19) It was Adam’s pride in his own intellect that moved him to eat of that fruit which the LORD had commanded him not to eat.

A “proud look” is an abomination to the LORD, because it is an attempt to share in the glory of HIM who has no rival. *“I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another.”* (Isa 42:8) *“For the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”* (Exo 34:14) HE who rules in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, alone, has the right to be “proud.” *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure”* (Isa 46:9-10)

It is the height of audacity for a man (a potsherd of the earth) to seek any place of glory for himself when it is clear that the LORD, alone, is worthy of all glory. Men cannot rightly boast in any accomplishment, thought, or deed of record, since the LORD is “responsible” for his success. *“Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? or thy work, He hath no hands? Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begetteth thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth? Thus saith the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker, Ask me of things to come concerning my sons, and concerning the work of my hands command ye me. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts.”* (Isa 45:9-13) Paul summed this up for the Corinthians when he wrote, *“For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?”* (1Cor 4:7)

There is no more insidious and ingrained trait which abides in the flesh of man than that of pride. Multitudes of books are written to encourage men to "have pride" in themselves, to have great regard unto their own thoughts and to urge other men to act upon this same baseness. Yet the scriptures indicate that it is the pride of man that brings about his destruction. *"Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility."* (Pro 18:12) We can see this clearly illustrated in the case of Haman. Haman was so incensed that Mordecai was not subservient to him that he devised a gallows upon which to destroy Mordecai. Still thinking that he was so deserving of a place of honor he thought to take his case unto the King. A truly foolish act which ultimately resulted in his own demise as his pride and plot were uncovered.

As we look in the Book of Zephaniah, we read of the LORD's promise to bring the light of the gospel and the fruit thereof to that remnant which HE has scattered throughout the Earth. *"For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia my suppliants, even the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering."* (Zep 3:9-10) The LORD will call HIS people from out of every kindred and tribe, and the manner in which HE will make them manifest is the same now as it was then. This is that which Peter spoke of on the day of Pentecost. *"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."* (Acts 2:39)

HE said HE would give "the people a pure language", which is that which cannot be understood by impure men. There is but one language which is common to all of the sons of GOD. Paul declared that he would speak no other. *"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."* (1Cor 2:2) *"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness."* (1Cor. 1:23) This is the gift of GOD.

HE said that they would "all call upon the NAME of the LORD" in that "pure language". *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."* (Acts 4:12)

HE said that they would serve HIM. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* (John 10:27) *"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."* (John 8:12) *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2Cor 5:17)

HE said they would bring "mine offering". The natural man presumes to bring his own offering to the LORD, yet such shall not be received for even our "righteousnesses are as filthy rags" in HIS sight. Only ONE OFFERING will do, and no man can bring it except the LORD show him the necessity and completeness of that OFFERING which was given once and for all. *"For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."* (Heb 10:14)

The LORD has always made the promises given to CHRIST to be applied to that "remnant" which HE has hidden in the earth. *"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field."* (Mat 13:44) *"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."* (Heb 12:2)

This "remnant" is that "afflicted and poor people" which the LORD has promised to "leave in the midst" of the world. This world is not their home and they confess that they have here no continuing city, but they look for one which is to come. They are those who are stripped of pride and caused to bow in submission before the only ONE worthy of glory. *"For then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty because of my holy mountain."* (Zep 3:11) Religious men despise them since they see nothing in fleshly religion that they can find satisfaction in. They desire the presence of CHRIST made manifest in the gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD. For here alone do they find rest unto their poor and afflicted souls. CHRIST is ALL. This is the work of GOD and we will rejoice therein. mam