

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XX

Issue 31

Published occasionally for mourners in Zion

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 EXPRESS IMAGE

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Hebrews 1:3

All men will worship a god of their own choosing and design unless they are delivered from their own natural deceptions. The scriptures are quite clear that men have no excuse for not worshipping the one True and Living GOD. *“Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. (i.e.; HE has made HIMSELF manifest in HIS creation) For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.” (Rom 1:19-20)* But the same scriptures point out the rebellious nature of men and their desire to “design” god to fit their own notions. *“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.” (Rom 1:21-23)*

Rather than looking at the wonders of creation and seeking to know HIM who created all things, they have devised a “god” or “gods”, which satisfy their intellect and fit their notion of what is proper and good. Every nation upon the Earth has concocted their own notion of a deity or deities, which oversees their prosperity and aids them in battle and the achievement of their desires. Without exception they have all turned aside from the GOD of GLORY and LIGHT, preferring one which will cater to their own darkened understanding and free will. The nation of Israel is the “poster-child” of this reality. Even when they stood in the shadow of Mt. Sinai, (as the most favored nation upon the Earth) and quaked at the consideration of the glorious conflagration that surrounded that MOUNT, they desired to make themselves a graven image of their own choice. Apart from the intercession of Moses, they would have been rightly destroyed. (see Ex.32:8-14)

This same error plagued them throughout their journey in the wilderness, their subsequent entrance into the “*promised land*”, the building of the Temple, and their captivity in Babylon. Yet their rebellion is never seen more greatly manifested than when they crucified the “*only begotten SON of GOD.*” *“Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” (Acts 2:22-23)*

The error of the Jews is the same error that plagues all men by nature, they will not have this MAN to rule over them. Many have designed a religion which they call “Christianity”, and they make a show of being the followers of CHRIST. They have set aside “holidays”, “holy men” (pastors, bishops, reverends, etc), and various rituals which bring them much satisfaction and salves their religious conscience. The major factor in their adherence to this “religion” is that they believe they have chosen to participate in this endeavor and they will continue in it as long as they desire. They

will not gladly receive the truth which declares that those who are the true sons of GOD were not made so by free will but by the sovereign grace of GOD. *"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)

The LORD has not left this world without a WITNESS to HIS glory, beyond the wonders of creation, (which we have no desire to understate). The LORD HIMSELF has come down to Earth in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin. In doing so HE has revealed all that HE would have men to know of HIS invisible and immortal SELF. Without this condescension, no man (due to his innate blindness and rebellion) could ever "know HIM" as HE is. *"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)

Thus, we read the description of the LORD JESUS CHRIST by the writer of Hebrews, as *"the EXPRESS IMAGE of HIS PERSON"*. That is surely a mouthful and enough information to cause all of those, who have been given eyes to see and ears to hear, to bow down before HIM in worship, adulation, and unending praise. It is in this revelation that the manifestation of the sons of GOD is set forth. Apart from that revelation it is impossible that any man could be acquainted with HIM. *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* (John 3:3) *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* (2Cor 4:6)

CHRIST is the BRIGHTNESS of GOD's glory. This particular Greek word for "brightness" only appears once in the scriptures and it literally means "a brilliant flash". It denotes an intense and overwhelming light before which no man can stand. Saul (later Paul) experienced this "brightness" on the road to Damascus. *"At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me."* (Acts 26:13) When Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream he spoke of the brightness of the image (his own kingdom) which Nebuchadnezzar saw, but was yet overshadowed and destroyed by the overwhelming LIGHT of that STONE cut out of the mountain without hands. (see Dan.2:31-45) This is the same "BRIGHTNESS of CHRIST" that will destroy the wicked. *"And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming."* (2Thess 2:8)

Then we read of HIM as the "EXPRESS IMAGE" of GOD. This Greek word literally means "an engraving". There is no difference between CHRIST and GOD except insofar as HE has revealed HIMSELF in the PERSON of JESUS CHRIST. Otherwise, no man could have seen GOD, since HE is both IMMORTAL (which man is not) and INVISIBLE (which no man can see). This is a STONE of stumbling to many, who see CHRIST as some "secondary" figure in the GODHEAD. Surely Phillip marveled as the LORD said, *"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) Was not the same truth spoken by the prophet of old, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, **The everlasting Father,** The Prince of Peace."* (Isa 9:6)

The grandest display of the glory of the PERSON of GOD is set forth in the Earth when HE reveals that HIS purpose in its creation is to bring glory to HIMSELF in the redemption of unworthy sinners. *"upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."* There can be no understanding of GOD apart from the revelation of JESUS CHRIST as the SAVIOR of HIS elect bride. HE has made no failed attempt to save all men, rather HE has come into the world for the express purpose of saving that people which HE loved from the beginning. Will not the ONE, who does according to HIS will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the Earth, surely accomplish HIS own purpose. Can GOD in anywise fail?

"Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb, We love to hear of thee; No music's like thy charming name Nor half so sweet can be. O let us ever hear thy voice; In mercy to us speak; And in our Priest we will rejoice, Thou great Melchisedec. Our Jesus shall be still our theme, While in this world we stay; We'll sing our Jesus' lovely name, When all things else decay. When we appear in yonder cloud With all thy favored throng, Then will we sing more sweet, more loud, And Christ shall be our song."
(by John Cennick, # 118, Gadsby's Hymns) Have you known this REDEEMER? mam