

# 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 REBUKE OF RELIGIOUS MEN

*And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath. Therefore take unto you now seven bullocks and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you: for him will I accept: lest I deal with you after your folly, in that ye have not spoken of me the thing which is right, like my servant Job. So Eliphaz the Temanite and Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite went, and did according as the LORD commanded them: the LORD also accepted Job.*

*Job 42:7-9*

The only times that we see the anger of the LORD JESUS displayed when we examine HIS short ministry upon the Earth, was when HE was stirred by the disregard for HIS house and the self-righteousness of the religious leaders of the day. We see HIS anger unleashed (twice) upon those who made the temple a place of merchandise (see John 2:15; Matt.21:12) and on several occasions in HIS dealing with the Scribes and Pharisees, pointing out their origins. “*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.*” (John 8:44) “*O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*” (Matt 12:34) (see Matt 23:3) We see HIM also issue a stern rebuke to Peter who unwittingly questioned the necessity and purpose of HIS death at the hands of wicked men. “*Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*” (Matt 16:22-23)

The LORD was derided by these same Scribes and Pharisees for companying with winebibbers, harlots, and publicans. “*And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.*” (Luke15:2) These men and women, with whom HE companied, were what would be termed by the religious and self-righteous crowd; immoral sinners. Yet the LORD was not ashamed to be called their friend. The LORD never openly rebuked or condemned men for “immorality” as men would define it. Now having said that, it is obvious that HE hated sin as much as ever, but HE did not define “sin” as “immorality”.

HE did indeed tell the woman taken in adultery, to go and sin no more, but only after HE told her that HE did not condemn her. She was already quite acquainted with her indiscretions and her worthiness to be stoned according to the Law which she broke. HE pointed out the error of the woman at the well in Samaria, as HE told her all that she did and how many husbands she had and the fact that she was living with a man who was not her husband. HE did not approve of these arrangements, nor did HE wink at the faults which could be clearly seen in them. Yet HE saved HIS disdain for those who thought themselves to be something when they were nothing. “*Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*” (Mat 15:7-9) “*Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith:*

*these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.” (Mat 23:23-25)* They are much akin to those whom Paul warned Timothy about, *“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” (2Tim 3:5)*

Job had three friends who were in many ways commendable. They seemed to have a genuine concern for Job when they had heard of the calamities that had befallen him. They put aside their own needs and traveled from some distance to where he was in order to mourn with him and comfort him in his hour of need. (see Job 2:11) Would that we all had friends of such a mind. They were sincerely touched with the severity of the trials he underwent and wept at the sight of him in such distress. (see Job 2:12) They were so moved with sorrow for his grief that they sat with him and did not even speak a word for seven days. (see Job 2:13)

They began a discourse with Job only after Job had expressed his lament and sorrow of heart. Over the course of time, both Job and his friends conversed about spiritual matters and the manner in which the LORD is pleased to deal with men. While they spoke many things which had an element of truth in them, they were never able to either rightly state the purpose of GOD or the reason and manner in which HE is pleased to bring blessing and chastening to HIS elect children. Job received little if any comfort from them because they were essentially moralistic conditionalists who believe that men can either earn or forfeit the favor of GOD based upon their actions. They are the ancestors of modern day preachers who essentially believe and preach the same in our day. Job did accurately state their inability to bring comfort and help to HIM as he called them *“miserable comforters” (Job 16:2)* and *“forgers of lies, and physicians of no value.” (Job 13:4)*

While Job did not completely comprehend the magnitude of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST, yet his speech was pleasing in the LORD’s sight, because the LORD had chosen him as a vessel of honor, through no activity of Job’s own. He did have some understanding of the grace of GOD, yet as we see in the final chapter of the book, he was woefully ignorant of the LORD. Nonetheless, the LORD commended his speech to the “three stooges”, pointing out that Job was HIS servant in whom HE was well pleased, while reminding them of their own ignorance and inability to come into HIS presence.

We can see several lessons which we might learn from this situation. Job was a man who was chosen by GOD and made righteous and preserved by the LORD and not himself. Had Job been judged for his own knowledge of GOD, he most certainly would have perished. When he was brought to repentance by the revelation of the LORD, he clearly stated that he only knew of the LORD by what he had been taught by others. This is much the same situation that Saul of Tarsus found himself in. Saul walked in his own righteousness for many years, proud of his learning, position, and satisfied with his own obedience, while disdainful of those of lesser station. Yet upon the road to Damascus the LORD revealed HIMSELF unto him, and he was humbled in the dust, calling HIM, LORD. He was indeed a chosen vessel of GOD or else he would have perished in his own knowledge and station.

Bildad, Eliphaz, and Zophar are typical of natural religious men, who often walk in an outwardly acceptable fashion, possessing knowledge of religious matters and able to express and discuss doctrines which they have learned in that religion. Yet they are in reality poor, blind, and naked before the LORD. Now whether or not they were of the elect of GOD, we cannot fully ascertain. In their outward demeanor they were no different than Job or Saul; walking in ignorance. We do have some hope, however, that they were brought to repentance. They did comply with that which the LORD required of them, but then religious men do the same.

Our greatest expectation for their acceptance before the LORD, lays not in their outward obedience to that which the LORD commanded, but rather in that they were directed to go to HIS servant Job, that he might pray for them. In this we see Job as a type of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, our GREAT HIGH PRIEST who is the CHOSEN VESSEL, in whose NAME and RIGHTEOUSNESS all must come to find acceptance in the presence of GOD. *“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” (Heb 7:25-26)* Have you come unto GOD by HIM?

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