

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

OUR TEACHER

And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Matthew 7:28-29

Nicodemus sought out a meeting with the LORD under the cover of darkness. *“There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.” (John 3:1)* The Jews had a ruling council of 71 men called “the Sanhedrin”. Nicodemus was not just a member of the Sanhedrin, but a prominent scholar and teacher among them. While he was fearful of being discovered by the rest of this council in the private company of this MAN JESUS of Nazareth, he was nonetheless carried there by strange curiosity which he could not fully explain. Thus, we can see the grace of GOD at work even among this self-righteous group of Pharisees and Sadducees who for the most part saw the LORD JESUS as merely a threat to their own political power, rather than a SPOKESMAN or PROPHET of GOD.

Yet this man, Nicodemus, unbeknownst to himself, was a man marked out by his FATHER in Heaven, to receive instruction from the lips of GOD that was both, life altering and completely outside the realm of his natural understanding. Even though he had been a student and scholar of the Holy Scriptures and even a teacher of other scholars, yet HE was ordained to sit at the feet of the ONE TEACHER sent from GOD who would strip away all that he thought he knew about entering the Kingdom of GOD. The grace of GOD caused him to know that there was something different and compelling about this MAN, which stimulated his curiosity.

Nicodemus, as most teachers among men do, probably had spent some time pondering many questions that he wanted to ask this MAN JESUS. He probably figured he would engage the LORD with some back-and-forth queries and at least be entertained by an interesting conversation if not enlightened by some gem of wisdom from HIM. Imagine his surprise when the LORD’s first statement preceded his questions, rendering all of his planned discussion as completely irrelevant. I expect he was somewhat in awe at his own ignorance of this basic truth, which the LORD, confronted him with, *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)* He had never heard of such a thing. His mind reeled as he stumbled to grasp this most basic SPIRITUAL TRUTH with his carnal understanding. *“Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” (John 3:4)* Nicodemus reasoned in the only fashion that one who is without SPIRITUAL knowledge can. What the LORD taught Nicodemus is far removed from the natural understanding of men and can only be grasped by those who have undergone the New Birth of which HE speaks.

The LORD enabled many to recognize the unique nature of HIS teaching. *“And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.” (Mar 1:22)* Religious men think that they can learn sound doctrine and practice and gain understanding of SPIRITUAL TRUTH, by hiring teachers who recite the thoughts and words of other men of like mind. Some even spend years at various Bible schools sitting at the feet of august Professors in these institutions, whose office walls are covered with their credentials and various honors. *“But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared,*

and taken.” (Isa 28:13) The same is true today even as it was in the days when the LORD came into the world in flesh and blood. The SPIRITUAL nature of the Kingdom of GOD is hidden from them except that the LORD be pleased to send HIS WORD with POWER even as HE did then.

The LORD JESUS spoke the WORD with POWER and AUTHORITY because HE is the POWER and AUTHORITY of the WORD. *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:1-2) “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” (Rev 22:13)*

The LORD JESUS taught with AUTHORITY, because HE is both LIGHT and LIFE. *“All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:3-4) If a man is to gain any “light” at all, it must be revealed to him by HIM who is the LIGHT. “I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.” (John 12:46) If a man is to gain “light”, he must first be given LIFE to bring him out of the state of death which all men are in by nature. Paul describes this very action in his letter to the Ephesians, “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.” (Eph 2:1) “Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” (Eph 2:5-6)*

The LORD JESUS taught with AUTHORITY because HE needed not for any man to teach HIM. We see this illustrated even while HE was yet a mere lad. *“And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:46-49) While the learned “doctors” pored over the scrolls day and night seeking to understand the WORD of GOD; the LORD JESUS came into the world knowing every WORD upon those pages, being the AUTHOR and FINISHER of every one.*

The LORD JESUS taught with AUTHORITY because HE had the SPIRIT of GOD without measure. *“For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” (John 3:34) The LORD raises up men and gives them various degrees of understanding and the ability to declare that truth according to the good pleasure of HIS will. Yet all men, regardless of their gifts and callings have partial knowledge and can boast only in HIM. “And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.” (1Cor 8:2) “For now we see through a glass, darkly--now I know in part.” (1Cor 13:12) But the LORD JESUS had no such limitations. “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.” (John 5:26-27)*

JESUS CHRIST teaches us who HE is. *“He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” (John 14:9) “I and my Father are one.” (John 10:30) “Before Abraham was, I am.” (John 8:58) “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) “I am the door of the sheep.” (John 10:7)*

JESUS CHRIST teaches us what HE came to do. *“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10) “I lay down my life for the sheep.” (John 10:15) “And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.” (Mar 8:31) “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:27-28)*

JESUS CHRIST teaches us what HE will do in the future. *“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2-3) “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.” (Mat 25:31-33) “Surely I come quickly. Amen.” (Rev 22:20) mam*