

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

CHANCES AND OPPORTUNITIES

And I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them. Ecclesiastes 9:11-12

Hardly a day goes by that I do not hear men speak of being “lucky” when good things befall them or lamenting their “bad luck” when things do not go according to their desires. They are tossed to and fro in these matters thinking themselves to be as the waves of the ocean. This is the realm of the natural understanding which men are born with. We are not surprised when we hear this philosophy expounded by the men of this world, but we are astounded beyond measure when we hear those who claim to believe in the Living GOD of Heaven and Earth, speaking with the same language and espousing the same darkened understanding.

Just recently I saw a tag on the front of a vehicle which made my jaw to drop, my heart to sink, and anger to rise up within me all at the same time. The slogan on the tag said, “Give JESUS a chance to save you, HE died for the opportunity.” My first thought was to tear the tag off of the vehicle and throw it into the nearest dumpster, but I was restrained by calmer thoughts.

I am fairly confident that the person who owned the vehicle had the intention of declaring the gospel. Yet they could not have missed the gospel any farther and in reality, set forth one of the most blasphemous statements that I have read in recent days. The sad reality is that this is the “gospel” (so called) of the modern era, and I would venture to say that the majority of those who call themselves “Christians” have no objection to such drivel. Darkness has enveloped their minds and they have become enemies of the cross of CHRIST, tossed to and fro with the winds of deceit and the doctrines of devils, spread by ravaging wolves who desire to destroy the people of GOD, sowing seeds of discord among them.

The LORD said, “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*” (Isa 55:8-9) Men, by nature, are shut up to the darkness of natural understanding and cannot escape from it apart from the LORD’s mercy in quickening them and causing them to see HIS glory and their depravity. “*I have seen the travail, which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it.*” (Ecc 3:10) This is all in keeping with the LORD’s ordained purpose to magnify the glory of HIS grace in the redemption of sinners by the blood of the ONLY BEGOTTEN SON of GOD.

There is some merit to speaking of things that occur in the human realm as by “chance”, for such appears to be the case to the weakness of human flesh. Men consider the randomness of events because they cannot comprehend the detail necessary to cause events to occur according to a DIVINE order. Solomon addresses this very matter in describing the seeming lack of order in the rising and falling of men. Rich men lose their riches, healthy men get sick, weak men grow strong, uncommon occurrences happen without warning or explanation. Time and chance happeneth to all. Nations come and nations go. Few things are predictable by men.

Yet the LORD GOD of Heaven and Earth leaves nothing to chance and is not ashamed to declare the same to men. *“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: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” (Isa 46:9-11)* *“I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.” (Isa 45:5-7)*

It may appear unto men that events unfold in the Earth in a random fashion, yet the LORD plainly declares that such is not the case. How foolish of men then to have any consideration of the salvation of sinners to be according to chance and opportunity. To believe such one can have no consideration of the total depravity of men nor of their inability in their flesh to approach unto HIM *“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.” (1Tim 6:16)*

How much more wicked is it then to consider that men have the power to “give GOD a chance”, as if HE is waiting idly by; just hoping that someone would give HIM permission to save them. I cannot even describe the complete absurdity of such consideration. Nothing about the salvation of sinners is according to “chance”. Most assuredly not in any wise that men would be the ones dictating the terms of such and “letting GOD” do anything. The LORD’s salvation of sinners is always on purpose and according to HIS purpose and certainly not theirs.

HE sent HIS SON into the world for this very purpose, *“HE shall save HIS people from their sins.” (Mat. 1:21)* HE said that HE came *“to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19:10)* Nowhere does HE even imply that HE is waiting for the “chance” to save them. Rather HE declares, *“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)* HE sets the stage upon which HE brings salvation unto men and not vice versa. We see HIM going through Samaria to save the woman at the well. We see HIM going to Zaccheus’ house after calling him down from the Sycamore tree. We see HIM passing by the very spot where blind Bartimaeus sat or the woman with the issue of blood. We see HIM meeting Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Did any of them give HIM a “chance” to save them, or did HE not cause all things to work together for their good and HIS glory in bringing salvation to them?

It has become an increasingly common thing to hear some say that CHRIST JESUS died to give men the opportunity to be saved. They tell us that HIS death makes salvation a possibility for all men if they will but take advantage of it. The devils in hell could not have devised a more twisted and corrupt consideration of the shedding of HIS precious blood than this. HE has not shed one drop of that blood in vain. HE has not made the salvation of those HE died for a possibility but rather a certainty. *“Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” (Heb 9:12)*

Opportunities and circumstances are dictated by HIM who knows the end from the beginning and who shows mercy to whom HE wills and hardens those HE has appointed unto wrath. *“Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (Rom 9:20-21)* Does not such knowledge humble the heart of a proud man and cause him to fall upon his face before HIM? The sweet and comforting words of the gospel assures that man, who feels his need of CHRIST and trembles to consider standing before the GOD of all the Earth without a MEDIATOR, that CHRIST has died for sinners and bids them come unto HIM. *“A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.” (Mat 12:20)* HE is not waiting for the opportunity to save them, but rather HE has determined to save them from before the foundation of the world. HE will lose none of those for whom HE shed HIS blood. *“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)* Do you hear HIM calling?

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