

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*

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGMENT

He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. Psalm 72:2

We are blessed to live in a constitutional republic, wherein the principles which form our laws and manner of governance are enshrined in a written Constitution. This document is recorded in black and white for all to see. Those who would govern and those who would be the governed must all abide under the same principle. The making of laws and those that would govern by them must do so in accordance with the principles which are chronicled in its pages. Such a document is necessary for fair and principled enforcement of the laws of the land, due to the natural sinful tendencies of men. This natural bent of men will ultimately lead to tyranny and/or anarchy if the principles of governance are dictated by the arbitrary whims of dictators and kings.

The sands of time are littered with the blood of those who were unfortunate enough to live under despots and tyrants. Even the most benevolent of such leaders will ultimately govern in such a manner which will suit their own personal gain, whether it be the quest of riches or the simple desire to maintain a place of power. In the scriptures we read of many examples which bear this out. It is rare to find anyone who is in a place of leadership who does not, to some extent, love to have the preeminence. The only thing (humanly speaking) that will prevent the misuse of governmental authority is the presence of a written document which outlines the limitations of both the governors and the governed.

The Kingdom of GOD is governed by *"the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."* (1Tim 6:15) As a MAN HE has demonstrated HIS own sinless character while being tempted in all points like other men. *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."* (1Pet 2:22) HE is a most kind and benevolent RULER. *"Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory."* (Mat 12:18-20)

While HE has both the power and right to rule as the most powerful despot the world has ever seen, (and whom no man could ever call into question) yet HE has revealed HIMSELF as ONE whose kingdom is hedged about by two immutable principles which emanate from HIS very PERSON. *"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom."* (Heb 1:8) *"He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law."* (Isa 42:4) *"Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD."* (Jer 9:23-24)

"Righteousness" is the scepter of HIS kingdom. A scepter was that official instrument of recognition and acceptance which an ancient king would hold in his hand, whereby either to accept a person into his presence or by withholding it to banish them. We see this illustrated as

Esther approached King Ahasueras (see Est.5:2; 8:4). In like fashion there is but ONE SCEPTER in this Kingdom of Righteousness and it is the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST. Without this priceless commodity a man cannot be received into this Kingdom nor have any sort of approach unto HIM who dwells in the LIGHT to which no man can approach. *“In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.”* (Jer 33:16)

Many are those who expect to come into the LORD's presence with their own righteousness. They have no understanding of the fact that *“we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.”* (Isa 64:6) They are like Cain of old, Nadab and Abihu, or the Jews spoken of by Paul, *“For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”* (Rom 10:3) What a wondrous grace is bestowed upon men when they are made to know themselves to be unworthy of the least of the LORD's mercies and caused to flee unto CHRIST as their only RIGHTEOUSNESS, in heaven or on earth.

As surely as this Kingdom is one of RIGHTEOUSNESS, so too is it a Kingdom which is hedged about with judgment. The LORD has sent HIS SPIRIT to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment. HIS judgment is sure and steadfast. HE may show mercy, but HE shall demonstrate judgment in the earth even as HE already has in the heavens, when HE cast out one third of its inhabitants (see Rev 12:4). *“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”* (Heb 9:27)

All of the philosophies of men are designed either to, supposedly, prepare men for that judgment (as in the case of most religion) or to put it out of their mind as one might “whistle as they pass by the graveyard”. This is primarily why we find the penchant of some to deny the creation of all things by a Sovereign CREATOR. For, if we have a beginning which is solely in HIS hands then, surely, we must have an ending which involves coming into HIS presence.

Among other reasons, this is primarily why men hate the preaching of the Gospel of the Glory of the Blessed GOD. For nowhere in the annals of time has the judgment of GOD been seen in its grandest, most solemn, and awful display; than when the Eternal FATHER did pour out HIS wrath upon HIS only begotten SON, on the account of the sin of HIS people which was laid upon HIS back. *“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.”* (Isa 53:4-6) *“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”* (1Cor 1:18)

The preaching of the cross is an offense unto the natural man because it reveals that the only acceptable righteousness in the Kingdom of Heaven is the righteousness of JESUS CHRIST. It is also an offense to the natural man because it reveals the judgment of GOD from Heaven upon both the sin and the righteousness of men. This is totally unacceptable to men by nature who are convinced that they can influence GOD by their deeds of obedience and the activity of what they call faith. They find it reprehensible that salvation is the gift of GOD and is not determined by anything which the creature can bring or perform. As Cain grew angry at the LORD's rejection so too do those men who expect to worship the LORD as they see fit.

Righteousness and judgment are met in CHRIST, and all who are moved by sovereign grace to behold themselves as sinners and HE alone as worthy of worship, will of necessity fall down at HIS feet and give HIM praise. *“That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.”* (Heb 6:17-20) mam