

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XXI

Issue 15

*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*

---

## CONVERTED

*Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:3*

The LORD went about HIS ministry of preaching to men with one purpose in mind. HE desired to bring glory to HIS FATHER and to do HIS will. HE announced that purpose when HE quoted the words which Isaiah had written, hundreds of years before. *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."* (Luke 4:18-19) In the carrying out of that purpose HE determined to do two things, one which is acceptable to religious men, and the other which is not.

The first and foremost activity which HE engaged in was to seek out the lost sheep of the house of Israel. HE ministered to the halt, the lame, the poor in Spirit, and the blind. HIS preaching was designed to minister help and healing to those who were bowed down with sin, laboring under this bondage day and night. HE declared this when HE said, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* (Mat 11:28) Who can doubt HIS intention to minister aid to the helpless and those overwhelmed with their burden?

HIS other activity (which is roundly rejected by self-righteous and religious men) is that of confirming those that will not believe, in their own condemnation. Now we are certain that the LORD has made some vessels unto honor and some unto dishonor as it has pleased HIM. HE confirms that fact in the gospel which HE taught to the Apostle Paul as Paul quotes the LORD's own words which HE delivered to the prophet Malachi, *"Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* (Rom.9:13) *"I have loved you, saith the LORD. Yet ye say, Wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the LORD: yet I loved Jacob, And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness."* (Mal 1:2-3)

When the LORD spoke with Nicodemus, HE plainly stated HIS primary purpose of delivering HIS people and defining the plight of those who desire to walk on in their natural darkness. *"For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."* (John 3:17-18) By nature men are not in a neutral state, nor on the fence pondering whether or not they will believe and be saved. They will not believe apart from being given the gift of FAITH, as the LORD said, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."* (John 6:44)

All men, without exception, are under the condemnation, which was passed upon the world, as a result of Adam's transgression. All are guilty and all deserve to be destroyed in everlasting fire. Who among men can say that this is not so? Only those with a sense of their own righteousness or those who cling to their religious dogmas and creeds. Paul clearly states this condition which all men share, *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their*

*feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Rom 3:10-18)*

This is a dilemma from which a man cannot extricate himself. He is hopelessly mired in the morass of his sin and the darkness of his understanding, and neither can deliver himself nor have any desire to be delivered, except that the LORD should awaken him and grant unto him such desire. He has no one to blame for his condition, for even though he was born with a nature that embraced sin, yet he has willingly followed that nature and brought condemnation upon himself by a disregard of the commandments of the LORD, which he is not ignorant of. (see Rom.1:18-25) In the Apostles words, he is “*without excuse.*”

So, we see the LORD preaching in order to enlighten some and at the same time confirm others in their darkness and unbelief. “*And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand.*” (Luke 8:10) HE gave glory to HIS FATHER, as HE thanked HIM for this ministry. “*In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.*” (Luke 10:21)

Paul confirms this very truth as he rejoices in the “sweet smell” of the gospel which he was called to preach; “*For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?*” (2Cor 2:15-16) He says that the same gospel which is a sweet savor unto those that believe, is a foul odor to those who do not. Who can explain why it is that two men can hear the same message and one rejoices in it while the other finds it offensive? It is not humanly possible to anticipate those who will believe anymore than we can determine who will not. Thus, we are certain that only the grace of GOD bestowed upon those that believe makes them to differ from those who will not. “*For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*” (1Co 4:7)

This difference is manifested in that event which the LORD described to Nicodemus, “*Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*” (John 3:7-8) He describes here a supernatural event which the LORD causes to occur, quite separate from anything which the one upon whom this blessing takes place, does. Yet it is this event which is absolutely necessary in order for a man to enter the Kingdom of GOD.

We often hear the word “converted” or “conversion” used as though it is an activity of the human will and one which can be performed at any time which is suitable to the one who “converts” himself. The folly of such an idea can be seen in the words of the Prophet Jeremiah; “*Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.*” (Jer 13:23) “*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*” (Jer 10:23) Our LORD said the same, “*O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.*” (Mat 12:34)

To be “converted” simply means to “change to an opposite direction”. The LORD said that a man cannot enter the kingdom of GOD without a “conversion”. HE alone can bring this to pass. However, when HE has brought this to pass, then there is a “change of direction” in the desire of the man. The man who is converted recognizes the awful state of his sin, repents of it, believing the WORD of the LORD. He becomes something that he was not before, as the Apostle says, “*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.*” (2Cor 5:17-18)

Paul is an example of a converted man. He was by his own admission, at one time, a very religious man, satisfied with his condition before GOD. “*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*” (Php 3:7-11) mam