

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

THE STONE CUT OUT WITHOUT HANDS

And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner.

Mark 12:10

Mankind's knowledge of GOD is strictly limited to that which HE is pleased to reveal unto them. "*Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; 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 6:15-16) Yet this has not prevented him from seeking to make God in his own image while defining Him as one with characteristics and limitations which are suitable to his own imagination of how he would like for God to be or vainly describes Him in terms of his own making.

Paul addresses this very subject in his letter to the Romans. "*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.*" (Rom 1:21-23) He makes it clear that GOD has revealed HIMSELF in the glories of creation which surrounds men daily. "*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*" (Rom 1:20) Yet while surrounded by this grandeur and testimony to the eternal power and glory of the True and Living GOD, they have rejected HIM in favor of their own vile imaginations.

Most men perceive GOD as having various needs and desires which they are able to meet in one fashion or another. "*Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself.*" (Psa 50:21) Yet the LORD has plainly stated that man can supply nothing to HIM. "*If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.*" (Psa 50:12) In this Day of SALVATION we often hear some tell men that GOD is trying to save them and that they can not only grant HIM, HIS wish by deciding to be saved but can also make HIM happy by persuading other men to do the same. What folly resides in the wicked imagination of men that makes HIM their servant rather than vice versa.

Daniel interpreted a dream which the LORD had given to Nebuchadnezzar. In that dream the LORD revealed that HE would establish a Kingdom which would never pass away. "*The God of heaven (shall) set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*" (Dan 2:44) This was indeed a great mystery, even to Daniel, as he interpreted this vision, for he had some understanding that this was a future event. "*Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels (i.e.; the messengers) desire to look into.*" (1Pet 1:10-12)

Daniel reported what Nebuchadnezzar had seen in his dream "*Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the*

clay, the silver, and the gold.” (Dan 2:45) What a glorious vision this was! While they had no clear understanding of the meaning of this dream, they were nonetheless compelled to tremble before the ALMIGHTY ONE who gave it. The LORD gave a clear interpretation of this dream when HE told HIS disciples, *“Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Mat 16:18)* Many have wrongly concluded that the “rock” of which HE speaks is Peter. Yet HE merely contrasted Peter (i.e., petros, a piece of stone) with that ROCK (i.e.; PETRA, a mass of rock). Peter was merely a pebble taken out of the ROCK, not made with hands, who is ETERNAL. CHRIST is that ROCK upon which that Kingdom (i.e.; the mountain) forever rests.

CHRIST has established HIS Kingdom in the Earth, manifesting HIMSELF as the LORD of Lords and KING of Kings, as HE came to redeem that people which HE loved from before the foundation of the world. In that redeeming work HE has laid down HIS LIFE as a ransom for them, cancelling their debt of sin by the shedding of HIS blood in their behalf. HE has taken that same LIFE back unto HIMSELF as HE triumphed over the grave. HE has manifested the acceptability of HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS in the courts of heaven by HIS triumphal ascension to the RIGHT HAND of GOD. In that same redeeming work HE calls HIS sheep by name, seeking and saving each one, giving them LIFE and FAITH, whereupon they call upon HIM, and follow HIM. HE shall yet return to gather them unto HIMSELF in the final day, as HE raises the dead in CHRIST to LIFE forever.

It would seem reasonable that such a glorious and merciful SAVIOR, who came to deliver men from oppression and death, would be roundly respected and gladly received by men. Yet we see that the opposite is true. From the beginning men have rebelled at HIS rulership and sought out many inventions, false gods, and wicked practices in their quest to not have HIM to rule over them. All of the various religions which men have devised are a result of this pursuit. Even the Nation of Israel, whom the LORD had set apart in the Earth as a particular and peculiar (i.e.; set apart unto HIM) people, hated HIM. This was first manifested by their craven disobedience to HIS Law and then their idolatry which was a substitute for true worship.

Then they rejected HIS WORD and killed HIS prophets, as Stephen testified to them prior to their stoning of him. *“Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.” (Acts 7:51-52)*

The Jews, and in particular the Pharisee’s and Sadducees, are an illustration of the epitome of man’s religion. In them we can see a picture of modern-day religionists, many of whom call themselves Christians. They give lip service to believing the Word of GOD as long as they are able to interpret it in such a fashion as supports their own preconceived notions. Most are convinced that they play a necessary part in the establishment of CHRIST’s Kingdom in the Earth. Whether it be by decisions which they make or proselytes they call. Yet they rise up in anger and disbelief at the notion that CHRIST alone is the BUILDER of that Kingdom, which is *“not made with hands”*. (see Heb.9:11) Truly this is an indication of the rejection of that STONE by the builders (as they imagine themselves to be.)

CHRIST is that STONE upon which all of the hopes of HIS people are built. HE is that FOUNDATION upon which HIS entire Kingdom rests.

Behold the sure foundation stone Which God in Zion lays,
To build our heavenly hopes upon, And his eternal praise.
Chosen of God, to sinners dear, And saints adore the name;
They trust their whole salvation here, Nor shall they suffer shame.
The foolish builders, scribe and priest, Reject it with disdain;
Yet on this rock the church shall rest, And envy rage in vain.
What though the gates of hell withstood? Yet must this building rise;

’Tis thy own work almighty God, And wondrous in our eyes. (by Isaac Watts, Gadsby’s #141)

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” (Heb 9:24) Is CHRIST, alone, your HOPE, or do you trust in something you have done? *“The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD’S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes. (Psa 118:23)* mam