

# 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*

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## THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.*

*Hebrews 6:1-2*

Isaiah had recorded the mindset and failing of the Hebrews many years before the human author (whom I believe to be the apostle Paul) wrote this epistle to the Hebrews. *“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) *“Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men.”* (Isa 29:13)

One of the tenets of all human religion is the understanding that the foundational truths of their religion can be taught to others by human endeavor. The LORD told the children of Israel that the day would come when HE would reveal HIS determination to call HIS elect out from among the sons of men. *“But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”* (Jer 31:33-34) This is a “covenant” which is quite in contrast to the “covenant of law” which they broke.

This “covenant of law” which was given to Moses was established upon a “conditional” basis. *“For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.”* (Rom 10:5) Those that did not keep the law would perish. Thus, the curse of the law was visited upon them *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* (Rom 3:23) *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.”* (Gal 3:10)

All of man’s various religions, reject the notion that a partial obedience to the law of GOD is the same as complete disobedience. Religious men believe that they have some ability to gain the favor of GOD by this partial obedience. Yet the scripture is very clear, *“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”* (Jas 2:10) Isaiah points out that it is not just our sin that separates us from GOD but our supposed righteousness as well. *“But 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) Thus any “conditional covenant” that depends upon the ability of men to adhere to its precepts leaves them in a hopeless condition from which they cannot escape.

The wonder of the salvation of sinners lies in the fact that no human reason can explain why the LORD should show mercy to any. David expressed this amazement when he said, *“What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”* (Psa 8:4) Bildad contemplated the same when he said to Job, *“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that*

*is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?" (Job 25:4-6)*

It is with this wonder ever in our minds that we presently declare that CHRIST is the SAVIOR of sinners and will lose none for whom HE has shed HIS blood as an atonement for their sin. CHRIST is not just a savior who waits for men to respond to HIM, but rather is a SAVIOR who saves to the uttermost, completely and absolutely without the aid of any. Thus, Paul declares the "*doctrine of CHRIST*." It is quite popular among the various sects and denominations of those who claim to be the followers of CHRIST, to declare that CHRIST has done all that HE can to save every man on the planet if they will just permit HIM to be their DELIVERER. This is not the "*doctrine of CHRIST*'.

Paul describes the preaching of the "*doctrine of CHRIST*" when HE tells the Corinthians, "*For I determined not to know any thing among you, save (i.e.; except) Jesus Christ, and him crucified." (1Cor 2:2), and the Galatians, "*But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." (Gal 6:14) Then he sums up that very thought to the Colossians, "*Christ is all, and in all.*" (Col 3:11) This is the "*doctrine of CHRIST*."**

It is not surprising that Paul should warn these Hebrews, to leave the outward trappings of religion (i.e.; the principles) in order to focus upon "*the doctrine of CHRIST*". They were culturally and religiously attuned to holding onto the outward forms of religion. None of the things which he counsels them to "leave" are sinful in and of themselves nor are we to assume they have no validity. Did HE not send HIS own apostles into the world with the command to "baptize" those who believe? Does not Paul himself, mention the "laying on of hands, and the "doctrines" of the resurrection and certain final judgement? All of those things are true, yet those things are not themselves "*the doctrine of CHRIST*". Religious men in all ages have made these outward practices and teachings to be the stuff of separation between brethren, rather than the focus of their quest being "*CHRIST is ALL*". "*Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.*" (Isa 50:11) "*Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." (Isa 55:2) This is the "*doctrine of CHRIST*."*

The "*doctrine of CHRIST*" is primarily concerned with the PERSON of CHRIST. HE is not simply a "part" or a "piece" of the gospel message. Rather, one cannot rightly know or proclaim the gospel apart from a desire to know CHRIST HIMSELF and be found in HIM. "*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: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Php 3:8-10)

The "*doctrine of CHRIST*" centers itself in the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST. No man can be found to be "righteous" before GOD who does not stand clothed in the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST alone. There is no mixture with that which is of men. "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (1Cor 1:30)*

The "*doctrine of CHRIST*" speaks peace to the sons of GOD through "*the blood of the EVERLASTING COVENANT*." CHRIST is the REDEEMER who shall see of the travail of HIS soul and be satisfied. By HIS blood, the sins of HIS elect are atoned for and the Law forever satisfied. "*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) "*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.*" (Eph 1:7)

The "*doctrine of CHRIST*" is seen in the particular nature of HIS redemptive work. HE did not set out to "redeem" the whole race of mankind and miserably fail in that quest. Rather HE shed HIS blood for a particular people which were chosen in HIM before the foundation of the world. HE shall lose none of those for whom HE bled. To this end HE calls them by name from the wilderness of sin where they have gladly dwelt. "*I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:14-15) Do you rejoice in "*the doctrine of CHRIST*?"*