

singing : "Thy mercy my GOD" #11

Welcome friends to another broadcast of "Morsels for Zion's Poor"

Gamaliel was a man raised up by GOD and given earthly wisdom and the ability to be a teacher of men in matters pertaining to the Laws of the Jews. His most famous pupil was one Saul of Tarsus. Under his instruction Paul gained a strong fundamental understanding of the law and Jewish traditions, which served him well in later times as the LORD was pleased to remove the scales from his eyes that he might more clearly see (in contrast) the damning nature of the law and the freedom, which is given to the sons of GOD in CHRIST, from that law.

The LORD uses all sorts of men, even those who have no love of HIM or HIS way; to fulfill HIS purpose, giving some, great wisdom and even a measure of understanding, which is useful in the deliverance of those whom HE loves from various dangers and snares which are in their paths.

Surely the Jews would have killed Paul numerous times were this not the case. One illustration of this that stands out to us is when Claudius Lysias had him taken by cover of night to Antipatris, to protect him from those intent upon his demise. In this we rejoice as we see the controlling hand of GOD in all of men's affairs and we are made to reflect upon Paul's words, "*If God be for us, who can be against us?*" In like fashion we see Gamaliel calming the more radical elements of the Pharisees saying, "*And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.*"

In Gamaliel's words we see proven, the fact, that even some who are not "believers" are given some knowledge of the absolute nature of GOD's decrees, and therefore such is no sign of true faith and desire to worship HIM. Religions of all sorts recognize certain facts about the LORD which may be true, yet such knowledge is not "the knowledge of CHRIST" without which they shall surely perish, regardless of their doctrine or sincerity in their own religion.

Paul warned the Ephesian elders of the fact that in the near future in which they lived, the very base nature of man would be demonstrated and some (even of their own number) would start to divide themselves up into various sects and form spheres of influence by promoting themselves rather than the gospel of CHRIST. This spirit is seen in Diotrefes, of whom John said "*who loveth to have the preeminence*" This very trait is completely opposite to the characteristics of any who would be the follower of CHRIST. If CHRIST is ALL and in all, then there is no room for any man to raise himself up or seek a place of higher esteem among the brethren. There is no place for the sons of GOD to glory except in HIM.

The LORD has given various gifts and offices to the church for her benefit. Unfortunately, men by their very nature have corrupted these offices and often substituted "learning" for "gifts" or used "gifts" to gain preeminence among the saints. It is a widespread practice among many calling themselves the followers of CHRIST to set men apart into hierarchies among the saints as some gladly receive titles and expect to have deferential treatment, and salaried positions, given to them because they have the particular gifts of teaching or preaching.

As important as these particular gifts are, the possession of such does not confer upon the recipients some status which is not enjoyed by all of the brethren. Nor do these gifts comprise the totality of "ministry". These gifts are given for the purpose of equipping the saints to perform the work of the ministry, rather than the ministry being that which is defined by preaching and limited to those whom the LORD has given these particular gifts.

It is a demonstration of the corruptible nature of men, when we see any clamoring for some sort of recognition or status among the saints. To think of ourselves as we "ought to think" is to confess that we are unworthy sinners, blessed just to eat of the crumbs which fall from the MASTER's table. Not a one of us have anything that we have not received, and HE alone is worthy of ALL praise. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

"Thy free grace alone," #11 **If you would like a free transcript of this broadcast email us at forthe poor@windstream.net ,**