

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XIX

Issue 49

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

THE GOSPEL YOU HAVE RECEIVED

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. Galatians 1:9

Nothing is more common among professing Christians than apostasy from the faith which many at one time seemed to embrace. It is evidenced in the disappearance of multitudes of churches which were established in the early days of the apostle's ministries. Paul warned the Ephesian elders of this tendency as he, with tears, prophetically stated that even some of them would go astray. (see Acts 20:28-31.) He also warned Timothy that such apostasy would surely occur in his lifetime. *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* (2Tim 4:3-4)

We see this illustrated for us in the multitudes which came to follow CHRIST in the early days of HIS ministry. Thousands flocked to hear HIS every word and to speak highly of HIM, so much so that the Pharisees became jealous of HIS popularity and began to plot HIS demise. But ultimately many only followed him for the loaves and fishes with which HE fed them, and to see the miracles which HE did in healing the sick and raising the dead to life. The thousands dwindled to a handful, which prompted the LORD to ask HIS disciples if they too would depart from HIM. *"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?"* (John 6:67)

What was it that brought about this "falling away"? We can clearly see it defined for us in the verses leading up to the LORD's searching question. HE stood in the synagogue and declared these words in such a straightforward manner as to lay the axe to the root of man's religious endeavors and his ability to approach GOD by his own effort. *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. **From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.**"* (John 6:63-66)

We should not be surprised at this since the LORD taught that such would be the case in HIS parable of the Sower. (see Matt.13:1-9) Some of the "seed" fell upon the stony ground and immediately sprung up but soon withered, not having any root. This is typical of those who often have euphoric "experiences" which ultimately fade and they have no basis upon which to stand, only to keep searching for another "experience" much like a drunkard seeks to find happiness in his bottle. Some fell upon the thorny ground and even though they expressed some agreement, perhaps even a measure of human remorse over their sin, (i.e.; that which falls short of true SPIRIT induced repentance), the cares of this world overcame their desire to embrace that truth which they professed to believe. This is typical of those who received not a love of the truth that they might be saved. (see II Thes.2:10) Like the proverbial sow that is washed, they return to their wallowing in the mire. *"And for this cause God shall send them*

strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” (2Thes 2:11-12)

Many conclude that this is descriptive of moral decay, and while such might be demonstrated, yet that unrighteousness in which the natural man has the most pleasure (and is the source of his greatest damnation) is in his free will religion wherein he thinks to produce and present his own righteousness unto the LORD. *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” (2Tim 2:19) “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (1Cor 3:11) The unadulterated Gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD is this FOUNDATION. CHRIST is ALL. “Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” (Isa 28:16)*

This is that “gospel” which Paul says that the Galatians “*have received*” from him, and exhorts them not to depart from it, for there is no alternative gospel which can be said to be true. He knows that there will be many who are yet to come (and were already among them) who would pervert the plain message of JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified, adding to it all sorts of duties and activities designed to give them something other than CHRIST to fix their vision on and rely upon. Since many of them (probably most) were Jews, he knew that their natural tendency would be to seek to mix in some “law” with the “gospel”. That which is of the “law” is not of “FAITH” as he goes on to point out to them that the purpose of the law was to be a “schoolmaster” to bring them unto CHRIST, and not a moral code or list of duties which are to be carried out by those made free from the law of sin and death by the law of the SPIRIT OF LIFE in CHRIST JESUS.

He goes on to define the “gospel” which they had “received” (i.e.; from him as a messenger sent by GOD). Wherever he went he was determined to know nothing among them but JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified. They gladly “heard” his message and now they were in danger of departing from that “FOUNDATION” which he had built upon. He said this gospel was:

Not according to the natural man’s reason. *“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.” (Gal 1:11) The true gospel is not built upon the natural understanding of men, nor can it be received by the same. “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1Cor 2:14) This is what the LORD told Nicodemus, “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)*

Not taught by the power of the flesh nor the skill of oration. *“For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.” (Gal 1:12) While he, as an Apostle, was directly taught by the lips of CHRIST, the same POWER which opened HIS understanding did also apply the preached WORD to their ears and heart. “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2Cor 4:5-6)*

Not resting upon any carnal religion or tradition. In fact, it is that which is set against all such. *“For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews’ religion---And profited in the Jews’ religion above many my equals in mine own nation, -- But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by his grace.” (Gal 1:13-15) This “calling” caused him to declare, “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: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” Have you received this gospel? mam*