

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 JOYFUL SOUND

*Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk,
O LORD, in the light of thy countenance.*

Psalm 89:15

To say that we live in a day when the gospel has been subverted, perverted, and distorted, would be an understatement of the highest order. Most organized religion in the present time is quite content to rest upon its laurels of past "glory", (i.e.; their creeds, confessions, traditions and liturgies) having little desire or need to examine whether or not the message that they are proclaiming, far and wide, is indeed the same gospel which was declared by Paul and the rest of the Apostles. Since the vast majority of so called "christendom", is convinced of the ability of man's "free will", to choose to follow the LORD or not, we are not surprised to see the message of the present time to be a mixture of psychology and entertainment.

There is very little preaching today that does not in some measure adopt this "mixture", even that which upon its surface appears to be doctrinally sound. Because one accurately depicts the facts concerning the Person and Work of CHRIST, does not necessarily mean that the message they completely and exclusively declare is nothing but JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified. I often hear some declaring some truth that I rejoice in, only to be disappointed to hear their conclusion which reverts back to the response and work of men, to either manifest faith or to walk in some outward obedience, which is recognized and commended.

The Psalmist speaks of a people who are highly blessed, because they have been given a measure of understanding (i.e.; "that know") of the "joyful sound". We believe that the "joyful sound", must indeed be a reference to the Gospel which literally means "a good or delightful message." This "joyful sound" has gone into all the earth, but it has been "heard or hearkened to" and therefore "known" by relatively few. "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Rom 10:18) "But they have not all obeyed (this Greek word literally means hearken to) the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?(Rom 10:16)

We do not point this out in order to try to stir men up to some activity of "faith", but rather to emphasize the necessity of a work of Grace, ("i.e.; "ye must be born again.") which must take place in order for a man to be gladdened in his heart and soul, upon "hearing" this "joyful sound". This is that dawning of "light" ("And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32)) which is visited upon the elect of GOD when HE is pleased to give them eyes to see and ears to hear. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God; Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." (2Tim 1:7-10)

Those who are blessed by GOD do indeed rejoice in "knowing" the "joyful sound". That which is a "joyful" message to a man who is convinced of his inability to bring anything of value to the

LORD, is a declaration of the complete work of salvation which is wrought by CHRIST for such sinners. How can a man who feels that he has no faith, bring faith to the LORD? Yet what a joyous relief it is to such a man to hear that CHRIST is the GIVER of faith, and that whatever HE requires HE has provided. This is a “joyful sound”.

When the Philippian jailer cried out, “*sirs what must I do to be saved*”, he was not given a checklist or a decision card. Rather Paul said, “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*” (Acts 16:31) This was not a “formula” which if the man followed, he would gain salvation. This was a command by Paul for him to cast himself upon the mercy of CHRIST, whom he had little if any knowledge of. How could he believe on HIM of whom he had not heard? Thus we believe that Paul was given grace to declare unto him the unsearchable riches of CHRIST, and as the LORD gave him faith, he did indeed believe “on” CHRIST. He rejoiced in the “joyful sound.”

The Gospel is a “joyful sound” because it is a declaration of the supremacy of CHRIST; “*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*” (Php 2:6-11)

The Gospel is a “joyful sound” because it is a manifestation of the complete work of CHRIST in the salvation of that people which HE has loved with an everlasting love. “*But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*” (2Thes 2:13-14) HIS choice of a people and HIS work in their behalf insures that every one for whom HE came into the world to redeem shall “obtain the glory” to which they are ordained. “*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*” (John 6:37-39)

The Gospel is a “joyful sound” because HE who tasted death as every man, has triumphed over it, arising upon the third day, laying aside HIS grave clothes and clothed in a glory which HE is pleased to share with all of those for whom HE came to deliver. “*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*” (1Cor 15:20-23) The sting of death is forever taken away in CHRIST.

The Gospel is a “joyful sound” because HE who came into the world to save sinners shall so come again in like fashion as HE ascended into the heavens, to gather HIS purchased possession from every kindred, tribe and tongue upon the Earth. “*For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*” (1Thes 4:16-18) To be ever “with the LORD” is to be found walking in the “light of HIS countenance”, (i.e.; before HIS face.) A joyous place indeed for those who have “known the joyful sound”.

Blest are the souls that hear and know
The gospel's joyful sound;
Peace shall attend the path they go,
And light their steps surround.
Their joy shall bear their spirits up,
Through their Redeemer's name;
His righteousness exalts their hope,
Nor Satan dares condemn.

58 Gadsby's Hymns, by Isaac Watts

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