

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

REMEMBERING THE LORD'S DEATH

For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

I Corinthians 11:26

It is an unfortunate aspect of man's natural religious nature that he will turn the commandments and instructions of the LORD into rituals and religiously oriented habits. This is seen as men would take the model prayer which the LORD gave HIS disciples and turn it into a liturgy, (of sorts, to one degree or other) by a rote repeating of it, in the very fashion which HE told them, only the heathen do. *"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."* (Mat 6:7)

Yet this tendency towards "religiosity" is nowhere seen more clearly than in the practices which men adopt in carrying out the most simple of instructions as the LORD gave to HIS disciples concerning how they are to "remember" HIS death.

Among those practices is the notion that this "table" must be "presided over" or "administered" by someone who is augustly and properly "ordained" or set apart for this task by other rituals administered by those who have themselves undergone such proper, ritualistic, "ordination". This is no more or less a form of "priestcraft" than that which is practiced by the High Church of Rome and its many descendants and has existed in the fleshly religions of men since time began.

The LORD ably and deftly put an axe to the root of man's notion that there are certain prescribed and sacrosanct methods approved by men, by which and in which HE is to be worshipped when HE told the Samaritan woman, *"But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."* (John 4:23-24)

Any aspect of the observance of that memorial supper (which CHRIST instituted and commanded HIS disciples to observe) which would in any wise turn a man's eyes towards anything but the remembrance of the death of CHRIST is superfluous and a product of the flesh and not the SPIRIT. There is only ONE who can properly "preside over or administer" this table, since it is HIS table and the guests are those HE has commanded to attend.

Neither is there to be any examination of those guests (whereby they are judged fit or unfit to partake thereof) except as these invited guests are exhorted to examine their own selves, that they might properly discern the solemnity of this remembrance and their privilege to participate therein. *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup---discerning the Lord's body."* (1Cor 11:28-29) Those who would set up methods and means whereby to exclude various saints of GOD from this table do so without scriptural warrant except in extreme cases of discipline, undertaken for the purpose of restoring a fallen brother.

In order to properly "remember HIS death" ("this do in remembrance of me." (1Cor 11:24)) we must first consider the ONE who died. JESUS CHRIST is the ETERNAL SON of GOD who

thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD, and is the fullness of the GODHEAD bodily. HE did take upon HIMSELF a mortal body of flesh and blood and was tempted in all points like as we are yet was perfect in HIS obedience to HIS FATHER and the HOLY LAW of GOD, being without sin. In this sinless and incorruptible state HE did "become sin" for HIS elect bride as her SUBSTITUTE, imputing her sin to HIMSELF and HIS righteousness unto her.

In order to properly "remember HIS death" we must consider the death which HE died. HIS death was not imagined, incomplete, or somehow anything less than the exact death which all flesh must experience. HE underwent excruciating pain in HIS mortal body, but more importantly, HE experienced HIS greatest suffering in HIS mind and soul as HE wrestled with the darkness and condemnation of the sin which was laid upon HIM. In those three days and nights in which HE resided in the tomb, HIS body was absolutely dead. HE was without mortal life of any sort. Yet far more "deadly" than a simple cessation of bodily functions, HE was "cut off" from the very presence of the FATHER in whom was HIS delight and did make HIS soul an offering for sin.

In order to properly "remember HIS death" we must consider the reason that HE died. There are three reasons that come to mind. The first is "HIS Purpose". The second is "HIS love". The third is the "awfulness of sin".

GOD does all things according to HIS purpose and nothing occurs in Heaven or Earth which does not exactly fulfill that purpose. GOD does not have contingency plans which are dependent on what any part of HIS creation (men included) does, rather HE directs all things to occur according to that ordained purpose. The death of JESUS CHRIST was according to that purpose. *"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:" (Acts 2:23)*

JESUS CHRIST did undertake the redemption of HIS elect bride, because HE loved her with an everlasting love. *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:6-8)

There are no "cosmic necessities" outside of the purpose of GOD, which demanded the death of CHRIST. There is no force or power of darkness which could possibly exist which could demand CHRIST's death apart from HIS purpose. Yet it pleased GOD, in order to magnify both the glory of HIS grace and the unwavering justice of HIS law to put HIM to death on the account of sin, which is the transgression of the law. GOD will by no means clear the guilty nor at all acquit the wicked, and HE has decreed that the *"soul that sinneth shall die"*.

It is quite clear from the scriptures that even the elect of GOD were *"by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* (Eph 2:3) *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."* (Rom 3:23) Therefore it is because of the sin of HIS elect that JESUS CHRIST went to Calvary's cross and endured the shame which was rightly due to each one of them. HE would magnify HIS hatred of sin and HIS immutable justice in the suffering of CHRIST on the account of the sin of HIS people. *"To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."* (Rom 3:26)

We remember HIS death and weep, that our sin caused HIS pain. We remember HIS death and rejoice because HE has by it demonstrated HIS love for HIS elect, believing, remnant and has removed all condemnation from them. We remember HIS death with gladness since HE has triumphed over death in HIS resurrection which is the "harbinger" of that resurrection which awaits all who sleep in HIM.

This resurrection is the very basis of our hope, and we are encouraged as we consider the temporary nature of this "remembrance" with bread and wine, for it is only "until HE comes". Then we shall drink of that "new wine", (which never yet any man has tasted), with HIM at the marriage supper. Indeed HE has saved the best wine until the last. *"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* (John 14:3)