

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 LILIES OF THE FIELD

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. Matthew 6:28

All men can empirically observe the natural creation. Even those who are born blind and deaf have some ability to recognize their own existence. In order for a man to deny the glory of GOD in that creation, they must and do turn a blind eye to what they observe. By nature, men would rather concoct schemes and solutions to explain that creation rather than attributing it to GOD. Some will acknowledge that a “god” created what they observe but will not (and cannot) give the TRUE and LIVING GOD their unmixed adoration and worship. Paul describes this TRUTH in his epistle to the Romans: *“For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”* (Rom 1:20-23)

By nature, men love “convenient” gods. These “gods” are those who fit their idea of what a “god” is like and what he would do. They know where he is and what can be expected of him, since he is like them. They recognize that this “god” must certainly have parameters in which he can operate and most assuredly can do nothing that they do not allow him to do. Thus, they believe that even god has limitations. The only time they hope that he is a sovereign and immutable GOD is when they stand in need of help or assistance. When that occurs all men hope that “god” can hear them and is moved by their pleas. To many (maybe most) praying is like rubbing the lamp hoping the genie will appear or like relying on a lucky rabbits foot.

Thus, it is naturally possible for men to recognize that there is a “god” who created the world out of nothing and to state that belief. However, it is impossible for a man by that same nature (i.e.; that of the flesh) to delight in giving glory and honor to the ONE who created it. The natural enmity of man towards GOD prevents him from bowing at the throne of a Sovereign GOD who will show mercy to whom HE will show mercy and harden whom HE will. (see Romans chapter nine)

To acknowledge that this GOD is the CREATOR can only be done by those whom the LORD is pleased to give the “gift” of “FAITH”. *“Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.”* (Heb 11:3) It is in this operation of “FAITH” that men can recognize their own frailty and their total dependence on HIM to deliver them from their sinful condition. This ONE who is the WORD of GOD (see John 1:1-3) is that CREATOR.

From the BEGINNING to the END of the scriptures, we read of HIM, HIS PURPOSE, and HIS REVELATION to men. *“God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”* (Rom 8:3) *“No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.”* (John 1:18)

Throughout these scriptures, the LORD uses HIS natural creation to illustrate HIMSELF and HIS attributes. HE is that ROCK which followed the children of Israel on their journey through the wilderness. *“They drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.”* (1Cor 10:4)(see Mat.16:18) HE is the LIGHT which illuminates their WAY. *“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world.”* (John 8:12) HE is the VINE which bears the branches and produces the fruit which grows upon them. *“I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.”* (John 15:1) HE manifests HIS constant watchcare and deliverance of HIS people as the majestic EAGLE. *“I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto*

myself.” (Exo 19:4)(see Deut.32:11) HE is the WATER which if a man drink, HE shall never thirst again. “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev 22:17)

We see HIM describe HIMSELF as two beautiful flowers. “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.” (Song 2:1) Flowers in general are sentinels of beauty and sweet fragrance. “One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.” (Psa 27:4) “His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.” (Son 5:13) Their blooming is usually a joyful signal of the coming of Spring-time. “Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty: they shall behold the land that is very far off.” (Isa 33:17)

While there is a flowering plant that is presently called a “Rose of Sharon”, it is unlikely that this is the flower the LORD specifically referred to. HE is speaking of a FLOWER of great renown, even as that GOLD of Ophir. (see Isa.13:12) Though there are “roses” of many types and colors in the world, I would venture to say that most people think of a large red blossom when a rose is mentioned. My mind is drawn to think of the blood of our dear SAVIOR when I read of HIM as this red “ROSE.” “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Mat 26:28) While there are some roses that bloom in clusters, the most notable ones are those who have a singular blossom. “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6) There is no other SAVIOR nor any access unto GOD but in CHRIST.

HE also identified HIMSELF as the “LILY of the valleys.” Again, we are drawn to consider the beauty of a mountain scene with valleys covered in the lilies of springtime. HIS beauty is beyond compare, even a breathtaking sight as Daniel testified: “Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.” (Dan 10:8) Also that of John; “And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead.” (Rev 1:17) So say all who, by HIS grace, are brought to HIS feet in repentance.

There are many types of “lilies” around the world of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Yet when we think of a “lily” we most often think of a beautiful white flower. It is interesting that there are lily’s that bloom right around the time of the Passover, which signal both the payment for sin which CHRIST made for HIS people, and HIS resurrection as their Triumphant REDEEMER. The white LILY reminds us HE was pure and without sin as our SUBSTITUTE. “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” (2Cor 5:21) “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” (Heb 4:15)

CHRIST is in everlasting union with HIS people. They were given to HIM before the foundation of the world as the scripture says, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” (Eph 1:3-6)

As we rejoice in this glorious TRUTH we see that HE identifies HIS people as one with HIM in the same sentence in which HE identifies HIMSELF as “the LILY of the valleys”. HE goes on to say; “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters.” (Song 2:1-2) HE sets her apart by describing her as one “among thorns”. This is in keeping with HIS description of letting the tares and the wheat grow together until the time of harvest. “Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” (Mat 13:30) We see HIM teach the same TRUTH when HE speaks about the sheep and the goats (see Mat 25:33), the seed sown on good ground (see Mat 13:3-9), and those who follow HIM because they are HIS sheep. (see John 10:27)

Then HE tells us to “consider the lilies of the field”. HE says they do not grow on their own, but are planted, watered, and caused to bloom by HIS POWER. They toil not. HE has completed the work of their REDEMPTION. “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) Nor do they cloth themselves. “neither do they spin”. They are clothed in the RIGHTEOUSNESS of CHRIST. “And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.” (Rev 19:14) Are you clothed in HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS or your own?