

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

OUR SANCTIFIER

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, And righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. 1Corinthians 1:30-31

The LORD appeared to Moses in a "BURNING BUSH" as he watched his father-in-law's sheep in the shadow of Mount Horeb, which he later called, "the mountain of GOD." "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." (Exo 3:1-2) Moses was not there because he was looking for GOD or expecting that the LORD would appear unto him. Yet the LORD came to where he was and stirred his curiosity by the sight of this BUSH which burned but was not consumed.

In this I am reminded that "Our God is a consuming fire." (Heb 12:29) No one can stand in his presence by their own will or power for HE is that ONE, "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting." (1Tim 6:16) Yet as we see here, HE is pleased to appear unto Moses according to HIS own design and in HIS own time. What great mercy is extended to Moses, who was not seeking the LORD, but the LORD was seeking him. And not only seeking him but finding him exactly where he was according to HIS predestined purpose. "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." (Heb 2:17) The meeting of the LORD with Moses is much akin to HIS meeting with the woman at a well in Samaria. She was simply going about her normal everyday tasks with no thought of GOD. Yet we read in the scripture that the LORD JESUS, "must needs go through Samaria". She was not seeking HIM, but HE had appointed a time and place where HE would reveal HIMSELF to a sinful woman upon whom HE had set HIS love before she was ever born.

Thus, Moses went to see this oddity which he assumed must have a logical explanation fitting the laws of "science". "And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." (Exo 3:3) He had no idea what the LORD had in store for him. "For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him." (Isa 64:4) "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom 11:34)

I am sure he was quite startled when the LORD spoke to him from this bush calling him by name. "And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I." (Exo 3:4) The LORD described this calling when HE said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27) As the LORD called his name, Moses submitted himself to HIM. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power. (Psa 110:3)

Even then Moses was quite in the dark as to the glory and power of the ONE who spoke to him from this BUSH. However, as he approached, the LORD struck fear into his heart and mind as HE

spoke these words, *“Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face: for he was afraid to look upon God.”* (Exo 3:5-6) The LORD removed the notion from his mind that he could simply saunter into the presence of GOD according to his own will. Modern day “preaching” in its quest to “gain converts” has by and large abandoned this TRUTH and usually presents the LORD as waiting upon men to do something or choose HIM. “Churches” are full of multitudes who think that they can approach unto the LORD anytime they get ready like they can pet their faithful hound when they feel like it.

HE told Moses that this was “*holy ground.*” Now I don’t imagine that this piece of dirt that Moses stood upon was any different than the spot where his sheep were grazing. This spot was “HOLY” because the LORD was there. Daniel, John, and Isaiah were all brought to stand, or might I say fall down in worship at the revelation of HIS HOLINESS. (see Dan.10:8; Rev.1:17; Isa.6:5) They trembled before HIM because they were brought face to face with HIM who said, *“Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.”* (Exo 33:20) This is reiterated in the NT as John wrote, *“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) It is impossible that sinful men should come to the LORD or have any knowledge of HIS glory apart from HIS determination to manifest the LORD JESUS CHRIST as the KING of Kings and LORD of lords. HE is *“The King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.”* (1Tim1:17)

As we consider the vast separation that there is between man and GOD, the created and the CREATOR, we are brought to have some understanding of what it means when we read about “HIS HOLINESS.” We are struck dumb with amazement that HE who lacks nothing and is above all things should then be mindful of men, being willing to condescend to them and visit them with HIS SALVATION. We are also made aware that a man must be “made holy” in order to come to where HE is. As HE told Moses, *“put off thy shoes from off thy feet”*, for nothing which is profane or “unholy” can be found there.

When a man is confronted with the HOLINESS (i.e.; separation) of GOD he will be stripped of all confidence in his ability. *“And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”* (Exo 3:11) Isaiah had the same experience, *“Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.”* (Isa 6:5) Daniel confessed that all of his own beauty (i.e.; value and ability) appeared to him as corruption. GOD in HIS mercy does not cast off HIS people, even though they are (upon seeing HIM as HE is) quite convinced that HE should. Rather, HE reminds them who HE is even as HE reassured Moses that HE did not require his wisdom or ability but that the LORD was HIS shield and exceeding great REWARD. *“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”* (Exo 3:14)

The concept of the necessity of all things to be “cleansed and set apart” in the service of GOD is one of the foundational truths in the OT. It is clearly set forth in the First Commandment which the LORD gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai. *“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”* (Exo 20:3) HE was not establishing a “pecking order” or putting HIMSELF at the top of a list but rather would have those who belong to HIM set apart solely unto HIM. The cleansing and anointing of the Priests and utensils in the Tabernacle illustrate this truth.

Thus, we come to the NT and find that this still holds true. Men cannot come unto the LORD nor render any service to GOD apart from being sanctified. One of the gravest of errors that men often entertain is the notion that the SPIRIT of GOD produces “sanctification” in them by a cooperative work between HIMSELF and their flesh. Sanctification is a work of GOD alone as HE makes some vessels unto honor and some to dishonor, cleansing the vessels of honor by the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, setting them apart unto HIMSELF. (see II Tim.2:19-21)

Paul understood this work and its AUTHOR as he lamented his own sinfulness in the seventh chapter of Romans. When men behold the perfect righteousness of JESUS CHRIST they are appalled at their own weakness, unthankfulness and disobedience. Nothing but the blood of CHRIST can cleanse them. *“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”* (Rom 7:24-25)