

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 ENEMIES

And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

Luke 1:67-74

One thing that the LORD made abundantly clear in HIS teaching was that we are to love our enemies and do good to those who spitefully use us. Yet lest we should think that we are to surrender to all of our enemies; the scripture is also abundantly clear that we have many enemies who would destroy us, if they could and we are admonished to strive against them with all of our might. A battle rages against them. We are to be individually involved in this conflict while at the same time enjoying victory over them through that which CHRIST has done in our behalf.

The sanctification of GOD's people is something which has been purchased by CHRIST and given to HIS children totally apart from any merit or work on their part. Yet at the same time they are also exercised in the outworking of this sanctification in their everyday lives in such a way that it would seem at times that this work is entirely of their own effort. Many admonitions and exhortations to the LORD's own demonstrate that this mystery is true. (see Phil.2:12-13)

I believe this conundrum is displayed in the life of the LORD JESUS CHRIST. *"Though HE were a SON, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, HE became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;"* (Heb 5:8-9) Now it is plainly clear that since the LORD JESUS is the true and living GOD that HE was always "perfect" and knew all things. Yet "HE was made perfect" and "learned obedience" through the things HE suffered (i.e.; experienced). *"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the CAPTAIN of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both HE that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause HE is not ashamed to call them brethren."* (Heb 2:10-11) It was necessary that the will of GOD be manifested in HIM and that HE might undertake the work HE was sent to do. In like fashion, though we be the freeborn sons of the true and living GOD we must and shall manifest that character, which HE has wrought in us, in this present world as a testament to HIS redemptive glory. Bro. E.W. Johnson used to say, "Because something is predestined to happen does not mean it does not have to happen." (see II Pet.1:5-11)

Our real enemies are not those who hate us for following CHRIST or those who mistreat us out of jealousy, anger, or for no seeming reason at all. They are only a minor inconvenience which the LORD has placed in our path in order that we might demonstrate the nature of our SAVIOR to

the men of this world and at the same time keep us humble in the knowledge that we are only made to differ from them because of the grace of GOD. (see I Cor.4;7; James 1:17; I Peter 4:10).

Our true enemies which we are exhorted to struggle against are:

Our “old man” who would seek to dominate our thoughts and re-capture our hearts. *“Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” (Col 3:8-10)*

Our “flesh” whose appetites would destroy us. *“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; (Eph 4:22-23) “But put ye on the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.” (Romans 13:14)*

Those who would pervert the truth of the gospel. *“There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of CHRIST.” (Gal 1:7) “They are the enemies of the cross of CHRIST.” (Phil 3:18) “For many deceivers are entered into the world.” (2 John 1:7)*

The powers of darkness who would seek to blind us once again. *“Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Eph 6:11-12)*

The friendship of the world which would steal our affection and destroy our judgment. *“Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of GOD.” (James 4:4)*

The fear of death which would rob us of the hope we have in CHRIST JESUS. *“For GOD hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Tim 1:7) “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the victory through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.” (1 Cor 15:54-57) “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” (1 Cor 15:26)*

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