

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

WEAPONS IN THE KINGS HAND

So it came to pass in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan: but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found. 1 Samuel 13:22

The Philistines were a great and mighty people who were constantly at war with the children of Israel. They were worshippers of the pagan gods, Dagon and Ashtoreth. One of the most amusing accounts of the absolute disdain and triumph of the true and living GOD over all false gods takes place in the fifth chapter of I Samuel. The Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant from the Israelites (in battle) and placed it in the temple of their god Dagon. They soon discovered that Dagon had fallen in worship before JEHOVAH and was ultimately dismembered by the same. The Philistines, like all religious men, assumed GOD would be pleased to occupy a "place" in their worship. They thought they would honor HIM in the same way in which they honored their other gods. But the GOD of heaven and earth will share no stage with any person, religion, doctrine, or god (see Ex.20:3); nor will HE be worshipped according to any mans design. HE certainly will not be worshipped alongside those who have eyes but see not (see Ps.115:2-8). The modern day "ecumenists" would do well to take note of these facts as well as those who try to tell us that all of us are worshipping the same god.

Because of their religious assumptions and presumptions, they were smitten with a plague which even Preparation H could not solve. There was no solution for their plague but to rid themselves of this ONE over whom they had no control. So they sent the Ark back to the Israelites. Men are comfortable with the gods of their own making because they are predictable, easily defined, and most often do exactly what they want. Their gods think like they do and always follow some moral code which they agree with. David said of the true and living GOD, "Our GOD is in the heavens, HE hath done whatsoever HE hath pleased" (Ps.115:3) (see Isa.46:10; Dan.4:35; Eph.1:11) The GOD of all gods will always be consistent with HIMSELF and will do right because HE is the very definition of right. It does not matter if we understand HIM or agree with HIM or even like HIM, HE is still GOD. HE said to Moses, "I AM" (i.e.; I exist) and then the LORD JESUS repeated those words when the soldiers came to arrest HIM in the garden. (see John 18:5,6) In HIM we move and have our being (see Acts 17:28) and not vice versa. HE dwells in the light to which no man can approach. (see I Tim.6:16) I grow weary of those who think that they can paint GOD into a corner and force HIS hand or who assume that HE is under some obligation to be merciful. HE will do right HE may show mercy. The mercy of GOD flows out of HIS very character which HE has revealed in HIS word. But HE reserves the application of it to HIS sovereign choice and purpose. (see Rom. 9:18) Some balk at this reservation and go off in search of a god or gods more suitable to their own design.

The Philistines are typical of the enemies of the people of GOD in all ages. They desired the servitude of Israel. In fact the passage before us tells us that they so manipulated Israel as to insure that they had no "(black)smith to fashion their swords and spears" (see v.19) thus making them dependent on their enemies(Philistines) to supply them with weapons. When the time for

battle arose the Israelites found themselves empty handed. But the King and his son had weapons and knew how to use them. Jonathan, the king's son, undertook to fight these Philistines himself and in so doing set them in such disarray that they turned upon themselves and were defeated. (see I Sam.14:1-16)

The LORD JESUS CHRIST has undertaken the cause of HIS people and has single-handedly destroyed our enemies. We were not able to even fight against our foes for we were found without sufficient weaponry in the day of battle, but HE has triumphed for us.

The greatest enemy we face is death. Death is the result of sin. The power of sin to condemn us is the law. The law brings us into condemnation because we have broken it in its letter and its spirit. Therefore, in order for us to escape death, it was necessary for the LORD JESUS to destroy that which had the power to condemn us. *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."* (Col 2:14-15) *"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus"* (Romans 8:1) HE was a perfect man and as such had the weapons necessary to wage war against our enemy death, satisfying every jot and tittle of the law, paying the price (sin debt) that we owed, and coming forth from the grave as a victor over death. In doing so HE purchased for us eternal life which HE has bestowed upon us. We shall never again be overcome with the darkness and sting of death.

But we also had another enemy which HE has destroyed. GOD has placed in every man a conscience (see Rom.2:15) which indicates to us our wickedness. We are our own worst enemy as we have violated that conscience time and time again. But HE gives the gift of faith to HIS elect and causes us to believe the record of the gospel giving us a conscience void of offence. The letter of the law could only condemn as even the Old Testament sacrifices only served to remind the children of Israel of their sin. But as we are enabled to believe the gospel by the grace of GOD our conscience is made clear, condemnation is taken away, and we can serve HIM with a pure heart while delighting ourselves in HIM.(see Heb.9:14)

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