

# 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*

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## CONTENDING WITH HORSES

*If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan? Jeremiah 12:5*

We have all viewed the destruction and devastation left in the wake of hurricane Katrina. I have heard some remark that this is about as bad as it can get. It is quite common for people to view their own problems as though they have suffered the worst that mankind could possibly endure. Jeremiah (the weeping prophet) was lamenting to the LORD of his troubles when the LORD answered him with the words in the verse we are looking at. Rather than the LORD patting him on the back and sympathizing with him in his supposed misery, the LORD gave him this mild rebuke and reminded him that troubles which come upon men in this natural world are to be expected and are nothing compared to that judgement which HE is able to mete out.

Men often view such calamities and disasters as the recent Tsunami in Indonesia, this hurricane, or the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York as the judgement of GOD displayed. Indeed there is a sense in which we can view such catastrophes as HIS judgement upon sin, since there would be no such happenings in a world which was without sin. Sin is the root cause of all of man's sorrow. As the LORD said to Adam, "*cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life*".(Gen 3:17) So Adam, by his disobedience plunged the world into darkness and as a result brought disease, heartache, and death upon the whole human race which is in the anteroom of hell.

We certainly are moved with compassion for those who are suffering in the midst of such tragic loss and deprivation as the folks affected by Katrina, but we are also aware that this is but a light trial compared to the unfolding of GOD's eternal judgement upon sin. These buildings can be rebuilt, the dead can be buried, new lives will spring up to replace them, and life will go on even in a benighted city such as New Orleans. But the "judgement of GOD" is that from which there is no recovery. The unfolding of the wrath of Almighty GOD shall cause the heavens and the earth to flee away and men will desire death rather than life but cannot find it. (see Rev.6:15,16; 9:6)

Some "preachers", no doubt, will profit from this generation that is looking for "signs and wonders" by characterizing this awful situation as the "judgement of GOD". The intent being to "scare" folks into serving the LORD (and sending in their tithes and offerings) for fear of the same "judgement" falling on them. The LORD said "*An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.*" (Matt 12:39-41) If the heart of a man is not moved to repentance by the truth as it is revealed in JESUS CHRIST, no amount of calamities or disaster will do the job. Man in his natural state will not be moved to repentance by the scare tactics of preachers of doom and

gloom, and will only raise his fist higher in rebellion in the face of pain and suffering. (see Rev.16:9-11) One only has to watch the news interviews filled with men and women complaining about what the government is or is not doing to help their situation, rather than effusively thanking GOD for sparing their lives, to see that this is true.

The wrath and judgement of GOD are not designed as corrective measures but rather for the total destruction of the wicked. The LORD said, *"I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me."* (Prov 1:26-28) There is no relief or remedy for the man who abides under the wrath of the ALMIGHTY. GOD has no partial judgement or wrath that is temporary.

The true sons of GOD are totally without condemnation. They have been the objects of HIS affection before their creation and should fall upon their faces, daily, thanking HIM that they were not appointed unto wrath. By our nature (birth into the human race) we were the children of wrath even as others, but by election we are those appointed unto redemption through the blood and righteousness of JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Election does not save the sons of GOD. It is the means whereby they are earmarked to receive salvation. Our blessed REDEEMER trod the winepress of GOD's wrath in our behalf and alone secured our redemption. HE was a perfect SUBSTITUTE, having no sin of HIS own but willing to bear the punishment due ours. HE obtained (purchased, got possession of) eternal redemption for us that we might never taste the wrath HE already endured for our sake. Had HE not been the immutable and eternal SON of GOD HE would have been destroyed by the burning wrath of an offended, holy GOD.

The natural man hates the doctrine of GOD's free and unconditional election of a people in CHRIST JESUS before the world began. He will rise up in anger at the thought of GOD being an absolute sovereign over his destiny. Only the grace of GOD awakening a lost and rebellious sinner will cause him to bow down in repentance and own the fact that he is worthy of destruction. His natural enmity against GOD is slain as he worships at the LORD's footstool and owns the justice of GOD in condemning him forever but praises that MERCY which appointed him to redemption in CHRIST. Only a rebel can find fault with GOD. *"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"* (Rom.9:20)

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