

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

GOD WILL SURELY VISIT YOU

And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

Genesis 50:24-26

The life of Joseph is an amazing illustration of the provision which GOD has made for the sustenance and well being of HIS people. From Joseph's earliest days of being the favorite son of his father and prophesying of the servitude of his brethren; his life was ordained to be for the salvation of the nation of Israel. In this we see HIM clearly revealed as a type and foreshadow of CHRIST who being the only begotten of the FATHER came into this lowland of sin and sorrow and through much tribulation triumphed and provided life itself for those of HIS kinsman, even while we were yet sinners.

The reaction of Joseph's brothers, whenever he revealed himself to them, reminds us of the fear of judgement that grips the hearts of GOD's children when HE is pleased to reveal to them HIS absolute holiness and the depths of their own depravity. It is difficult for us to fathom the goodness and grace of GOD when we are confronted with the just deserts of our own path of wickedness, most especially when face to face with fact that it is our sin that caused HIS pain. But oh the glory and the gladness that fills our very souls when we are able to see that HE meant it for our good, that HE determined to save us according to HIS abundant grace which provided for us a SUBSTITUTE and a REDEEMER. "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." (2Cor 4:6)

Yet even as Joseph is clearly a "type" of CHRIST, he is also typical of the believer who while yet living in this world is but a stranger and sojourner here and has no lasting citizenship in this world. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." (Heb 11:13)

The old testament saints all died without having "seen" the HOPE of Israel revealed. We, who have been privileged to live in the earth after the advent of JESUS CHRIST, can say we have "seen" the salvation of the LORD. We are reconciled unto GOD even as HE is reconciled unto us by the death of HIS SON and there is nothing more that we could desire of HIM than that HE has already provided. Yet there is one benefit purchased for us and demonstrated by the LORD JESUS CHRIST which we long for but have not yet fully realized. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." (Rom 8:23)

The majority of Joseph's life was spent in the land of Egypt. Yet he knew that this land was not the final chapter in GOD's design for those of the chosen race of Israel. He even

served the king of Egypt for a season in order to fulfill the very purpose of GOD but he was confident that the visitation of the LORD upon that nation was yet to come in a full deliverance from that land of darkness to which he was consigned at the present time. He testified of his disdain for Egypt and his hope in the resurrection by instructing them (with an oath) not to leave his "bones" in that land forever.

Death is an awful prospect for even the bravest of men. Death is that which strips men naked and puts an end to all the dreams and hopes which belong to men in the flesh. The scripture speaks of it as an "enemy", (see I Cor.15:26) which it truly is to this mortal body in which we dwell. Contrary to all of the psychologists and other physicians of no value, there can be no "joy" in the hour of death except a man has been given a "hope" in the resurrection. All of that "confidence" which the ungodly may have in that approaching hour (see Ps.73:4,5) is but an empty vessel. *"The simple pass on and are punished". (Prov.22:3)* They have no fear of the judgment which is to come because they lack the knowledge of it.

GOD's children on the other hand cannot be buoyed up by the world's platitudes and its experts on "dying". There is but one hope and expectation which can give them any peace in that approaching hour. *"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first."* (1Th 4:13-16)

The hope of the resurrection is the very lifeblood of the saints. It alone can minister unto them in the vicissitudes of life and most especially when the darkness of the approaching sunset of life begins to steal into their view. Paul said, *"For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."* (1Cor 15:16-19) That faith which is delivered to the saints is built on the resurrection of JESUS CHRIST from the dead. This was no mere apparent resurrection for there was no body left in that tomb. This body with which HE arose was no cloud of vapors but a real body that could be touched and felt. One in which HE ate with HIS disciples (see Acts 10:41) and ascended into heaven and shall so come again. The resurrection of the saints bodies takes place:

According to the power of GOD and none in men. *"And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power."* (1Cor 6:14) The resurrection of the bodies of the saints is the final testimony and demonstration of the grace of GOD. *"But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead."* (2Cor 1:9)

Because CHRIST has purchased it. *"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."* (1Cor 15:20) All of the benefits of the sons of GOD are those which are bought and paid for by the blood of the LAMB. HE has demonstrated HIS redemptive work by being the LEADER of HIS sheep. HE is our EXAMPLE

Because the gift of eternal life has already been given to the saints. It is impossible that anything which is "eternal" should ever perish. *"But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."* (John 4:14) Adam was barred from the garden so that he could not eat of the "tree of life" and live forever. All that Adam lost has been restored in JESUS CHRIST and we have eaten HIS flesh and drank HIS blood. HE is the TREE of LIFE. *"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?"* (John 11:25-26)