

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

PROMISES NOT PREMISES

But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Hebrews 8:6

When we were kids we often made solemn promises. These were usually sealed with the famous “cross my heart and hope to die” pledge. But we all knew that if the circumstances warranted it we could always abandon the promise without too much fear of the consequences actually occurring. Some seem to consider the promises of GOD in about the same light.

There are many who are quick to point out (to the new testament saints) all of the OT promises which they tell us are still “available” to us today, IF we keep the conditions. Of course they somehow seem to think that they are able to meet these conditions and seem to forget that these conditional promises carried with them the promise that GOD would mete out judgment if those conditions are not met.

In fact the giving of these conditional promises to Israel was for the same purpose that HE gave the law to them. They were given so that men might be made aware of their inability to meet the conditions necessary to enjoy the blessings just as the law was given for the purpose of revealing their sin. Paul made it quite clear that the law “*was weak through the flesh.*” (Rom 8:3) The law is good just as the conditional promises are good, the problem is that they are both established to manifest the weakness, sin, and inability of men to keep either of them. Those who think that they keep them are like the Judaizers who go about to establish their own righteousness.

Paul said, “*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.*” (Rom 7:12-14) He said that the law is good if a man keeps it but it ministers nothing but condemnation if a man does not keep every jot and tittle of it, because to break one part of it in any wise is to break it all. (see Rom 2:25; James 2:10) When he was awakened by the SPIRIT to see the spiritual nature of the law, he said that he was slain by it, and came to despair of ever keeping it.

This promise of judgment and condemnation to law breakers is that which drives them to the feet of CHRIST to sue for mercy when the law in its awful power and rigor is revealed to them by the HOLY GHOST. They are stripped of any hope of ever keeping the law or being able to gain favor with GOD by the keeping of these conditional promises. Yet I heard a man “preaching” the other day that Christians could turn the blessings of GOD on or off like a man

would turn a light switch on or off. He said that Christians had the ability to choose to keep the commandments of GOD or they could choose to disobey them. Paul on the other hand said, *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."* (Rom 7:18-19)

I have no doubt that men can and will choose to do evil, but I find nothing in the scripture that would indicate that they have been given the power to choose to do good, except that the LORD should work in them *"both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure."* (Phil.2:13)

The writer of Hebrews says that the LORD JESUS CHRIST is the mediator of a BETTER covenant build upon BETTER promises. In fact the only true promises that were given under the old covenant were promises of condemnation because it was certain that those to whom these "conditional promises" were given could not and would not keep them. Therefore I believe we can say that these so called "conditional promises" were no promises at all but were in reality "premises" which were designed to demonstrate the certain condemnation of all of those who walked contrary to those conditions laid down by a just and holy GOD.

But GOD willing to demonstrate the glory of HIS grace and the mighty power of the same established the new covenant which was in no wise conditional at all but a clear declaration of what HE guaranteed HE would do for and in HIS elect people. *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away."* (Heb 8:7-13)

There are no conditions that must be met that HE has not performed for HIS elect people in whose hearts HE has written HIS laws for they are those to whom HE reveals HIMSELF and causes them to believe in HIM of whom they have heard. HE is their GOD and they are HIS people. *"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."* (2Cor 1:20)

HE has determined to bless them and to give them HIS kingdom. (see Luke 12:32) They are made heirs and joint heirs with CHRIST and seated in heavenly places, they are filled with HIS SPIRIT and given faith according to the measure which HE determines. They are heirs of the promise and not subjects of some premise which neither they nor their fathers could keep. *"For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect."* (Rom 4:14)

"Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek." (Heb 6:16-20)

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