

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume VII

Issue 38

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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

COMPLETE IN HIM

For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.

Colossians 2:9-10

The central truth of the gospel is imputation. This is the action of CHRIST to take upon himself the guilt of HIS people and to transfer HIS perfect righteousness to HIS children's account. This is the ground and basis of their legal acceptance with the FATHER and upon no other ground does their true hope rest nor do they in any wise expect to enter into HIS presence apart from that perfect righteousness being laid to their account.

The fact that they are ordained unto eternal life from before the foundation of the world is not the basis of their confidence before GOD. But rather HIS blood shed for sinners in the expiation of their crimes and the transfer of HIS perfection to them is that upon which all of their hopes are built. Yet HIS faithfulness to them revealed by a right contemplation of their election in CHRIST before the foundation of the world is a source of much joy as well as humility which comes as they realize that HE alone has made them to differ from another.

The concept of substitution is one which is quite admired by men in general. One can read Charles Dickens' classic "Tale of Two Cities" and see this concept illustrated as one man takes the place of another who is condemned to die. Every battlefield has witnessed the heroic deeds performed by men who have laid down their lives to preserve the lives of others. While we do not wish in any way to minimize these heroic actions they are nonetheless not on a par with that substitutionary work of JESUS CHRIST in the behalf of HIS elect, because no real transfer of guilt from the guilty to SINLESS or righteousness from the PURE to the wretched takes place in them as it does when the REDEEMER died in their behalf.

Paul said it like this "*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*" (Rom 5:6-8) There are two astounding truths set forth in this passage. Paul said it is not astounding (even though unusual) that one man might die for another, especially if he deemed the other man worthy of such sacrifice.

However he said it most certainly is astounding that one would die for an unworthy wretch who had no benefits to offer and deserved to be destroyed. Such is that people for whom CHRIST shed HIS precious blood. CHRIST died for the ungodly. HE died for sinners. HE bled for those who disobeyed HIM, disregarded HIM, and even dismissed HIM as a failure and an imposter. None stood with HIM but all forsook HIM and fled. HE trod the winepress of GOD's wrath alone in their behalf and without their aid.

Yet the most astounding part of all of this is when we consider WHO it was that died in their place. JESUS CHRIST was no ordinary man but rather was the eternal SON of GOD who knew no sin neither was guile found in HIS mouth. Can anyone begin to fathom the wonders of the incarnation of that Eternal, and Only Begotten SON to merely walk among men, let alone that HE who is ETERNAL LIFE should die in their place? The atonement which

CHRIST made for HIS elect bride gains all of its worth from the fact that HE is who HE is. No other man who has ever lived could have ever even atoned for his own sins let alone taken away the sin of another. But HE who had no sin became sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in HIM. Who is HE?

HE is the fullness of the GODHEAD bodily. That means that HE is indeed GOD, the same ONE who created all things and by whom all things consist. Without HIM was nothing made that was made. Yet HE has taken on a body of flesh and blood that HE might dwell among men, revealing HIMSELF as ONE with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST. *"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."* (Phi 2:6-8)

It was impossible that men should have ever had any contact or understanding of GOD except that it pleased HIM to manifest HIMSELF as the SON of GOD in the person of JESUS CHRIST. *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."* (John1:18) *"God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."* (Heb 1:1-3) If one wanted a perfect summary of the gospel I believe that this passage would be it.

HE is the head of all principality and power. There is no power that is not ordained by GOD to fulfill HIS own purpose. Even as HE said to Isaiah, *"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."* (Isa 45:7) The forces of evil and men of wickedness, which were created to be destroyed serve the ordained purpose of GOD and can in no wise be found to operate contrary to HIS will. *"The LORD hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil."* (Pro 16:4)

Therefore HE has complete dominion over every form of authority or government that could possibly exist in the universe and has demonstrated HIS own mighty power in HIS triumph over them as the GOD-MAN. *"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 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 show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."* (Col 2:13-15)

The deliverance of the elect of GOD is established by the decree and purpose of HIM who does all things according to the pleasure of HIS will. Yet HE has not seen fit merely to decree the deliverance of those who are the *"apple of HIS eye"* but to actually effect their redemption by taking upon HIMSELF the very penalty under which it pleased HIM to subject HIS beloved when HE created them in Adam and ordained his disobedience.

Such a display of mercy and grace the world has never nor can ever see the likes of. The JUST dying for the unjust, the PURE taking upon HIMSELF the sin of ungodly men. Had any attempt to redeem the fallen sons of GOD been undertaken by any other than this LAMB of GOD it could not have succeeded. John records this vision, *"And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book---, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne--- And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."* (Rev5:4-10) We are complete in HIM.