

# 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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## HIMSELF HE CANNOT SAVE

*Likewise also the chief priests mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*

*Matthew 27:41-42*

These Pharisees, while yet in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, nonetheless spoke "prophetically" concerning the LORD JESUS CHRIST. They meant it in a mocking way but nevertheless they spoke one of the most profound truths that men have ever uttered. "HE saved others, HIMSELF HE cannot save." Then they demonstrated that they had no idea of the nature of HIS kingdom when they said "If HE be the King of Israel, let HIM now come down from the cross." Had HE come down HE would have demonstrated that HE was not the KING of Israel, because HE has forever proved HIS reign as the REDEEMER KING by enduring "*the cross, despising the shame, and is (now) set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*" (Heb 12:2) where HE ever lives to make intercession for HIS own.

Paul, speaking of the propitiatory work of CHRIST, said that HE performed this work that HE might be both just and the justifier of HIS people. (see Romans 3:24-26) That being true HE could not save HIMSELF from the ignominy of death on the cross, since HE had undertaken to redeem HIS people, and to save HIMSELF would be to fail in that work.

The average person considers that GOD has many limitations, most especially when they think of man's imaginary "free will" which they suppose to be a bastion that even the LORD cannot invade. I know of only three other times in the scripture (other than our text) that we are told that GOD "cannot" do something. HE cannot deny HIMSELF. (see II Tim.2:13) HE cannot lie. (see Titus 1:2) HE cannot be tempted with evil. ( see James 1:13)

It would be totally unnecessary to even make those statements except for the fact that HE does so to contrast HIS own immutability and holiness with the wickedness and corruption which all men are well acquainted with. We usually associate the things we "cannot" do with disappointment since they are usually things that we desire to do but are yet prevented from. Yet there is nothing that GOD should ever "desire" to do that HE cannot and will not do. David said it like this, "*But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" (Psa 115:3)

It is not in the character of GOD to lie. Nor could HE who is unchangeable ever deny HIMSELF. Neither would it be possible that HE should or could be tempted with evil since HE hates the wicked as well as wickedness. Not only that but HE could never be accused of any such thing by any of HIS creation. HE is right at all times simply because HE is GOD.

Nebuchadnezzar found out this truth after eating grass as an ox and made this testimony, "*I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*" (Dan 4:34-35)

So the truth that is always presented in the scriptures is that the True and Living GOD is never prevented from doing anything that HE determines to do. Even those things which men and devils might view as HIS failure or as not occurring according to HIS will, is in reality just a part of HIS ordained purpose and nothing that HE undertakes can or shall ever fail. *“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.” (Isa 46:9-11)*

Therefore when we read that HE could not save HIMSELF we understand that the reason that HE could not is that HE would not.

**HE cannot deny HIMSELF.** Upon this very truth of His immutability (i.e.; unchangeableness) hangs all of the foundation of our HOPE. IF HE has decreed a matter then it is certain that HIS decree must come to pass. The entire certainty of the salvation of HIS elect rests in HIM and not in anything that they can bring to HIM or fulfill. Some say that it is the faith of GOD’s people that saves them yet HE says even when our faith fails HE remains faithful and can in no wise cast us off. *“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” (2Ti 2:13)* (see Rom.3:3; II Tim.2:19) HE decreed that HE would *“save HIS people from their sins” (Matt. 1:21)*. Over 700 years before the LORD JESUS began HIS ministry, Isaiah prophesied by the direct revelation of GOD that *“the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (Isa 53:6)* *“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: -----for he shall bear their iniquities.-----because he hath poured out his soul unto death:--- he bore the sin of many.” (Isa 53:10-12)* This had to occur, HE could not save HIMSELF without denying HIMSELF.

**HE cannot lie.** HE who is the embodiment of TRUTH cannot be less than TRUE. *“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.” (Tit 1:2)* Having thus promised HE confirmed it with an oath and since HE could swear by none greater than HIMSELF; HE (who could not lie) sealed HIS promise with HIS own blood and purchased that possession given to HIM before the foundation of the world. *“I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no savior. I have declared, and have saved.” (Isa 43:11-12)* HE could not save HIMSELF because HE must be true to HIS own promise.

**HE cannot be tempted with evil.** It is fearful even to entertain the notion of men accusing GOD of evil. HE was under no obligation to give any law, nor could any have accused HIM of wrong had HE merely decreed the righteousness of HIS elect without any atonement contrary to the law. Yet in order to demonstrate HIS own righteous character it pleased HIM to subject men to the law and then to fulfill that law rather than disregard it. Then having established this decree under which the whole human race sank in condemnation, HE demonstrated the immutability of HIS own law by causing HIS only begotten SON to bleed and die to satisfy the claims of that law which rightly condemned those elect sons which HE loved in CHRIST with an everlasting love before the foundation of the world.

The LORD has declared that HE would not disregard HIS own law which HE saw fit to subject men to. HE came not to destroy it but to fulfill it. This is described by Paul when he said, *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (Rom 3:25-26)* Now who could call GOD “unjust” in any wise? I declare that none could. Yet GOD; (willing to make HIS righteous character known), HIMSELF declared that HE would be unjust in acquitting the wicked without a proper atonement to satisfy the law’s demands. Which atonement was made on Calvary’s hill upon that cross designed by a RIGHTEOUS GOD and raised by the hands of wicked men according to HIS determinate counsel. HE could not save HIMSELF since HE cannot be tempted with evil.