

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

CHRIST THE SUM OF ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

II Corinthians 5:21

GOD has no backup strategies, nor does HE ever need to plan for any contingencies because all that HE does is "Yea and Amen." "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." (Act 15:18) HE "knows" all things because HE orders all things to occur exactly as HE sees fit. "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." (Isa 45:7) "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. Harken unto me, ye stouthearted, that are far from righteousness: I bring near my righteousness; it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion for Israel my glory." (Isa 46:9-13)

This last verse that we just quoted is evidence of the fact that the LORD created the world for the purpose of manifesting HIS grace in the redemption of HIS elect people. Their salvation was not simply something HE hoped to accomplish. Nor was it some open ended offer of grace to all of mankind which depended on their acceptance, but rather HE ordained that those who HE calls "Israel my glory", would partake of the salvation which HE provided.

The vastness of GOD cannot be fathomed by such mortals as we are. HE alone inhabits eternity and hath immortality while we are but creatures of a span. The only thing we can possibly know about HIM is in those things which HE sees fit to reveal to us, all else shall forever remain a secret. (see Deut.29:29) HE is infinite, we are finite. HE is high and lifted up and HIS train fills the temple while we are mere beggars and maggots. It is with this in mind that the Psalmist wrote, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Psa 8:3-4)

In this same vein Job said, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" (Job 7:17) He was aware of the utter separation that existed between HIM who is "higher than the heavens" and those men which HE had created.. Eliphaz went on to say, "What is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?" (Job 15:14)

Before Adam disobeyed the LORD and plunged his posterity into death and destruction by those actions, he enjoyed an idyllic existence in the garden of Eden. Yet he was but a servant of GOD and enjoyed none of the fruits of sonship, even though the tree of life was at his disposal. Many look at his existence as a probation which he failed, yet it seems clear in the scriptures that as all things were appointed by GOD to occur according to HIS purpose, then there was a purpose in his sin and subsequent guilt.

Before there was ever a sinner, there was a SAVIOR. The SON of GOD was the RIGHTEOUSNESS of GOD from the beginning. In fact before the foundation of the world

the FATHER gave a people to the SON before they ever had an existence which occupied time and space. HE was their righteousness then and they were HIS delight and the apple of HIS eye and were joined to HIM in a mystical union which is glorious to contemplate as HE determined to plunge them into the darkness of guilt in order that HE might manifest HIS grace in their redemption and bring many sons to glory. Though they were by virtue of their subsequent disobedience, the subjects of HIS wrath even as others (i.e., the children of disobedience, the reprobate.) they were never its objects, for it has been HIS purpose from the beginning to deliver them and cloth them in the righteousness of CHRIST as new creatures, conforming them to CHRIST, and setting them free from the law of sin and death.

The carnal mind rejects the notion of CHRIST being the only means of righteousness with GOD. Men are convinced that their religions are fine, one being just as good as another. They are sure that the comparative good deeds of men will count for something when all shall give an account in the Day of Judgment. It does not seem reasonable to the flesh to conclude that there is not one thing that a man can do to enhance HIS standing with GOD. Nor does it seem quite fair to him to consider that men could be morally upright and workers of good deeds and yet be found as reprehensible in GOD's sight. Yet the scripture plainly says, *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* (Isa 64:6)

If our "righteousnesses" are as a menstruous cloth before GOD, how must our sin appear to HIM. There is not one speck of acceptability in us which is ever the product of ourselves or even one shred of righteous behavior that can be discovered in us which is not the result of HIS performance as HE *"works in us both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure"*. Our only acceptability with a sin-hating HOLY GOD is the "imputed righteousness" of JESUS CHRIST. Wherein HE has taken the guilt and punishment due to us because of sin, upon HIMSELF and justified us by HIS own satisfaction of the law, being our SIN BEARER and SUBSTITUTE. Our sin became HIS, HIS righteousness became ours.

Through the ages to come, the subject of rejoicing for the blood bought sons of GOD shall be to magnify the glory of HIS grace and to praise HIM for HIS substitutionary work in their behalf. Just as HE has been their RIGHTEOUSNESS before the foundation of the world and their RIGHTEOUSNESS in the present age as their JUSTIFIER, so HE shall be their RIGHTEOUSNESS in the ages to come. They have no other, for CHRIST is the SUM of all their RIGHTEOUSNESS forever.

"And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honor of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." (Rev 21:22-27)

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.
When from the dust of death I rise, To take my mansion in the skies,
E'en then shall this be all my plea: "Jesus has lived and died for me."
Bold shall I stand in that great day, For who aught to my charge shall lay,
While through thy blood absolved I am, From sin's tremendous curse and shame?
This spotless robe the same appears, When ruined nature sinks in years;
No age can change its glorious hue; the robe of Christ is ever new.
O let the dead now hear thy voice; Bid, Lord, thy banished ones rejoice;
Their beauty this, their glorious dress, Jesus, the Lord our righteousness.

103 Gadsby's Hymns