

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

SENNACHERIB'S FOLLY

And the LORD sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he returned with shame of face to his own land. And when he was come into the house of his god, they that came forth of his own bowels slew him there with the sword.

II Chronicles 32:21

One of my grandmother's favorite expressions was "don't count your chickens before they hatch." How often it is that men make future plans based upon their past successes. Nothing is more common among men than the general assumption that because they have done something in the past that they will be able to do it again in the future. Samson is the poster child for such mentality. *"And she said, The Philistines be upon thee, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he knew not that the LORD was departed from him."* Judges 16:20

Samson forgot that the only reason he was able to do any of his exploits was because of the power which the LORD was pleased to work in him. So if Samson, who was versed in the work of the true GOD should have such a mindset, we should not be surprised that Sennacherib, a heathen king, should assume that he had within his own grasp the ability to overthrow the people of GOD because no other nation could stand before him.

Every government upon the earth exists to fulfill the purpose of HIM who *"changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding."* (Dan 2:21) HE said, *"By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth."* (Pro 8:15-16) The wickedest king in the earth as well as the most benign ruler are all put in place by GOD's hand to fulfill the will of HIM who sits in the heavens and laughs at the calamity of men who seek to overturn HIS dominion. (see Ps.2:1-5)

The LORD raised up these wicked kings, such as Sennacherib, from time to time in order to chasten the children of Israel which HE called HIS chosen nation. HE also raised them up to demonstrate HIS power in their own destruction (as Pharaoh) and to remind those whom HE gave wisdom to understand, that the nations of the earth are as a drop in the bucket and the dust of the balance to HIM. *"All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity."* (Isa 40:17) All nations and the people that make them up are but mere pawns upon HIS chessboard which HE moves according as it pleases HIM.

This concept is sure to stir the ire of those who take pride in their ability and what some describe as their "responsibility". We have often been accused of "over" emphasizing the sovereignty of GOD. I have never understood how one could "over" emphasize that which has no bounds. There is but ONE SOVEREIGN who rules over all and who does whatsoever HE hath pleased.

There are many well meaning men who tell us that there are two tangent tracks which are both true, one being that GOD is absolutely SOVEREIGN and the other that man is absolutely responsible. That's too many absolutes. There is no doubt that man is accountable to GOD for every one of his actions but there is also no doubt that everyone of his actions is ordained by GOD to occur at the very time and place appointed by GOD. So GOD is responsible for all things. Men often grow angry when we tell them that GOD will destroy them for the very sin which HE has appointed them to commit. Now make no mistake about this, *'Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.'* (James 1:13-14)

No man can make any excuse for his sin nor accuse GOD of tempting him since he is by his very nature bound to sin and a slave to his own lusts. Every man is accountable (because GOD made him accountable) for each and everyone of his actions even though he cannot help but fulfill the will of GOD by each of them even though it be to his own destruction. Paul addressed this very concept and the expected outcry of the natural man in Romans 9:19-24.

While this teaching provokes the rage of the natural man, yet to those who have been humbled in the dust before an Almighty and Sovereign GOD, they can but say "Even so FATHER for so it seemed good in thy sight". The only reason any man ever seeks the mercy of GOD is because HE has been appointed to it by the same ONE who says that HIS mercy endureth forever. This totally strips man of any glorying in his salvation and makes GOD both the first and moving cause of his deliverance as well as the destruction of the wicked. *"For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?"* (2Co 2:15-16)

Pause, my soul! adore and wonder! Ask, "O why such love to me?"

Grace has put me in the number Of the Saviour's family;

Hallelujah! Thanks, Eternal Love, to thee! #69 Gadsby's Hymns

Sennacherib acted out his own rebellion against the true and living GOD by his consideration that he could thwart the purpose of GOD. In reality he just had no conception of the fact that the deliverance of GOD's people had nothing whatsoever to do with their actions. He thought that GOD could not act apart from the complicit will of men like most free will preachers of our day tell us.

The actions and end of Sennacherib serve to demonstrate two truths:

1. The deliverance and salvation of the sons of GOD does not in any wise depend upon any, action, thought, or ability on their part. The LORD delivered Jerusalem from the very clutches of Sennacherib without the hurling of one stone or the shot of one arrow on the part of its inhabitants. The LORD sent an ANGEL to deliver them even as HE sent HIS only begotten SON into the world to accomplish the redemption of those whom HE loved with an everlasting love. HE cancels their debt of sin, loving them in spite of their own natural rebellion and wickedness. *"For by grace are ye saved".* (Eph.2:8)
 2. The wicked are appointed to destruction and that destruction occurs as the result of their own wicked rebellion against the LORD which they will not avoid. Even as those Pharisees to whom the LORD said, *"And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."* (John 5:40) Sennacherib breathed out many threatenings and slaughterings against Jerusalem and haughtily spoke dishonor to GOD. He returned home in shame at his utter defeat and was slain at the hands of his own children. *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* (Gal 6:7)
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