

# 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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## A BESIEGED CITY

*And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.* Isaiah 1:8

In ages past men gathered themselves into walled cities for protection against marauders and those intent on gaining their possessions and bringing them into servitude. One of the tactics that developed as a means of overthrowing these walled cities was that of the siege. In essence an army or armies would gather themselves in array around the city and prevent anyone from either coming out or going in. From time to time during the siege these armies would mount assaults upon the city with various instruments of warfare to test the inhabitant's resolve and strength, but the main tactic of the siege was simply to play a waiting game until the water, food, and supplies necessary to sustain the populace were expended.

The only hope which those within the city had of withstanding such a siege was either to have some sort of continual supply of food and water inside the city, to mount a counterattack and fight off the besiegers, or else to hope that some other army (which was an ally of the city) would appear as a deliverer, driving off those who were intent on the besieged city's overthrow.

An illustration of the latter is seen as the city of Samaria was besieged by Benhadad the king of Syria, during the reign of Jehoram. The situation was so dire inside the city that mothers ate their own children (see II Kings 6:28,29) The LORD delivered the city however by causing the army of the Syrians to hear the sounds of an approaching army and to flee in disarray in the middle of the night thus ending the siege without a shot being fired.

The LORD likens the "daughter of Zion" (HIS elect remnant) to a "besieged city". We can see several things which come to mind in this illustration.

There would be no need to "besiege" a city which is without walls since an army could just march in and destroy it. Therefore we can see that in order for the "daughter of Zion" to be besieged then it must be a walled city. *"In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah; We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks."* (Isa 26:1) The LORD has not fenced the whole countryside (which HE could have if so pleased HIM) but has specifically hedged about HIS chosen city, (i.e., HIS elect bride) appointing her unto salvation and providing it as it has pleased HIM. *"Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."* (Isa 49:16)

There is nothing that makes the sons of GOD any different from those who perish other than that the LORD has chosen them unto salvation. *"Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off."* (Isa 56:5)

The LORD HIMSELF has built these walls without the aid of any and has taken up a habitation therein. *"Sing praises to the LORD, which dwelleth in Zion: declare among the*

people his doings.” (Psa 9:11) *“Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.”* (Isa 60:18) Now in reading this the man who is without understanding might conclude that there is yet no strife for the sons of GOD. Yet the same LORD who has built these walls of Salvation which can never be overcome or destroyed has also ordained that it is through much tribulation that the saints inherit the kingdom.

Therefore the *“daughter of Zion”* is not just a walled city but is a *“besieged city”*. She is completely safe and amply provisioned inside these walls yet always exposed to the danger and malice of that great army which is assembled outside her gates.

This world is not a friend unto the people of GOD, despising their LORD and their message. *“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”* (John 15:18-19) Yet the LORD has not seen fit to take HIS people out of this world but rather to demonstrate HIS perfect salvation of them in keeping them safe right in the very teeth of their enemies. The world despises the elect sons of GOD because it judges the LORD’s particular favor of those HE has approved as being unfair, even as Cain envied Abel and slew him, or Ishmael (the son of the bondwoman) despised the free born son, Isaac.

The walls of salvation were devised and built before the world’s foundation. Yet it pleased the LORD to make the world and all of its inhabitants subject unto HIS law in order that HE might demonstrate HIS purpose of delivering those for whom this city was built. Therefore the sons of GOD (who were never appointed unto wrath) fell under the condemnation of the law even as did those who were appointed unto wrath. Yet HE came into the world born of a woman, as their mighty DELIVERER to satisfy the claims of the law in their behalf so that HE might be both just and the justifier of them who are manifested in time as those that believe.

Though this law is now perfectly satisfied and rendered completely incapable of condemning the sons of GOD (see Rom.8:1) it still from time to time mounts an assault on this besieged city causing the inhabitants thereof to tremble until HE who has prevailed against it and put it out of the way, speaks peace to their frightened souls.

Satan himself, has marshaled his forces and arrayed them against the city of GOD doing everything in his power to destroy the sons of GOD from without even as he sought to do to their LORD before them. Even as Peter warned us, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”* (1Pet 5:8) We know him to be a formidable foe who will withhold none of his wiles to defeat us, yet we are safely within the walls of an impregnable fortress completely out of his reach and clad in an armor which will repel all of his fiery darts. (see Eph.6:10-18)

Yet the most dangerous foe to the people of GOD does not dwell outside these walls but can be found lurking in the dark shadows of every side street in the city. He is a most relentless foe who knows the exact weaknesses and failings of every one of its inhabitants and does not cease to use this against them. His name is Adam the father of our flesh and that one that Paul recognized would plague him until the end. He is an insidious foe who purports to be our friend but has neither part nor lot in the kingdom of GOD which cannot be inherited by flesh and blood. He is a secret admirer of the armies (the world, the law, the Devil) which besiege the city from without and often employs their aid in his quest to overcome its inhabitants. Thanks be unto GOD, however, but he will shortly be forever put away. *“In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”* (1Cor 15:52)

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