

# 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 SCARLET THREAD

*Behold, when we come into the land, thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by: and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household, home unto thee.*

*Joshua 2:18*

When we read the commandments given to Moses concerning the vestments of the priests and the veils (curtains) and coverings of the tabernacles we find that there is a scarlet thread which was woven into them all. In like fashion there is a scarlet thread which is in the warp and woof of the whole fabric of the scriptures. It is this scarlet thread which is both precious and vile. It is this scarlet thread which is both powerful and foolish. This scarlet thread is the blood of CHRIST, which is HIS very life as a man, since we read that the life is in the blood. (see Lev.17:11)

While this MAN's blood is the most precious substance to some, it has no value to most, and is even disdained by the wise, religious, and prudent men of this world. Paul said, "*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*" (1Co 1:18) The awakened sons of GOD desire no greater prize than to be found hidden in the blood of their dear SAVIOR. They seek no other rest besides, for in CHRIST alone they find perfect peace and lasting joy.

It is not so with the men of this world who consider the message of the gospel to be unworthy of their great powers of reason and intellect and consider those who declare it to be true, mentally deficient or at the least, deluded. The religious men of this world (most especially those who call themselves "Christians") often speak of HIS blood and even declare that there is great benefit for all men in what CHRIST has done in shedding it, but stop short of relying solely upon it.

The religious men of this world do not see the total sufficiency and power of that blood to save the sons of GOD. They are convinced that they must add something to it in order to make it effective. They often make such statements as, "CHRIST has done all that HE can in shedding HIS blood, now it is up to you to receive it". or "CHRIST has paid the sin debt of all men, and the only one which is not covered is the sin of unbelief." Faith is not something which men bring to GOD but rather is that which GOD brings to men. Faith is the gift of GOD and true faith is the evidence of the sovereign work of GOD in those for whom CHRIST died.

CHRIST has made no failed attempts to save anybody. When HE shed HIS precious blood on Calvary, HE unequivocally and without controversy completely paid the whole sin debt of HIS elect bride. In so doing HE finished the work which HE came to do. HE not only has redeemed HIS people, but HE has destroyed their enemies.

There are multitudes who speak about the shedding of CHRIST's blood, to whom, the true preaching of the cross is yet an offence. To see their anger demonstrated one only has to declare the particular and limited nature of HIS atonement. Those who love man's free will more than the efficacy of CHRIST's blood will be manifest in short order as they rise up and call those who would preach it, anything but blessed. The scarlet thread of CHRIST's blood alone is the sole basis of the saint's hope. This truth is woven by the hand of GOD into the very tapestry of the

faith which is delivered to the saints. We neither know nor care to look for any other. *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* (1Cor 3:11) *"For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."* (1Co 2:2)

With all of that in mind, it is interesting to look at the three instances when a "scarlet thread" is specifically mentioned in the scriptures. The first was when Tamar was giving birth to the twins sired by her own father-in-law. *"And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother, that had the scarlet thread upon his hand: and his name was called Zarah."* (Gen 38:28-30)

The LORD had promised that the MESSIAH would come from the loins of Judah. (see Gen 49:8-12) The fulfillment of this promise is observed in the book of Revelation, *"Weep not: behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof."* (Rev 5:5) And it is here in this most unlikely of situations (the result of incest and harlotry) that the LORD would see fit to send forth a sign of HIS greatest triumph as HE traced HIS earthly lineage through Pharez (see Mat.1:3). Yet the scarlet thread was not placed upon Pharez's hand but rather that of his brother's.

Insofar as the midwife knew, the firstborn was to be the one whose hand came out first and it was his hand upon which the scarlet thread was placed as a token of that fact. Yet GOD is not in any wise beholden unto man nor does HE work according to man's reason. That child which came forth first, (the true first born), was aptly named Pharez, which means "the one who breaks". Truly he is that one who is typical of HIM who is the BREAKER, mentioned in the prophecy of Micah 2:13. HE has triumphed openly over all of HIS enemies and as Job has said, *"who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?"* (Job 9:12)

Just as the midwife placed a thread upon the hand of the one who was not the firstborn, so too do the free will "midwives" place the scarlet thread upon the hand of one who cannot save them or anyone else without their permission. This quasi-savior is not the FIRSTBORN of GOD, for HE is mighty to save and cannot be denied HIS right nor HIS possession which HE has purchased with HIS own blood. HIS blood is both sufficient and efficient for their redemption.

Then the "scarlet thread" appears again in the book of Joshua as that token (see Josh.2:12,18) which was given to Rahab by the Israeli spies to mark the place of her abode even as the children of Israel put the blood of the lamb on their door posts and lintels on the night of the Passover. It is the blood of CHRIST that marks out the deliverance of the captives and does set at freedom those who are worthy of death. There were probably at least a few morally upright women in the city of Jericho, but it was unto a harlot that the messengers were sent and to whom the token was given and she alone with her family were saved alive.

The third time a scarlet thread is mentioned is found in the book of the Song of Solomon where the BRIDEGROOM is describing the beauty of HIS beloved. *"Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet, and thy speech is comely."* (S of Sol. 4:3) The FATHER sees the beauty of HIS children as HE beholds them hidden in the blood (which is the life thereof) of HIS dear SON. *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."* (1John 5:11) This is the MARK of her BEAUTY; lips as a "thread of scarlet". Her speech is that which is comely because it is the speech of those lips which testify of a "thread of scarlet".

Peter exhorted the saints to be ready to give to every man, who asks, a reason of the HOPE that is in them. *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."* (1Pe 3:15) We have no other HOPE than that which is displayed in the scarlet thread which is woven into the only garment of covering which we have or desire.

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