

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

NO CONTINUING CITY

For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

Hebrews 13:14

Throughout the scriptures, a stark contrast is made between the kingdoms of this world and the Kingdom of GOD. The kingdoms of this world wax and wane and kings come and go according to the good pleasure of GOD. *"Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings:" (Dan 2:20-21)*

All governments ultimately fail because that is the design of GOD for them, that the eternal nature of HIS kingdom might be contrasted thereby.. *"that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." (Dan 4:17)* Is it any wonder that "politics" is the bailiwick of liars and self serving deceivers? Should we be amazed when governments become oppressors since it is in the heart of men to do only evil continually, and the basest of men are in seats of power and rule.

All that can be seen with the natural eye is temporary and passes away. *"While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."* (2Cor 4:18) The LORD plainly declared, to Pilate, the origin and nature of HIS kingdom. *"My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."* (John 18:36)

An inability to comprehend this very principle manifests the blindness of Israel to embrace and worship the MESSIAH, as HE walked among them. It is also the inability to comprehend this same principle which manifests itself in those religious Gentiles who try to interpret Bible prophecy in a carnal fashion and look for a kingdom of flesh and blood replete with real estate and earthly conquests. *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption" (1Cor 15:50)*

The triumph of CHRIST over the kingdoms of this world is complete. *"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it."* (Col 2:15) HE did this in HIS work on Calvary's cross *"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;" (Col 2:14)* HE manifests that triumph as HE calls those, which are HIS, out of every nation upon the earth. *"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." (Rev 5:9)* HE calls HIS own sheep by name and the voice of another shepherd they will not follow.

Thus those who are awakened by HIS SPIRIT and born from above by HIS almighty power and the gift of ETERNAL LIFE are thus "translated" from a satisfaction with this present world to a longing for that kingdom *"wherein dwelleth righteousness."* (2Pet 3:13) This is manifested by way

of illustration in Lot, *"And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished. "* (2Pet 2:7-9) Now according to the carnal standards of men it would be impossible for them to see Lot as being a "righteous man". Yet those who are the subjects of CHRIST's kingdom are made just by HIS righteousness, and not by their own, and in actual fact; in spite of their innate depravity.

These awakened sons of GOD, confess that they look *"for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."* (Heb 11:10) Their satisfaction is not found in this present, sinful realm and their affections are elsewhere. *"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."* (1John 2:15) *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2 Cor 5:17)

This "new creature" groans and travails under the pains of sin even as the rest of the natural creation does, yet this "new creature" desires that which the natural creation has no knowledge of, nor any desire after. *"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."* (Rom 8:22-23)

Those who are "born from above" desire not a continuation of the present world order (kosmos), but rather a deliverance from it. In this desire they are given a hope in the resurrection of CHRIST that they too shall be raised in a body which is incorruptible and fadeth not away.

While the natural man would like to be delivered from death, his desire for life is that he might continue on in fulfilling the carnal desires of his heart. If he loves fishing, then he anticipates fishing through endless days, or continuing whatever makes him happy in this passing world. The man who is born of the SPIRIT however has his affections set upon those things which cannot pass away even as Paul exhorts the Colossians, *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."* (Col 3:1-4)

We have here no continuing city. Our LORD JESUS CHRIST is that CITY not made with hands, and is eternal in the heavens. *"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked."* (2Cor 5:1-3) We desire to be clothed with HIS righteousness and not that of our own. HE is our COVERING.

We have here no continuing city. That CITY which we long to inhabit is ruled by HIM *"Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."* (Isa 9:7) HE rules in this Kingdom not for a mere thousand years nor any finite measure of time but forever.

We have here no continuing city. That CITY which we expect to inhabit is one wherein dwelleth HOPE. *"God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope."* (1Tim 1:1) *"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:."* (Col 1:5-6)

We have here no continuing city. That CITY of which we are the inhabitants is enhanced by nothing of this earthly realm. *"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."* (Rev 21:22-23)