

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

SURVEYING THE BULWARKS

Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. Psalm 48:12-13

The English word “*bulwarks*” appears in the KJV, five different times and each time, that it is found, a different Hebrew word is translated as “*bulwarks*”. The word which is used here is a word which specifically means an entrenchment, rampart, or fortress. The general meaning of a bulwark can apply to any sort of fortification which is constructed for the defense of a city. Most especially an impregnable wall. Thus the Psalmist is exhorting the reader to take notice of the defenses and fortifications of the city of Zion, which is the kingdom of GOD.

When the LORD JESUS was upon the earth, HE made this statement. “*Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*”(Mat 16:18) Some have wrongly surmised that the rock of which HE speaks is Peter (whose name means a stone or rock) yet HE merely used Peter’s name by way of contrast, and the ROCK upon which HIS church is built is not upon some fallible man but rather upon HIS own perfections and power.

Thus HE stated that even the very “powers” (i.e.; *gates*) of hell itself (which is used here as a synonym of the kingdom of darkness and death, whose strength is sin and whose end is destruction) could never prevail (i.e.; overpower) against it. HE demonstrated the spiritual nature of HIS kingdom when HE rebuked Pontius Pilate with these words “*My kingdom is not of this world:*”(John 18:36). Then HE explained the power of HIS kingdom at the same time, “*To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.*”(John 18:37)

This is exactly what HE had said earlier to the Jews, “*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day*”(John 6:37-40)

The success and furtherance of the Kingdom of GOD rests squarely upon the shoulders of HIM who is that ROCK of offense and the STONE which was rejected by the wise builders, and who shall grind to powder all who do not cast themselves upon HIS mercy. None of those for whom HE has come, to seek and to save, can possibly perish, since it is HIS purpose to give unto them HIS kingdom and they do inhabit it according to the good pleasure of HIS will. HE has triumphed over all of their enemies (which are HIS as well) and made a show of them openly and has paid every one of their debts, by nailing them to HIS cross.

The glory of this Kingdom is recounted each time the gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD is declared. Who can disannul it or in anywise overturn its precepts? Thus HIS kingdom is established in the earth, though the men of this world (cosmos, or world system) cannot see it nor

in anywise feel its power. Yet those, to whom it is given, rejoice in their KING and exult in the magnification of HIS glory and the exaltation of HIS name. They see HIS deliverance plainly revealed and find great comfort within the walls of this City.

A proper "survey" (i.e.; *mark ye well*) of the defenses and fortifications of this city can only be done by those who are inside its walls as they traverse the bounds of this MIGHTY FORTRESS and see the impregnable nature of those "*bulwarks*" of their defense. Thus they are encouraged and they are made to have total confidence in that which has been erected for their safety and deliverance from all foes who might rage against them. This is a HOLY CITY which is built for a royal priesthood and a peculiar people, whose delight is in the TRUTH of the MOST HIGH GOD, and without (i.e.; outside its walls) "*are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.*" (Rev 22:15)

This kingdom is compassed about with TRUTH. Thus the LORD told the woman at the well of Samaria, "*God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.*" (John 4:24) This is not a kingdom which is built in any way upon man's grasp of the TRUTH, but rather this Kingdom is established by the application of the TRUTH by the SPIRIT of GOD. "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.*" (John 16:13-14) "*But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*" (Jer 31:33)

This kingdom is compassed about by GRACE. "*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*" (John 1:17) TRUTH believed is the manifestation of GRACE applied. CHRIST affirmed this when HE upbraided the Pharisees because of their unbelief, "*He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.*" (John 8:47) HE went on to describe those who are HIS sheep, "*But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.*" (John 10:26-28) It is only by HIS grace that any man can be called by HIS name. "*(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)*" (Rom 9:11) "*So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.*" (Rom 9:16)

This kingdom is compassed about with RIGHTEOUSNESS. GOD accepteth no man's person except that he be found perfectly righteous before him. "*Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.*" (Psa 24:3-4) Since this is the "standard" of the Kingdom, all men who are found clad in garments of their own making are sure to be cast away. There is only ONE whose righteousness exceedeth all that is required. "*Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.*" (Jer 23:5-6)

This kingdom is compassed about with IMPUTATION. HE who is righteous has taken the sin of HIS elect unto HIMSELF by imputation (i.e.; an accounting term which means to lay to account or reckon) and HE has imputed HIS righteousness to them. "*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.*" (2Cor 5:21) "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" (1Cor 1:30) All ye inhabitants of Zion, look well at these bulwarks, rejoice therein and "*Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*" (Psa 100:4)

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