

# 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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## THE GRANDEST "IF" IN THE BIBLE

*For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall  
be also in the likeness of his resurrection.*

*Rom 6:5*

There can be no greater place of despair, depression and emptiness for those who have been awakened to the fact of their own just condemnation and the tender mercies of GOD, than to consider being cast out of the presence of the LORD forever. This is a place of darkness which exceeds that of Judas, who destroyed himself, because of carnal sorrow. This place of despair is manifested in our LORD as HE cried out *"my GOD, my GOD, why hast THOU forsaken me."* In that moment the sorrows of death compassed HIM about and there was none that could deliver HIM, as HE bore our sins and carried our sorrows. HE died without hope as a condemned sinner before the law, and none eye did pity HIM nor did any come to HIS aid.

What a contrast, to that despair, is given here in this verse for those whom the LORD has hidden in HIS side, (i.e. *"planted together"*) and in whose behalf HE trod the winepress of GOD's wrath alone. For *"if"* (and what an *"if"* it is) they are planted in the likeness of HIS death, by means of the imputation of HIS sinlessness and righteous obedience in satisfying the LAW by HIS life and HIS death, then it is an absolute certainty that they shall be raised in the same fashion (on the basis of the same imputation,) as HE triumphed over death and lives forever more.

This ultimate resurrection and triumph over the natural grave, is manifested and foreshadowed in that of which Paul speaks to the Galatians. *"For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."* (Gal 2:19-20)

As surely as the sons of GOD shall be raised from the graves in which they sleep, so too, are they presently made to live in CHRIST. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2Cor 5:17) This is the fulfillment of the promise which the LORD left with HIS disciples, *"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also."* (John 14:16-19)

The gift of the HOLY SPIRIT cannot be earned or merited by men, but is granted according to the good pleasure of HIS will to those whom HE has ordained and called unto eternal life. HE is pleased to manifest this gift in them by causing them to believe HIS WORD, HIS promise, and to delight in HE whom the FATHER hath sent. *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."* (John 5:24)

There are two major Greek words which are translated as “if” in the writings of Paul. Both of the words are “particles of conditionality”. One of those words is used primarily to denote a condition of indefiniteness or uncertainty. We see this illustrated in the use of the word “if” in Rom.2:25; *“For circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law: but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision.”*

The law of Moses was given; not to correct the sinful condition of man but to demonstrate his innate sinfulness. *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead.”* (Rom 7:7-8) These conditional promises of the OT were given to demonstrate man’s inability to gain GOD’s blessing through the activity of the flesh, even as Paul argues here that the law cannot profit if a man does not keep it in its detail.

The law, along with the promises which are attached thereto, serves only to illustrate the lost and undone condition of man in his natural state. *“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”* (Gal 3:21-22) This revelation of the law’s purpose and the innate depravity of man, both serve to demonstrate the sheer folly of trying to establish a righteousness which is acceptable to GOD by the keeping of a law which is totally contrary to that sinful state into which men are born. *“Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.”* (Job 5:7)

So the “conditional” promises attached to the law, are unable to aid man at all, due to his inability to keep it. This indefinite and uncertain “if” speaks nothing but condemnation. *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. (HIS own)”* (Rom 8:3)

Now this is the only remedy which is set forth as the means whereby a man might be found just before GOD, accepted in the BELOVED, and made an heir and joint heir with CHRIST of all of that which is rightfully HIS, by virtue of HIS person and work.

Thus we see the second “if”; illustrated in our text, which is also conditional, yet, is never in question but rather certain to occur because the foundation thereof is not based upon man’s ability or lack thereof but rather upon that which CHRIST has performed. So the Apostle sets forth this glorious premise which ministers joy and hope to those who are “planted” by CHRIST and therefore in CHRIST. *“For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also (raised) in the likeness of his resurrection.”*

This is exactly what the LORD told HIS disciples in John’s gospel, *“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.”* (John 14:1-3) All of the comfort of GOD’s people arises out of their conviction and persuasion that CHRIST is the sole MESSENGER of GOD and in HIM is the power of an endless life. Even as Peter confessed, *“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.”* (John 6:68-69)

How does a man gain such a conviction? From whence does such a persuasion come? Is it possible that a man whose natural thoughts are contrary to the way of GOD should on his own accord embrace the way of GOD which he naturally despises? The LORD JESUS clearly stated the SOURCE in HIS words to Peter, *“Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”* (Mat 16:17) Would GOD abandon those to whom HE is pleased to reveal HIMSELF? Would HE hold any in derision who call upon HIS name and tremble before HIM? *“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom 8:31) A grand “if” to be sure.

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