

# 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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## LAHAIROI

*And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac; and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahairoi.*

*Genesis 25:11*

Some suppose that the book of James is a modifier of the truth that the salvation of GOD's people is solely and completely according to the gift of grace by a Sovereign GOD. Those who love to proclaim the "free will" of men (as though it was some sovereign power) often turn there to prove that salvation is as much about the works of the creature as it is about the grace of GOD.

If one assumes the notion that GOD has made HIS will subservient to the will of man, then he is predisposed to view the salvation of the LORD's people as a cooperative effort with GOD providing a "gift" and man making a decision to receive it and thus earning favor in the sight of GOD by being obedient to various commands and duties. This concept is rooted in the very nature of man and is proof of the "law" written in the hearts of all men.

Unfortunately for the natural man, he is blind to his condition, and apart from a "new birth" he can never see the glory of the kingdom of GOD. He can never proclaim salvation by grace alone because he is too preoccupied with establishing his own righteousness before GOD, just as the Jews did, in rejecting CHRIST, even though HE walked in their midst and declared the truth of GOD in their ears. (see James 1:18)

By nature men are convinced that they can bring something of value unto the LORD (of which notion, Cain is the poster child), whether it be sincerity of purpose, obedience to the outward precepts of GOD's law, demonstrations of faith, or outward manifestations of worship and praise. In this state he can never find comfort and rest in a salvation that was purposed in Eternity by a GOD who alone hath immortality, dwelling in a LIGHT to which no man can approach.

Neither can he be content to magnify the glory of GOD's grace, apart from any participation by the creature. For he believes that he can bring faith to GOD rather than the necessity of GOD bringing faith to him. I saw a marquee outside a local meeting house which illustrates this very point. It said, in bold letters, "We can never have eternal life until we have faith". This is exactly backwards to the truth. Until a man is given eternal life he will not and/or cannot believe.

The natural man hates this declaration because it gives him no place in which to glory, nor any place wherein he might demonstrate his own worthiness compared to someone else. "As it is written, *There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*" (Rom 3:10-12)

The natural man is quite content to speak of a salvation of which man makes the deciding choice in time, but he recoils at the notion that GOD should do so from before the foundation of the world. He might speak of a Sovereign GOD with his lips, but in reality he believes in the sovereignty of man's free will.

The eternal nature of GOD's love to those whom HE has chosen in CHRIST is an abhorrent idea to that man who believes that salvation is by chance rather than by the design of a GOD who has predestined all things according to the good pleasure of HIS will. Thus the glory of the

salvation of the elect Bride of CHRIST, is hidden from his view even though it is stretched across the ages of time like an unfurled banner, and is set forth upon every page of the Bible in bold letters which are unmistakable to those who have been given eyes to see.

That man who is given the knowledge of his salvation in CHRIST will glory in his SAVIOR, rather than in his own belief in the SAVIOR because he is made aware that his salvation rests completely in the work of the REDEEMER in HIS behalf, and not in his having come to embrace that work.

There has never been a day when those whom the LORD has loved in CHRIST, have ever been hated, despised, or in any wise the objects of HIS wrath. Rather they are the appointed heirs of salvation, who, while hidden in the earth for a season, like a buried treasure, are brought to LIGHT at the appointed time by HIM who has purposed their redemption prior to their subjection to vanity and manifestation as unworthy sinners. They are brought to faith because they are ordained to receive it. (see Acts 13:48)

We can see this illustrated in the relationship of Isaac to the well of Lahairoi. This place is mentioned by name only three times in the Bible. Though it is called "Lahairoi" in the KJV each time it is associated with Isaac (see Gen 24:62; 25:11) it is apparently the same "*fountain of water*" (*Gen.16:7*) from which Hagar drank and was sustained when she fled from the wrath of Sarai, Abram's wife. In that account the name in the KJV is "Beerlahairoi" which is the word used later minus the "Beer" prefix (in English) even though in the Hebrew it is the exact same word.

The word literally means, "well of my LIVING ONE, or my seer or prophet". Hagar was a bondswoman and only briefly encountered this well while she fled from her mistress. Though she was sustained by it while there, we have no account of her ever returning to it, or dwelling in that vicinity. She was content to have temporarily benefited from it, just as the seed which fell upon stony ground withered away. Or even as those who are mentioned by Peter, "*For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*" (2 Pet 2:20-22)

There are some who give an outward appearance of being among the household of faith for a season, but in time they prove that they are not the sheep of the LORD's pasture, as they turn back from following after HIM, and are content with that way from which they had seemingly escaped.

Isaac, on the other hand, is illustrative of those who are the appointed heirs of grace. He was born into this world as the heir of his father's estate. While Hagar was a bondswoman, Isaac was a son. Hagar was born in bondage and while benefiting from the wealth of Abraham, she was not an heir to any of it. Hagar did not choose her birth (and the station befitting it) anymore than Isaac decided to be the child of promise. This is what Paul speaks of with his illustration of Jacob and Esau. "*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)

Thus we see Isaac prior, to his marriage, living in the vicinity of "Lahairoi". "*And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi; for he dwelt in the south country.*" (Gen 24:62) Even as the LORD told Isaiah, "*And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.*" (Isa 42:16)

Yet after his father Abraham's death, he dwelt by that WELL. He was never "without" that WELL, before, (since he came by that WAY). Yet as he was made aware of that which was his by inheritance, he gladly lived by that WELL. "*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 2:20)

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