

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Published occasionally for Zion's mourners*

*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 SET TIME

*Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.*

*Psalms 102:13*

The prayers, complaints (such as we see here in the 102<sup>nd</sup> Psalm), declarations, and exaltations which David spoke in the Psalms are in reality the prophetic utterances of the MAN, CHRIST JESUS. Whether they are glad pronouncements of praise or deep grievings and exclamations of sorrow, they expose the soul of HIM who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows. We can see a window into all that HE bore for HIS elect as HE was in all points tempted (i.e.; tried) even as they are. Thus HE, as their GREAT HIGH PRIEST, is touched with the feelings of their infirmities and they in turn are given some understanding of the great conflicts which occur in the heart which is exercised by sin.

HE, having no sin of HIS own, and being perfectly unstained with any imperfection or impurity, did nonetheless become sin for HIS people and underwent the very burden which those who are laid under the lash of the law and the weight of sin's condemnation do bear. HE knows what it is to sink under the crushing blame and guilt, of a broken law, to lift up HIS eyes to heaven, and feel a sense of abandonment and darkness. HE experienced a need for mercy and a desperate hope that HIS groanings might be heard by HIM (alone) in whom HIS soul could find a place of respite and an expectation of deliverance.

In this groaning and desire for deliverance, those whom HE has loved with an everlasting love, do share that yearning (when they are awakened by HIS SPIRIT) as they through much tribulation enter the Kingdom of Heaven which HE has opened for them. HE ever stands for them as their SUBSTITUTE in those things wherein the law demands satisfaction, and their EXAMPLE and PERFORMER in all things pertaining to life and godliness.

This is no haphazard operation which is left up to the free will of men to bring to pass. Rather it is accomplished by the work of HIS SPIRIT in the sons of GOD. Thus they can no more be satisfied to continue in the way of their flesh as they once did (before HE was pleased to bring them out of darkness and into the LIGHT of the glory of GOD in the face of JESUS CHRIST), than the man who is walking in the flesh can desire to do all things to the glory of GOD.

Though their flesh (those who are born from above) wrestles against the SPIRIT of GOD, they are inexorably drawn to HIM and caused to make their complaints unto the LORD, as they see the wicked tendencies and certain destruction of that flesh, and they do willingly cast themselves at HIS feet as their only DELIVERER and CHAMPION; the sole basis of their HOPE and SALVATION. We have the example of Paul, in this very matter, spoken of in the book of Acts, "behold, he prayeth," (Acts 9:11) Every man who is born again knows something of the depths of his own sin and his utter dependence upon the mercy of GOD for help. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16)

Thus we see our SAVIOR's example as HE used David to record HIS own anguish of heart and mind in the most descriptive of terms, here in this Psalm, "For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth. My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I

*forget to eat my bread. By reason of the voice of my groaning my bones cleave to my skin. I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top. Mine enemies reproach me all the day; and they that are mad against me are sworn against me.” (Psa 102:3-8)*

Thomas Kelly gives us a glimpse of our LORD’s grief in his hymn; (#1116; Gadsby’s Hymnal)

Tell me, ye who hear him groaning, Was there ever grief like his?

Friends, through fear, his cause disowning, Foes insulting his distress.

Many hands were raised to wound him, None would interpose to save,

But the awful stroke that found him, Was the stroke that justice gave.

In the very midst of the depths of HIS sorrow, HIS mind’s eye was turned not merely to contemplate HIS own suffering (though HE was marred more than any man), but to be reminded, and thus to remind us of the certain deliverance which was brought in by that which HE gladly gave. Isaiah speaks of this when he says, *“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.” (Isa 53:10-11)* The author of the epistle to the Hebrews corroborates this very truth when he exhorted the sons of GOD, *“Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb 12:2)*

The LORD speaks here in our text of a *“set time”*. The Hebrew word which is used here refers to a “specific appointment” and can mean a “particular festival or assembly”. We could paraphrase what HE said here as “the season to show favor to the LORD’s people, yes that specific appointment which was made in advance, is now here.” This “set time” was made plain when the LORD JESUS read this scripture from Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth (see Luke 4:17-19) *“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.” (Isa 61:1-3)*

A *“set time”* requires a particular purpose. All that the LORD does HE does for a specific reason. Nothing in all of HIS creation is left to chance nor is any activity or action not ordained according to HIS purpose. HE has determined to manifest the glory of HIS grace in the redemption of a people which HE has loved from the beginning. And to that end HE has ordained every action to bring about that desired result. *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom 8:28)*

A *“set time”* requires that there is SOMEONE who has the authority and power to establish such an “appointment”. *“Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?” (Rom 9:21).*

A *“set time”* requires that there is SOMEONE who has the power to keep that appointment. When men make “appointments” they may or may not be honored, but whenever the LORD establishes a “set time”, that appointment will be kept. We read of this in the example of those Gentiles who believed in Acts 13:48, *“And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.” (Acts 13:48)* *“Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead. (Acts 17:31)*

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