

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

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

From the very opening pages of the book of Genesis, the LORD would demonstrate to man his own corruptible fleshly nature and HIS purpose to deliver that people who were precious in HIS sight. HE prophetically decreed to Adam that he would “die” in the day that he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, in disobedience to the LORD’s command.

Adam showed himself to be a corruptible human being by doing the very thing which the LORD revealed to him that he would do. The LORD demonstrated HIS faithful watch care over HIS creation by covering Adam’s nakedness with the skins of animals to replace the inadequate coverings which Adam had concocted (fig leaves; see Rom.10:3) to hide his shame. Though HE placed a curse upon the ground because of Adam’s sin and drove him from the Paradise of Eden, HE nonetheless declared that a DELIVERER would come through the seed of the woman.

The LORD is never in a hurry to do anything and we see the fulfillment of this prophecy coming many, many years after it was spoken. Though the LORD is never in a rush to accomplish HIS purpose, (as man sees it) HE is completely faithful to perform that which HE ordains to come to pass at the exact moment which seems good in HIS sight.

Thus we see the LORD demonstrate, down through the history of man, as revealed in the scriptures, HIS circuitous but certain deliverance of that people upon whom HE has set HIS everlasting love. HE ordained the selling of Joseph into Egypt by his brothers. HE ordained that there would be famine in the land in order that Joseph’s family might be brought to Egypt and spared from starvation. This was their deliverance as Joseph had been installed in a high position in Pharaoh’s government. In a somewhat torturous and protracted manner Jacob’s arrival in Egypt was brought to pass.

Then over another period of many years the children of Israel were brought into complete slavery and servitude in the very place which they once viewed as their salvation. The LORD ordained this captivity as much as HE did their salvation from the famine. HE would demonstrate HIS continual purpose to deliver HIS people, but only in the time which pleased HIM.

The day came when GOD caused Pharaoh to reluctantly let the children of Israel go, ordaining that they should be enriched by the spoils of Egypt. (see Ex. 12:35,36) Yet this deliverance seemed to be short-lived whenever the Israelites noticed the army of Egypt hot upon their heels. Thus they began to cry and murmur at their plight, only to have their sorrow turned into rejoicing as the LORD opened up the Red Sea and they crossed over on dry ground, seeing Pharaoh’s legions swallowed up in that same sea.

Over the next few centuries of time the LORD ordained the rise and fall of Israel in order that HE might once again remind them of that DELIVERER who would come, and build a TEMPLE not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. It is in the midst of a greater slavery than they had

endured in Egypt, that the LORD was pleased to send forth the ONE REDEEMER of Israel whose hand could not be stayed, nor HIS purpose overturned.

When they were in Egypt they were under hard physical taskmasters. Yet when they were under Roman rule, they were not only mistreated by their captors, they were also greatly laboring in the delusion of fleshly religion which was visited upon them by the Pharisees who embraced their own additions to the law, but neglected mercy required by the law. *"To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear. But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken. Wherefore hear the word of the LORD, ye scornful men, that rule this people which is in Jerusalem."* (Isa 28:12-14)

It is upon this backdrop that the LORD was pleased to paint the grandest MASTERPIECE of deliverance that has ever been put on display to HIS creation, as HE sent forth HIM who was born of a woman, to be the TRUE REDEEMER of the Israel of GOD. All of those "deliverances" which took place throughout the history of the nation of Israel, were but types and shadows of that true DELIVERANCE which HE had ordained from before the foundation of the world. This REDEEMER was sent to bring salvation to all that HE had ordained unto eternal life. *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* (Mat 1:21) This was indeed the "set time" when HE would favor Zion.

A "set time" is a specific time. It could not occur either before or after that time which is appointed. We are reminded of the LORD's declaration to Abraham concerning the birth of Isaac, HIS chosen heir, *"But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year."* (Gen 17:21) Then when that day was fully come Isaac was indeed born. *"For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him."* (Gen 21:2) That birth could not have occurred at any time, except at that moment which was established by the LORD.

In order to have a "set time", the ONE doing the "setting" must be an absolute SOVEREIGN. Man may propose to establish times but only HE who ordains all events can, in reality, set any time. If any event which occurs in the earth happens randomly then, all other events could occur in the same fashion, since all events depend upon those which occur previously. Thus the LORD says of HIMSELF, *"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."* (Isa 46:10) The Psalmist declares his confidence in the faithfulness of HIM who orders the days of our lives. *"But I trusted in thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand:"* (Psa 31:14-15)

A "set time" presupposes a set purpose which is to be accomplished at that "set time". The work of the redemption of GOD's people is not set forth in the scripture as an open ended "offer" to save, but is declared to be a work which HE would accomplish and indeed has completed since that "set time" to favor Zion has already occurred as we read in the epistle to the Hebrews. *"But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."* (Heb 9:11-12)

Then a "set time" becomes a time of rejoicing for those who are ordained to be blessed by that which occurs at this "set time". In this I am reminded of those Gentile believers, *"For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 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 13:47-48) Job also rejoiced at the prospect that he would be raised from the dead. *"O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me! If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come."* (Job 14:13-14)

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