

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 AFFLICTIONS OF THE RIGHTEOUS

It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes. Psalm 119:71

One of the most satisfying blessings for the sons of GOD, is to be made aware that the Psalms are, for the most part, written to set forth the prayers and worship of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, before HIS FATHER, as HE labored in this present world as that ONE who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet never submitting HIMSELF to any of the lusts of the flesh, the lust of eyes, or the pride of life. For he was without sin and therefore could not be made its subject, though HE did, willingly, bear our sins in HIS own body as our perfect SACRIFICE and SUBSTITUTE, thereby condemning sin in the flesh, and triumphing over it for us, as HE came, "*in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin.*" (Rom 8:3) In this fashion, HE came into the world primarily to "*do HIS FATHER's will*" and in so doing, to redeem that bride which the FATHER gave HIM before the foundation of the world.

In complete opposition to the comprehension of sinful men, the GOD of Heaven, Earth, and Hell was born of a virgin mother and became an infant of a span (see Lam.2:20) Truly did the prophet of old say, "*He is---a MAN of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: --- he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*" (Isa 53:3-4) Surely we must put our hands upon our mouth when we contemplate the wonders that are set forth in this revelation. We are struck dumb with amazement when we consider that HE was a perfect MAN and perfect GOD, "*Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.*" (Heb 5:7-8) How is such a thing as this possible?

We will leave the explanations and analysis of this conundrum for the learned scholars to explain. We shall merely fall upon our faces in adoring wonder at HIS condescension and willingness to submit HIMSELF to that law which HE authored and designed to reveal sin and put to death those who break it. We will worship at HIS feet as we see HIM, who was without sin, become sin for us. (see II Cor. 5:21) "*He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief.*" (Isa 53:8-10)

And so it is that there hath no temptation (i.e.; trial, or testing) come upon the sons of GOD, but that which is common to all men and we see the MAN, JESUS of Nazareth, who is CHRIST the LORD, submitting HIMSELF unto every one of these common trials, heartaches, and grief for the sake of HIS elect. Not simply submitting HIMSELF in some reluctant fashion but looking beyond those trials to the joy that was set before HIM, gladly embracing these troubles and thanking HIS FATHER for them as HE became the perfect SACRIFICE for HIS people. "*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the*

captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” (Heb 2:9-10) “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation” (Heb 5:9)

If HE, who bore the brunt of the broken law of GOD (in the behalf of those HE suffered for), rejoiced in the precepts of GOD, and was thankful for the afflictions which were the result of that broken law, then how much more should those who have been the recipients of HIS justifying and sanctifying work as their substitute, evermore take delight in those precepts and rejoice in HIS fulfillment of them. HE has satisfied the Law in every jot and tittle in order that HE might be both just and the JUSTIFIER of those who believe in HIM.

When HE left this Earth, going back to HIS FATHER, HE did not leave HIS people to fend for themselves. Rather HE gave them a COMFORTER who would lead them into all TRUTH and bestow upon them the necessary gifts for their benefit. *“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” (Eph 4:8)* It pleased HIM, according to HIS eternal purpose, to use the same afflictions which HE bore in HIS own life upon Earth, to strengthen HIS brethren even as HE was strengthened in the midst of them. *“For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.” (1Pet 2:19-25)*

When we are discouraged and downcast, (as often the sons of GOD are in this lowland of sin and sorrow) we are exhorted to remember HIM and as the SPIRIT of GOD is pleased to apply these things to our minds we experience the same joy which HE had when HE considered that these things are meant for our good. *“let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 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. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” (Heb 12:1-3)*

The “afflictions of the RIGHTEOUS”, therefore are seen by us to be satisfactory:

To HIMSELF. HE came into the world to fulfill one purpose which was *“to save HIS people from their sins.”* In order to bring many sons unto glory, it was necessary that HE not only be their REPRESENTATIVE in the courts of Heaven, but to satisfy the very demands of the Law of GOD in this world. This HE did by taking unto HIMSELF a body of flesh and blood and bearing the curse of the Law which was two fold. First *“the soul that sinneth shall die.”* Thus HE did indeed die the death of a sinner as HE tasted the bitterness of death. Secondly that HE undergo the effects of the curse upon man, *“And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Gen 3:17-19)* Thus HE came to bear this sorrow, which HE did as HE *“bore our grief”* as the *“MAN of sorrows.”*

To HIS FATHER. *“But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Heb 1:8-9)* HE has sat down in the seat of POWER fulfilling all righteousness in Heaven and Earth.

To those who believe. The gift of faith is given to those whom the FATHER calls in order that they might approve well what CHRIST has accomplished. *“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled “ (Col 1:19-21)* The awakened sons of GOD have thrown down their arms of rebellion, and now gladly embrace HIM whom they once despised. mam