

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 STEPS OF A GOOD MAN

The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Psalm 37:23

The man who believes the Bible to be a religious book, sees lessons on morality throughout its pages. The function of all religion is to propound various moral principles and each one seeks to encourage these principles in those who might avail themselves of them through their own free will. We would certainly not wish to denigrate any moral principle which is of benefit to men, nor would we ever contend that there are not moral principles which are indeed taught in the Bible.

Yet we would deny that the Bible is specifically a moral lesson book or that it is written to promote any religion, other than that of visiting "*the fatherless and widows*" and keeping oneself "*unspotted from the world.*" To see the Bible as anything less than the unfolding of GOD's purpose in the redemption of HIS people through the life, death, and resurrection of the only begotten SON of GOD, is to miss its grand design and to settle for husks without the KERNEL.

CHRIST is the WORD of GOD, and the Bible is the written declaration of HIM. All that is in its pages serves to magnify HIS person and work in the behalf of that elect Bride, for which HE has expressed HIS unswerving love and devotion. To miss that understanding is to be left without the key to all of the mysteries hidden within its pages, regardless of what else one may declare these scriptures to teach.

John said it best when he wrote; "*That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." (1John 1:1-4)*

From the dawn of creation until the last trump, there is to be but one NAME exalted, both in the shadows and types of the Old Testament and now in the full Revelation of JESUS CHRIST as the fullness of the GODHEAD bodily. All that is written in the pages of the Bible, is written unto the end that HE might be lifted up and magnified as the Blessed and Only POTENTATE, the ANCIENT of days, the Everlasting FATHER, and the BEGINNING and the END. In the ages to come HE will be the SUBJECT and the OBJECT of all praise and HIS redemptive work will be remembered forever, by every living creature which shall exist in HIS presence.

So as we read the Psalms we are reminded that they are written primarily to testify of HIM and to cause GOD's people to see HIS example as a perfect MAN who thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD, yet took upon HIMSELF the likeness of sinful flesh and dwelt among men, as a MAN full of grace and truth. HE learned obedience by the things which HE suffered and was acquainted with the weakness of sinful flesh, (though having no sin of HIS own) and is able to succor him that is tempted, having been tried in all points like as we are.

We read, "*the steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD*". We must then ask ourselves what "*good man*" could he be speaking of since the scriptures plainly declare that "*there is none good, no not one.*" It seems obvious to me that he must have reference to the only "*good man*" who ever walked upon the earth. We know that HE is 'good', because in HIS flesh, he deferred all glory to HIS FATHER when HE said, "*Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God.*" (Mat 19:17) To expect that "sinful men" can rightly be called "good" in their own selves is to deny the principle of the law which James set forth, "*For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.*" (James 2:10)

The only goodness which can be found in the sons of men is that which is imputed to them by the righteousness of CHRIST. All else about them is tainted with the corruption that is in them by nature. Here, in this Psalm, is the testimony that a GOOD MAN's steps are ordered by the LORD. We are sure that every step which the LORD JESUS took was according to the eternal purpose of a Sovereign GOD. This is true, as surely as it is true that the steps of the wicked were ordered according to the same purpose and accomplished the exact result for which they were ordained, "*Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.*" (Acts 2:22-24)

So, when the Psalmist speaks of HIS steps being "*ordered by the LORD*", he is not merely speaking about the fact that GOD has predestined all things to occur, even though that is completely true. Rather, he is testifying to the glory that surrounds HIM who came to fulfill the purpose for which HE came into the world. This is that which was told to Joseph, "*Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*" (Mat 1:21)

The Psalmist says, "*he delighteth in his way.*" We can look at that in two ways. HE is that ONE in whom the LORD "delighteth" as HE declared at HIS baptism, and upon the Mount of Transfiguration. "*This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*" (Mat 3:17; 17:5) But we can also consider it in light of the fact that HE whose steps are ordered (ie; CHRIST) has taken delight in that which HE was sent to do. "*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) "*Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O LORD, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart; I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.*" (Psa 40:7-10)

If we need further evidence that this "good man" is CHRIST, then we must only read the complete narrative describing the wisdom of his mouth and the judgment of HIS tongue. (see v.30). Then we read "*The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.*" (Psa 37:32) Is this not descriptive of the life of CHRIST, as HIS enemies plotted HIS demise? Next we discover, "*he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*" (Psa 37:34) Is this not the exact declaration which is set forth in Psalm 2 "*Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.*"

How glorious it is to contemplate the steps of this GOOD MAN, as HE fulfilled the FATHER's purpose in obtaining eternal redemption for those who have been the objects of HIS love from the beginning. Well did HE say, "*For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.*" (John 6:38-39) mam