

# 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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## THE LORD'S WORK

*The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God. Jeremiah 51:10*

Many surveyed the plight of the Jews and no doubt figured that they had been completely abandoned by the LORD as the hordes of the Chaldeans swept into Jerusalem, slaying multitudes and plundering Solomon's temple. This was an edifice that had stood in a quite glorious state for many years. Solomon had been ordained by GOD to begin construction on this most glorious building four hundred ninety-eight years after the LORD enabled Moses to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. (see I Kings 6:1). During Solomon's reign, the nation of Israel enjoyed a prolonged period of worldly peace and prosperity. Yet Solomon, like all men by nature, departed from those things which the LORD had taught him, and brought shame upon himself and his nation as he worshipped other gods. (see I Kings 11:1-8)

Still the LORD did not rend the kingdom from him, in honor of HIS promise to Solomon's father; David. (see I Kings 11:12; II Sam 7:12) In this we see illustrated the glorious covenant of redemption which HE will ever uphold, which is based solely upon HIS promise to our greater DAVID. *"I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him: With whom my hand shall be established: mine arm also shall strengthen him. The enemy shall not exact upon him; nor the son of wickedness afflict him. And I will beat down his foes before his face, and plague them that hate him. But my faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him: and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my father, my God, and the rock of my salvation. Also I will make him my firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven."* (Psa 89:20-29) How blessed are the sons of GOD because of that everlasting covenant with CHRIST wherein the FATHER bestowed all blessing on HIS SON, *"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."* (Psa 2:6-8)

Only for David's sake, was Solomon spared, yet the LORD did promise to take the kingdom from Solomon's son. In this we see illustrated the fact that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of GOD, nor can the natural man in anywise preserve himself from destruction. *"Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word."* (John 8:43)

Once Solomon was dead, it was not long before Israel was divided into the northern and southern kingdoms of Judah and Israel and many kings, some good and some bad (as men would judge) ruled over their kingdoms which were constantly being besieged and harassed by a vast array of enemies bent upon their destruction. Yet the LORD preserved to HIMSELF a remnant even in these times and spoke to them through many prophets.

Jeremiah was brought on the scene in time to prophesy of the certain destruction of Jerusalem, but no one believed him. When he spoke the truth, false prophets arose to contradict him and to

ultimately deliver the nation up to its ordained end. The LORD had designed all of this to come to pass that HE might demonstrate HIS faithfulness to preserve those whom HE calls and sends, *"And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee."* (Jer 1:19) The risings and fallings of those; identified as the children of Israel, were ordained to occur by HIM who would demonstrate; that HE will never forsake those who are the people of HIS choice. *"But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."* (Isa 41:8-10)

Thus, we see Jeremiah declare this very fact as he says, *"The LORD hath brought forth our righteousness."* Some are no doubt of the opinion that Jeremiah is speaking about something which the LORD discovered in man and then made manifest. Yet this notion would deny all that is said concerning man by nature throughout the Scriptures. Paul sums this up quite succinctly when he says, *"There is none righteous, no, not one."* (Rom 3:10)

Isaiah gives a little more detail of the type of righteousness which is accepted with the FATHER and the total lack thereof (regardless of how it may be assumed or imagined to be) in the sons of men when he says, *"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways: behold, thou art wroth; for we have sinned: in those is continuance, and we shall be saved. **But** we are all as an unclean thing, and **all** our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee: for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us, because of our iniquities."* (Isa 64:4-7)

The LORD does indeed have regard unto RIGHTEOUSNESS and the MAN that doth wait upon HIM. Isaiah inserts one of the biggest "buts" in all of the scriptures as he sets forth the complete unacceptability of any righteousness which a man might assume that he possesses or could presume to bring unto the LORD. Man's "*righteousnesses*" are as vile and stinking cloths, (ie. filthy rags) unto HIM who will not look upon sin. The very best intention of man is as rotting garbage before the LORD.

The total impotence of men by nature is seen in the wasting of Jerusalem and how the Jews were powerless to defend their city against the forces of the Chaldeans. It was necessary that they as a nation be brought down to the dust that they might discover their own barrenness as they had become a proud people, disregarding the word of GOD, even as Jeremiah wept before them and warned them of their impending doom.

The only manner in which a man may be found as "righteous" before the LORD, is for HIM to supply it for those who cannot provide it for themselves. Thus, Jeremiah goes on to say *"come, and let us declare in Zion the work of the LORD our God."* This is the place of greatest rejoicing for those who have been shown what true RIGHTEOUSNESS actually is.

Let us declare "*the work of the LORD our GOD*" as HE raises up the Chaldeans as a mighty people and Nebuchadnezzar as powerful potentate, so that they might be used as an axe to chop the tree of Israel to the ground. Yet this was but a means to an end, and the power of Babylon was soon brought down to a greater ignominy than Israel. For Israel was favored by GOD in a covenant sure and steadfast, while Babylon was merely a tool in HIS hand to work HIS perfect work in that people that HE loved, and whom HE destroyed for daring to bring harm to Israel.

The carnal nation of Israel is but a type and foreshadow of that true Zion, which HE chose in CHRIST from the beginning. Let us declare "*the work of the LORD our GOD*" as HE provides a perfect RIGHTEOUSNESS for them through imputation. CHRIST is the RIGHTEOUSNESS of HIS people, and they shall never perish because of "*the work of the LORD our GOD.*" mam