

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 LORD'S BELONGINGS

God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work. Psalm 62:11-12

Few things are more disconcerting than eating a meal at a restaurant and then discovering that you have either lost your wallet or purse or left them elsewhere. A sense of helplessness accompanies such a scenario, not to mention the embarrassment. This is but an extremely mild example of the abject poverty, that men are faced with before ALMIGHTY GOD, when they realize their inability to pay unto HIM what they owe. Their debt is quite large, and they are left alone to contemplate the outcome of this dilemma. *"For the wages of sin is death." (Rom 6:23) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Eze 18:4) "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Eccl 7:20)*

As men stand before the JUDGE of all the Earth, there are two things which they stand in need of and of which they possess neither. In the corrupt "justice" systems of this sinful world, it is quite often true that men with great riches and power are treated differently than the poor, and many times have the wherewithal to commit crimes which go unpunished. Yet as men are brought into the presence of the one true and living GOD, they have no "power" at all, for as the Psalmist says, *"power belongeth unto GOD."* None of the sons of men have any "power" at all in the Kingdom of GOD. This is a realm in which flesh and blood has no "strength". The POWER of this Kingdom resides solely in its KING.

The other commodity which men need in this situation is "mercy", which they are totally unable to procure through their own effort or device, but without which they shall surely perish. *"Unto THEE O LORD, belongeth mercy."* Men often think that since they read that GOD is full of mercy that they can perform some deed or render some obedience which can influence HIM to show them HIS mercy. Yet the very definition of "mercy" rules out the ability of men to earn it or in some measure to deserve it. Mercy is the sovereign prerogative of GOD as HE has made it clear in HIS word saying, *"I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy." (Exo 33:19)*

Mercy is not bestowed upon men based upon any activity which they may perform, else GOD's favor would be no mercy at all, but rather the payment of a debt. Paul clearly defined the basis upon which the LORD is pleased to grant it. *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth."* (Rom 9:13-18)

Paul writes to Titus of the manifestation of the results of this mercy which has fallen from the hands of HIM to whom it belongs. *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but*

according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” (Titus 3:5-6)

We read of the many aspects of HIS mercy, which is bestowed upon the hopeless and powerless of the earth. HE does cause men to fear HIM. *“And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.” (Luke 1:50)* The moving cause of the “fear of GOD” which is in the sons of GOD is HIS mercy. *“He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy.” (Luke 1:54)* HIS mercy is bestowed according to the Eternal Covenant made with HIM who is the SEED of Abraham as HE promises *“To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant.” (Luke 1:72)* This mercy is visited upon the sons of GOD in real time and is not a theoretical concept. *“Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” (1Pet 2:10)*

Though there has never been a time when the sons of GOD have not been the objects of HIS mercy, HE is pleased to visit them in the day of SALVATION and to fulfill HIS purpose in their redemption and salvation according to that same mercy. This is that which Peter declared on the day of Pentecost. *“For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:39)*

The mercy of GOD in the understanding of men is necessarily juxtaposed over against HIS justice and judgement. Thus, we see the Psalmist speaking of the fact that HE *“renderest to every man according to his work.”* Though he does not specifically (in this verse) say that justice “belongeth” to the LORD, the fact is that that scriptures do indicate that truth on numerous occasions. *“To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.” (Deut 32:35)* *“For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.” (Heb 10:30)*

The religious and self-righteous men of the earth take great delight as they read that HE will render *“to every man according to his work”*. They suppose this means that they shall receive great blessing from HIS hand for their good deeds, acts of devotion, and obedience. In this they are much like the rich young ruler, the Pharisee who prayed in the temple, and those who point out their many works of “righteousness” in Matthew 7:22. Yet when a man is awakened to see himself a wicked sinner with no righteousness of his own, he is struck with fear to contemplate receiving from the LORD’s hand *“according to his work”*. He is then like the publican who prayed in the temple saying, *“GOD be merciful to me a sinner”*. He knows he has no “good works” to plead before the throne of GOD and knows himself to surely perish if he is called to stand upon his own merits. *“Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” (Mar 10:47)*

The LORD has other belongings:

The SALVATION of HIS people. *“Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people.” (Psa 3:8)*

That RIGHTEOUSNESS which alone is acceptable before HIM. *“O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee.” (Dan 9:7)* How else can a man come before GOD?

The VICTORY which HE has wrought in the behalf of HIS people and given unto them. *“Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's.” (2Chron 20:15)* This is illustrated in David’s triumph over Goliath. *“This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the LORD saveth not with sword and spear: for the battle is the LORD'S, and he will give you into our hands.” (1Sam 17:46-47)* *“Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” (Col 2:14-15)* HIS glorious victory indeed, may HE ever be praised. mam