

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 DISCOMFITING OF SISERA

And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet.

Judges 4:15

From the very beginning man has sought to find a place of reliance in his own understanding and his ability (as he supposes) to determine his own fate. We see this in Adam as he completely disregarded the commandment of the LORD and partook of that which was not his to eat. He thought that he could by his own power achieve or gain something which was not given to him by the LORD. Cain thought to offer of the fruit of his own labor, certain that the LORD would be pleased with that which he had labored for.

It is bound in the heart of man to lean unto his own understanding and to imagine that he can accomplish great things by his own willpower and effort. Thus, it was not long after the LORD delivered Noah and his family from the waters of the flood that we see the debacle at the tower of Babel. Men banded themselves together to "make themselves a name"(see Gen 11:4).

Throughout the book of Judges we read of time after time that the nation of Israel left off from waiting upon the LORD to turn aside to the worship of the gods of their own imagination. There are numerous Gods mentioned in the scriptures which men have worshipped and brought gifts of devotion to. Yet none of these "gods" actually have any place of existence nor any existential power. We read of the prophets of Baal, crying, shouting, and cutting themselves in a vain attempt to get him, to answer with fire. David aptly describes these "imaginary" gods in Psalm 115. *"Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them."* (Psa 115:4-8)

Were it not such a serious matter, this behavior would be comical. Yet while we as mere men tremble at the thought of being found as an idolator before a holy GOD, the scripture says that the LORD will have men in derision and will laugh at them for such foolishness. *"He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure."* (Psa 2:4-5) *"But thou, O LORD, shalt laugh at them; thou shalt have all the heathen in derision."* (Psa 59:8) *"But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me: For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD."* (Pro 1:25-29) When men do not fear the LORD (a state in which all men dwell by nature, *"There is no fear of God before their eyes."* (Rom 3:18)) they will go about to establish their own righteousness and will rejoice in their own power and might.

We see that the LORD raised up Pharaoh and made him to be a mighty man in the Earth in order to manifest HIS own righteous judgment and power and to demonstrate that HIS mercy is sovereignly dispensed. *“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.”* (Rom 9:16-17) Quite in contrast to the “gods” of the heathen, David declares, *“But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”* (Psa 115:3)

In much the same fashion as the LORD raised up Pharaoh, we see HIM give Sisera a place of great power and might among the nations of the Earth. No doubt Sisera was quite impressed with himself being the Captain of the, Canaanite King Jabin’s, army and going to war with nine hundred “chariots of iron.” He commanded quite a formidable force for the time and oppressed Israel for over twenty years.

Yet in HIS own time, the LORD laid Sisera low and demonstrated quite clearly that the might and power of men, regardless of how formidable it may be, is as nothing before HIM. *“Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.”* (Isa 40:15)

To these mighty men of valor, there could be no lower state that they could be brought to than to die at the hand of a woman. We see this illustrated in the death of Abimelech, *“And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone upon Abimelech’s head, and all to brake his skull. Then he called hastily unto the young man his armourbearer, and said unto him, Draw thy sword, and slay me, that men say not of me, A woman slew him. And his young man thrust him through, and he died.”* (Jdg 9:53-54) Thus the LORD added insult to injury and showed HIS utter disdain for the strength of men as HE ordained that Sisera should be slain by Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. She lured him to his death and drove a tent stake (i.e., a nail) through his temple as he slept and then cut off his head. (see Jdg.4:22; 5:26) Not to mention the fact that Deborah was the Judge over Israel at the time and accompanied Barak into battle that led to Sisera’s demise.

The scripture says, *“the LORD discomfited Sisera.”* This is a word which is hardly, if ever, used in modern language. It appears nine times in the OT and is translated from four different Hebrew words which all basically mean, “put into chaos”. This is exactly what happened as every one of Sisera’s men were slain by Barak’s army. In the heat of this battle, Sisera, “the mighty” abandoned his *“chariot of iron”* and fled like a dog running away from the fight.

If you had been able to ask Sisera about his power and might at that time, he would no doubt have confessed his own weakness. I am reminded of another man of great power who went into battle with great religious zeal, breathing out threatening and slaughter to the household of GOD. Yet he too abandoned “his chariot of iron” and fell upon his face before the LORD on the road to Damascus as the LORD “discomfited” Saul of Tarsus and brought him to repentance in a moment.

Such is the work of GOD which is visited upon those whom HE has ordained unto eternal life. While Sisera was “discomfited” unto destruction, those whom the LORD loves are “discomfited” that they might be given life. We see this illustrated in David (see Ps.51), Job (see Job 42:5,6), and Peter (see Luke 22:62), just to name a few.

Those for whom CHRIST has shed HIS precious blood, shall all, in HIS time, be brought down to HIS feet confessing their sins and calling upon HIS name. HE is the SAVIOR of sinners and will lose, none of those for whom HE obtained eternal redemption. Have you been “discomfited” by the LORD?

The Lamb is exalted
repentance to give, That sin may be hated,
while sinners believe;
Contrition is granted, and God justified,
The sinner is humbled, and self is denied.
Repentance flows freely through Calvary’s blood,
Produced by the Spirit and goodness of God.
The living possess it, through faith, hope, and love,
And own it a blessing sent down from above.
All born of the Spirit are brought to repent;
Free grace can make adamant hearts to relent.
Repentance is granted, God’s justice to prove;
Remission is given, and both from his love.

Hymn #239, Gadsby’s Hymns by John Stevens

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