

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

FROM THE DUST AND THE DUNGHILL

He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD'S, and he hath set the world upon them. I Samuel 2:8

Though Eli was the High Priest of the tabernacle in Shiloh, he was somewhat ignorant of the way GOD moves HIS people to pray. He saw Hannah, the wife of Elkanah (and ultimately the mother of Samuel), praying before the LORD in the tabernacle, and accused her of being drunk, since her lips were moving but he could hear no sound. Paul speaks of such "praying" and attributes "true prayer" to the SPIRIT of GOD. *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." (Rom 8:26)*

Hannah prayed according to the will of GOD and her prayer was answered just like John declared. *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."* (1John 5:14-15) The LORD is both the AUTHOR of prayer and the GRANTOR of those things which please HIM.

Hannah did not pray this prayer because she knew what the LORD's will was, but because she desired to have a son, and the LORD gave her faith to call upon HIM. Little did she know that the LORD had placed this desire in her, that she might pray to this end, and that HE would grant her desire according to the good pleasure of HIS will, in order to fulfill HIS purpose to raise up Samuel as a prophet and ruler in Israel. HE is indeed the GIVER of every good and perfect gift and does lead HIS people in ways which they know not. *"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."* (Rom 8:28)

Hannah's request for a son was heard and she returned to the tabernacle when the child was weaned in order to pay her vow (see I Sam.1:11) as she *"lent him to the LORD"* (I Sam. 1:28). One can only imagine the anguish that gripped her heart as she gave the child (her only son) up to Eli for service in the tabernacle. Only by grace was she able to carry this out. The LORD will equip HIS people to perform those things which HE has ordained for them to do. (see I Cor.10:13) HE is able to give HIS people a cheerful heart to do those things which HE requires and will never leave them nor forsake them. *"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work."* (2Cor 9:7-8)

Thus we see her rejoicing in the LORD in another prayer, granted unto her by the GOD who provides, *"And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation."* (1Sam 2:1) We see illustrated, in this prayer, the fact that, while prayer is often given to us to make our requests known unto GOD, its primary function is to express worship unto HIM who rules in the heavens and the earth, whose name is HOLY and whose ways are past finding out. Even as the LORD gave the opening line of HIS model prayer for HIS disciples, *"Our FATHER which art in*

heaven, hallowed be THY NAME, THY Kingdom come THY will be done, in Earth as it is (i.e.; decreed) in Heaven.” Only then does HE speak of making a request.

So, Hannah prayed and exulted in HIS holiness and faithfulness. “*There is none holy* (i.e.; set apart as IMMORTAL, see I Tim.6:16) *as the LORD: for there is none beside thee; neither is there any rock like our God.*” (1Sam 2:2) GOD will convince HIS children of HIS holiness and justice (which grows out of HIS holiness) as HE manifests the giving of HIS only begotten SON as a SATISFACTION of the law which men have despised and presently disregard apart from HIS grace. Does HE not, by this revelation, humble the hearts of those proud sinners for which HE shed HIS blood? Is this not that which causes them to rejoice in HIS goodness? “*And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, LORD, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.*” (Psa 9:10) Even then do they find rest in HIM and HIS sovereign rule as she did. “*The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.*” (1Sam 2:6)

A man cannot truly rejoice in the goodness of GOD to make men to live, until he first understands that HE has the power to destroy (kill absolutely) both soul and body in hell. The LORD said of HIMSELF, “*See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand.*” (Deut 32:39)

So, here, with those thoughts in mind, we see Hannah rejoice in HIM who does indeed deliver men from death and destruction. “*For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.*” (Deu 32:40-43)

HE delivers HIS elect from the “*dunghill*”. A “*dunghill*” is literally a pile of rubbish and filth. Men by nature like to think of themselves as very special unto the LORD as they entertain the notion that they can do many things to please HIM and earn HIS favor, by their morality, obedience, and devotion. Yet the LORD has no regard unto men and their supposed righteousness. HE even likens their “*righteousnesses*” to a menstruous cloth. “*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.*” (Isa 64:6) By this description we must despair of ever coming into HIS presence.

Yet we read that HE has seen HIS people in their dire condition and has had mercy upon them according to HIS purpose. “*And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee when thou wast in thy blood, Live. --- Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water; yea, I thoroughly washed away thy blood from thee, and I anointed thee with oil.*” (Eze 16:5-9) Thus, HE has lifted up the “*beggar from the dunghill*”. Apart from HIS sovereign grace, we would perish, for we had nothing wherewith to buy the gold of HIS Kingdom.

Then we read that HE has raised up “*the poor out of the dust.*” The LORD told Adam that he would surely die in the day that he ate the fruit of the tree which HE forbade him to eat. When Adam had fulfilled this prophecy, acting according to his nature, the LORD cursed the ground and told him, “*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 3:19)

The outlook for mortal man is quite bleak. He has no “*life*” within himself (as the LORD told Adam he would surely die), and can look forward to nothing but utter destruction in the lake of fire apart from the gift of LIFE from HIM who has the power to make men live. “*For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself.*” (John 5:26) “*As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.*” (John 17:2) “*And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.*” (1John 5:11-12) Surely, HE “*raiseth the poor out of the dust*”, now by the “*new birth*”, and later in the day of the resurrection when the dead in CHRIST shall awaken from their sleep. Are you alive in HIM? mam