

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 ANCIENT PATH

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. *Psalms 139:23-24*

There are many who call a spot of earth on the east end of the Mediterranean Sea, the Holy Land. It has been designated this way for many years and countless numbers of people from across the world have traveled thousands of miles to reach it, walk upon its streets, visit its shrines, and explore its history. The blood of untold thousands has been shed as men have sought to maintain its possession or to free it from the "infidels" who have occupied it. Both the sons of Isaac and the sons of Ishmael have laid claim to its "sacred" soil and have spent and do spend much energy and blood in preserving their title to it.

The historic significance of such a place cannot be denied and even the true sons of GOD can no doubt be interested in it from that perspective. Yet I have known some whose desire to visit the place went much further than that. I have heard them speaking of it in hushed tones as though a piece of soil has some "sanctifying power" of its own. Religious hucksters bottle its waters and sand to sell to the weak and deluded. I have even known of several who desired to be dunked in the waters of the Jordan River because they felt such a "baptism" was more valuable than such as would take place in a river or lake in any other country.

It is understandable that those who sit in darkness, regardless of their earthly lineage, should revere a land which can be seen and felt with the eyes and hands of the flesh, but it is not quite so clear as to why those who have been given eyes to see and ears to hear the spiritual nature of the kingdom of GOD in the glorious revelation of the gospel should do so. We can see why the natural Jews would feel that they have a claim to this real estate and we have some understanding of why the Ishmaelites would consider it a "holy place" as well. It is the natural bent of man to be religious; as can be seen in all cultures of the earth. However, apart from the revelation of truth; the "religion" of all men shall remain mired in a reverence for earthly things rather than in a love for the truth and an understanding of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of GOD. (see Rom.1:18-25; John 4:23,24) It was this lack of understanding which the LORD upbraided the Pharisees for when HE said, "*The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. (i.e., in your midst)*" (Luke 17:20-21). This kingdom is the same one spoken of by the prophet Daniel and has nothing to do with earthly soil or GPS coordinates. "*And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.*" (Dan 2:44)

This "eternal kingdom" has been established in the earth yet it is not "of" the earth. The LORD JESUS described it thusly, "*My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this*

world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.” (John 18:36) Notice that HE said **now** is my kingdom not from here. We are not waiting for a future time when HIS kingdom shall yet be established but realize that HE has already established it and has caused its glory to be manifest unto those who have been given the privilege to see it. *“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.”* (Isa 11:9-10) In fact the apostle Paul described it with these words, *“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* (2Cor 4:6)

The Psalmist said, *“lead me in the way everlasting.”* The word “way” means “a road or pathway. In the city of Jerusalem is a series of streets called by some the “via dolorosa” or “the way of the cross” which is purported to be the route that the LORD trod as HE carried the cross to Golgotha. Whether this road is literally the one HIS feet touched as HE bore that awful load in our behalf is of little consequence, but what is of the utmost importance to the sons of GOD is that the “way of the cross” is the only means whereby they might find peace with GOD. The LORD JESUS said it like this, *“I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* (John 14:6) While the sons of the earth seek out many things to satisfy their religious cravings the true sons of GOD can find no lasting place of peace and satisfaction in anything but the blood and righteousness of their blessed SAVIOR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Vain are all of those treasures which may satisfy the man who walks in darkness, but the converted sons of GOD know that apart from the imputed righteousness of JESUS CHRIST they shall perish. This is the ancient pathway or as the Psalmist called it, *“the way everlasting”* because:

This is a pathway marked out in eternity. Redemption is not an afterthought on the part of GOD. HE did not react to some unforeseen or unwanted occurrence and devise the means whereby HE would redeem HIS own. Before there was ever a sinner there was a SAVIOR. HE is the LAMB slain from the foundation of the earth. (see I Pet.1:20; Rev.13:8) The world was created as a means of displaying the redeeming work of JESUS CHRIST; that throughout eternity HE might be glorified in the manifestation of HIS mercy and grace to the sons of men. *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, by (grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”* (Eph 2:4-7)

This is the only pathway by which any man has ever found acceptance with GOD. The Jews of old were instructed to offer blood sacrifices of animals but this was not in order to expiate their sin but to point to the ONE who would come and literally cancel sin’s ability to condemn the sons of GOD. *“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. --- But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.”* (Heb 10:4,12) The priestly office of CHRIST preceded the ministrations of earthly priests.

This is the only path which shall never be destroyed. That work which the LORD JESUS undertook for HIS people shall never pass away and its eternal efficacy shall be that for which the saints shall praise HIM forever. *“But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God.”* (Heb 10:12) Evermore lead us in the way everlasting O LORD! *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”* (Rev 5:9)