

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

NO ONE ELSE TO BLAME

O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

Hosea 13:9

Most of the presidential candidates that we listen to have multitudes of ideas on how to solve the nation's many problems. There are plans being made in Washington right now to remedy everybody's financial woes by stimulating the economy. In a few decades we have come from a fairly self reliant people to a population that is expecting the government to meet their every need. Whereas communities used to rally together in times of disaster and need, now we wait for the federal government to come to our rescue, and complain when the help does not arrive in a timely fashion.

Consumer debt has risen in such dramatic proportions that many people owe more in credit card debt than the cost of their mortgaged homes and financed cars. The government cannot solve these problems because it did not create them. The concept of living within ones means is now disregarded by our citizenry and government alike. The blame for our current situation lies with our own disregard of common sense and our own desire to possess a multitude of this world's goods. We can blame no one else.

Man in his natural state is in the exact same condition before GOD. We have disregarded the commandments of GOD, not only outwardly, but in the very principle of them and we can lay the blame for our attitude and actions on no one but ourselves.

We are convinced that the GOD who rules in the heavens and the earth has ordained all things that come to pass. Nothing happens in this world which does not occur according to HIS sovereign purpose whether it is "good" (according to men) or "bad". (see Isa.45:7) The scripture indicates that this sovereign purpose even encompasses the sin of men. No man can do anything apart from their actions being a fulfillment of HIS divine purpose. HE will use the sin of men to accomplish HIS sovereign intention as we see illustrated in the case of Judas who was ordained of GOD to betray the LORD JESUS CHRIST in order that HE might be crucified in order to purchase the eternal redemption of HIS elect. (see Mat.26:24; Luke 22:22) We can also see this illustrated in the case of Joseph's brother's selling him into slavery, or Judah's sin with Tamar. They meant it for evil, yet GOD intended it for good. (see Gen.38:13-18; 50:20) *"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."* (Psa 76:10)

There are many who try to place the blame for their "sin" upon the LORD since HE is the absolute sovereign of the universe. Man can neither accuse GOD nor lay the blame for his sin at the feet of the LORD for the LORD is above the reproach of men and it is impossible that HE could ever be called into question. (see Dan.4:35) The scripture plainly says, *"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."* (Jam 1:13). Sin begins in the corrupt heart of men as James goes on to say, *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."* (Jam 1:14-15) We must face the fact that our sin is "our" sin, we have

invited destruction to visit us and it has obliged. We are not innocent bystanders being acted upon by a desire that is not our own. We have surveyed the wicked desires of our heart and we have embraced them time and again. Is it any wonder that the LORD said, *"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself?"*

The man who has not been quickened by the SPIRIT does not see the wickedness of his sin nor can he in any wise realize the utter destruction that attends it. But this in no wise excuses him from it. He sees his errors as commonplace (which indeed they are) and since this imperfection is shared by all of mankind he takes some measure of comfort as he compares himself to other men. He considers himself righteous because his evil deeds appear righteous when compared to the dregs of society. Neither can he see his actions as reprehensible in the sight of the LORD because he has no knowledge of the LORD's hatred of sin nor can he begin to fathom the absolute holiness of HIS person. Apart from the mercy of GOD being visited upon him, he shall utterly perish in the darkness of his own mind all the while convinced that he has some form of righteousness.

When the SPIRIT of GOD quickens a man, he finds himself stripped naked and bare before a holy GOD, from whose gaze and judgment he cannot hide. He must say with Isaiah of old, *"Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."* (Isa 6:5) and confess with David, *"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."* (Psa 51:4) He has no recourse but to cast himself on the mercy of GOD and cry out as the Publican, *"God be merciful to me a sinner."* (Luke 18:13)

In a moment the LORD is able to empty a man even as a bag of refuse is poured out upon a garbage heap. Gone is any confidence in the power of his flesh, gone is any hope of finding relief outside of the tender mercies of GOD. Taken away in an instant is any confession of any sort of righteousness which he was at one time convinced that he possessed. In HIM alone is the HELP of HIS people because:

HE is personally acquainted with their plight. *"For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb 4:15)

HE is perfectly suited to be the SAVIOR of HIS elect. *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb 5:8-9) "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."* (Heb 2:17-18)

HE has faced all of the judgement for their sin and has triumphed over it, taking their sin upon HIMSELF. *"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Phil 2:6-8) "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isa 53:4-6)*

HE shall preserve them faultless unto the very end. *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:" (Phi 1:6) I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (1 Thes 5:23-24)*