

# 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*

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## OUR COVERING

*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Romans 4:7*

The nation of Israel has long prided itself in being the “chosen people of GOD”. Even in the present hour when the scriptures plainly reveal that the kingdom of GOD is not flesh and blood they still hold on to this concept. There is yet a veil of darkness upon them. (see II Cor.3:15; Acts 13:27-29) There are even many mistaken Gentiles who consider them in that same light. The scripture does say that all Israel shall be saved but it plainly defines the true Israel not as those born from Abraham’s loins but as those who are born again by the the SPIRIT of GOD. “*But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*” (Rom 2:29). (see Rom. 9:23-33;11:23-28)

Israel as a nation is typical of that nation which is indeed made up of the true sons of GOD. “*A chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*” (1Pet. 2:9) That “nation” which is the LORD’s is comprised of those who were redeemed by the blood of the LAMB “*out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*” (Rev 5:9). They are that people of whom HE said; “*For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.*” (Heb 8:10-12) This is a nation whose GOD is the LORD. All of HIS promises to them are yea and amen and none of them are conditional except upon those conditions HE has promised to meet in their behalf.

The LORD has been pleased to demonstrate HIS everlasting love for HIS people both by contrasting the difference between them and natural Israel and also by many illustrations which describe HIS affectionate dealing with them which are pictures of HIS love to HIS saints. One of those illustrations that gives us a glorious picture of HIS mercy, care, and affection for those HE calls HIS own is found in the book of Ezekiel. We read HIS words to Jerusalem; “*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, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.*” (Eze 16:8) HE said that she had nothing of her own which could in any wise add anything to HIM, rather the condition that she was in of her own making is likened to that of a helpless newborn infant still covered in the blood of its birth and cast out unwanted into a field to die. There is nothing more helpless than a newborn human. They have absolutely no power to do anything towards their survival and are completely at the mercy of someone else if they are to live and thrive.

So HE chose to demonstrate HIS love for HIS people by reminding them just how unable they were to help themselves when HE was pleased to show them mercy and gather them unto HIMSELF to nurture them and preserve their life. Paul said *"For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"* (1Cor 4:7) Had not the LORD in sovereign mercy set HIS love upon some then who could have been saved? "Depth of mercy can there be? Mercy still reserved for me." The natural man entertains some notion of his and his religion's value to the LORD but that man who is convinced by the SPIRIT of his own depravity can but be amazed that HE should stoop to the dust to rescue the offscouring of the earth.

HIS mercy to those castaways is an evidence of the great love wherewith HE has loved them. HE said *"behold, thy time was the time of love"*, This literally means that this was the time when HE chose to demonstrate HIS love. It most certainly could not have any reference to their love for HIM since they were left for dead and wholly incapable of loving HIM, yea HE even goes on to say how they demonstrated their rebellion against HIM in spite of HIS overtures and goodness to them. (see Ezek.16:15-29) *"But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."* (Rom 5:8) GOD loves HIS people because HE loves them, not because of anything of worth forseen in them, nor that they could in any wise be of value to HIM because of their actions.

That love which HE was pleased to demonstrate could not at all be appreciated by a newborn infant, yet that is the time when HE was pleased to show it. But oh what a glory there is attached to that love because it pleases HIM to bring them to an awareness of it as HE causes them to grow up into the stature of CHRIST. What the infant had no knowledge of, that child who is weaned cannot yet fully fathom yet he is struck with amazement at its contemplation and made to fall upon his face in adoring wonder.

This demonstration of mercy brought on by eternal love is that wherein it pleased the LORD to cover the nakedness of HIS people. Paul said *"Blessed are they whose sins are covered."* HE has spread HIS skirt over us:

**That we might be covered in HIS righteousness.** Not only did the LORD JESUS CHRIST die for us, that is not only did HE satisfy the law's demands for our death in dying in our place, but HE has completely covered our nakedness that we might be presented *"to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."* (Eph 5:27) We are clothed in HIS righteousness.

**That we might appear in HIS presence.** David said *"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."* (Psa 24:3-4) None of us could ever enter into that holy place except that HE who has clean hands and a pure heart has covered us with HIS righteousness.

**That our accusers might not be able to uncover our weakness.** When the LORD designed the trial of Job, HE did not allow Satan to have free access to Job but only to afflict him according to that which HE designed for Job's benefit. *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* (1Cor 10:13) HE caused a woman to be brought to HIM who was taken in the very act of adultery, just so HE could demonstrate to her and those like her who tremble in their own wickedness that HE has caused all of our accusers to flee. *"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth."* (Rom 8:33)

A debtor to mercy alone, Of covenant mercy I sing;

Nor fear, with thy righteousness on, My person and offerings to bring.

The terrors of law and of God With me can have nothing to do;

My Saviour's obedience and blood Hide all my transgressions from view.

Augustus Toplady, #340 Gadsby's Hymns