

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

CATASTROPHES?

But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased. *Psalm 115:3*

All of us have been shocked by the reports coming out of Myanmar about the devastation and loss of life there as a result of a cyclone or hurricane of seeming epic proportions. Each time an occurrence such as this takes place there are always many who go about speaking about how these deaths could have been prevented as if to say that this all happened according to some random whim of blind chance or some quirk of "mother nature". To adopt such a view is to deny the plain and simple truth that every detail of this storm and every life that was ended happened exactly according to the divine will and sovereign purpose of the HOLY GOD who created this world out of nothing. The LORD said, *"I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."* (Isa 45:5-7) The Prophet Amos said, *"For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name."* Amos 4:13

Some characterize such a storm as this and its aftermath, as a catastrophe. They are the same ones who speak of accidents, luck, and chance as if there is no rhyme or reason to the occurrence of such events in the earth. Those who have been given a glimpse into the character and nature of the TRUE and LIVING GOD, know that all events in the earth transpire according to HIS sovereign purpose in every detail. Regardless of the complexity or simplicity of those events. Whether it be the flight of a harmless sparrow or the devastating power of a Tsunami crashing down in Indonesia and taking with it the lives of thousands of men, women, boys and girls, it is the same GOD who orders all things according to HIS will even as Nebuchadnezzar learned, *"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"* (Dan 4:34-35)

The writer of this Psalm was given an understanding of who GOD is. He knew that HE was not like the gods of men's imaginations who attempt and desire to do things but are often thwarted by the actions of men. I was listening to a preacher on the radio the other day who was a very interesting speaker. After listening for a few minutes he made the statement that "GOD cannot override the free will of men", the radio was off very quickly. Such statements are born out of blindness and ignorance of the GOD who rules over all things. GOD gave men a will and HE can surely control it as HE sees fit. (see Ps.110:3)

OUR GOD. David speaks of GOD as being his GOD. He does this to contrast HIM with those gods of the heathen who can do nothing. Many so called christians have hewn out one of their own design. They have a god which they have decided upon, one whom they have allowed into their heart. Their god has no hands but their hands, no eyes but theirs. He waits upon them to allow him to bless them. All tribes and nations have their own gods. They have chosen these gods out of a vast array in order to have one which suits their own imagination. But when David speaks of OUR GOD, he knows that GOD is not his possession by David's choice, but rather HE has become David's GOD by HIS own choice. Whereas the gods of this world are chosen by men, the true and living GOD has chosen a people of HIS own. No one can lay claim to HIM but HE in mercy has laid claim to a people which HE chose in CHRIST before the foundation of the world. It is of these people that HE speaks: *"Neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God."* (Eze 37:23) Our GOD is proactive in calling HIS children to HIMSELF and it is because of HIS promise that HIS people are blessed rather than HIS blessing being bestowed conditionally upon their actions.

IS IN THE HEAVENS. The true and living GOD cannot be contained in anything devised by men. The peoples of the earth have built their temples where they can go to meet with their gods whenever the notion strikes them. But the true GOD does not dwell in temples made with hands and can only be worshipped according to HIS design and where HE is pleased to be. This is why the LORD JESUS said to the woman at the well, *"Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. ---But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth".* (John 4:21,23-24) Men set aside days, times, and seasons of worship but there can be no true worship where HE is not pleased to come down and walk among HIS own regardless of their tradition or liturgy.

HE HATH DONE WHATSOEVER HE HATH PLEASED. Nothing, absolutely nothing, can thwart the purpose of GOD. HE is never trying to do something nor do things ever transpire that HE did not intend to take place. HE is an absolute GOD whose decree is accomplished in the heavens and the earth. *"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it."* (Isa 46:9-11)

This is a great comfort to those whom HE has made known HIS intentions to bless. HE will stop at nothing to minister to those whom HE has made the heirs of salvation. *"Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him."* (Isa 43:4-7) This is exactly what HE said in John's gospel, *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* (John 6:37) *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."* (John 6:44) HE is presently causing all events to occur in the earth according to HIS grand design to demonstrate the glory of HIS grace in the calling and deliverance of a people for whom CHRIST shed HIS precious blood to redeem. May HE be ever glorified!