

# 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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## THE LAW OF THE HUSBAND

*But if he shall any ways make them void after that he hath heard them; then he shall bear her iniquity.*

*Numbers 30:15*

We often speak about desiring mercy from the hand of GOD rather than justice. We understand that if we are judged on the basis of our merits we have no hope if justice is called upon to either accuse or excuse us. We must have mercy or we shall perish. That man who has been quickened by the SPIRIT is convinced of the truth of the scripture which says "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom 3:10), least wise himself. When we view the law in all of its rigor and unbending and condemning nature and see ourselves included in that number described by Paul, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom 3:23) we despair of any help given us at Mt. Sinai. We are convinced of the righteousness of that law, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." (Rom 3:19)

Therefore knowing ourselves to be guilty and having no excuse for our sin we are made by that same SPIRIT which quickened us to cry out with the publican "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." (Luke 18:13)

Yet when we are by GOD's grace brought to a place of hearing and believing the gospel, (see Rom.10:14) the basis of our hope upon which all of our comfort rests is no longer just a plea for mercy, but now we are made to rest in the glory of a satisfied law. The mercies of GOD are indeed new every morning lest we should be consumed and HE is most assuredly the ONE who shows mercy to whom HE will show mercy. Yet the basis upon which the elect bride of CHRIST is judged worthy of eternal life is not HIS mercy but the absolute satisfaction of HIS law by the ONE who in mercy has undertaken our redemption and has fulfilled the jot and tittle of the law in our behalf.

The mercy of GOD is displayed in HIS sovereign election of a people in CHRIST before the foundation of the world. The mercy of GOD is displayed in providing a LAMB for a sacrifice for HIS people's sin. Also the mercy of GOD is displayed in revealing the work, (which HE has done for HIS elect,) to them in this present world as HE causes them to hear the sweet words of reconciliation in the gospel and gives them faith to believe it. But the atoning work of CHRIST is strictly a legal work which cannot be overturned because the ONE who became our SUBSTITUTE has entered into a legal contract in our behalf and has fully paid the price that the law demanded for our redemption. Even as the words of Toplady's hymn says:

Complete atonement thou hast made,  
And to the utmost farthing paid  
Whate'er thy people owed;  
How then can wrath on me take place,  
If sheltered in thy righteousness,  
And sprinkled with thy blood?

[If thou hast my discharge procured,  
And freely in my room endured  
The whole of wrath divine,  
Payment God cannot twice demand,  
First at my bleeding Surety's hand,  
And then again at mine.] Gadsby's Hymns #227

So while we marvel that the mercy of GOD should be bestowed on such worthless creatures as ourselves, (having been given eyes to see and behold the wonders of redemption which HIS hand has wrought in our behalf,) the foundation of our hope rests on our confidence in HIS unfailing justice. We know we have no merit of our own but all of our hope is built on HIS righteousness and we can trust in no other. We may often doubt our own inclusion in HIS covenant of grace but we are unshakeably certain that what JESUS CHRIST has done in the behalf of HIS elect is totally sufficient and efficient to satisfy every claim which the law could bring forth against them.

In the Mosaic law, a husband had the power to cause the words which his wife spoke to be held against her or he could by owning her as his wife, cause her to be absolved of their consequences. (see Num. 30:1-16) He did this by becoming guilty for her iniquity. Whatever words she had spoken were still binding, but because he was her husband and gladly owned her as his wife, those vows were taken by him to be fulfilled in her behalf. He became her substitute. We see the glory of redemption played out as the LORD JESUS CHRIST has:

**Declared HIS love for HIS bride.** Some picture the atoning work of CHRIST as being some kind of general payment for sin which anyone who desires can take advantage of. The scripture however is very clear that the work which CHRIST did, HE did for a specific group of people known in scripture as the elect. The basis in law under which a man might take the iniquity of a woman was that she be his wife either in fact or by betrothal. The scripture is clear that before the foundation of the world the SON of GOD was given a bride and she has been hidden in HIM ever since. HE has gladly owned her as HIS own and by HIS actions to bear her sin has proved it for all to see. She reaps the benefits of this relationship which she had absolutely no participation in establishing. *"The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand,."* (Deu 7:7-8)

**Taken her iniquity as HIS own.** The scripture is very plain that HE *"did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."* (1Pe 2:22) HE was *"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb 4:15) Yet the same scripture tells us that GOD *"hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* (2Co 5:21) HE has transferred HIS righteousness to us as HE has taken our iniquity upon HIMSELF, as only a HUSBAND could do for HIS bride.

**Fulfilled the law for her.** The husband's decision (under Moses' law) to bear his wife's blame did not make the iniquity which she was guilty of disappear. The law demands satisfaction and the scripture is plain in its declaration that GOD *"will by no means clear the guilty;"* (Exo 34:7) nor will HE *"at all acquit the wicked."* (Nah 1:3) So when a husband heard his wife's vow and owned her as his wife, the vow was not canceled but rather had to be fulfilled by the husband as if he had made the vow himself. Our HUSBAND has gladly owned HIS bride and has willingly undertaken all of her responsibilities and accountability and made them HIS own. HE has fulfilled the law completely for her in such a fashion that any and all condemnation which might rightfully have been hers according to the just principle of the law, has been undertaken by HIM and the law's ability to judge her as guilty in any respect is forever abrogated. *"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross".* (Col 2:13-14)