

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

DOWN AND BACK

I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes.

Genesis 46:4

CHRIST is the subject and substance of every page in the scriptures. Those pages which do not directly testify of CHRIST HIMSELF, declare HIS purpose and work in the redemption of that people which were hidden in HIM from before the foundation of the world. The creation of the world and all of its inhabitants was manifested in order to display the glory of HIS grace in the magnificent deliverance of those whom HE loved with an everlasting love. All of history from beginning to end is HIS-story.

This truth is illustrated very plainly in HIS direction for Jacob to go from the land of Canaan down into Egypt. Canaan was that land which the LORD had promised to Abraham when HE instructed him to get out of Haran. The term "Canaan" literally means "merchant or merchandise" and I think it is proper to consider that this land represents that which is "purchased" or "paid for" or of great and enduring value. The term "Egypt" literally means "troubles, oppression, or anguish" and I think it proper to consider that Egypt represents a land of darkness.

Now the LORD is the CREATOR of both lands just as HE is the CREATOR of all things in heaven, earth, and hell. *"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."* (Col 1:16-17) *"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."* (John 1:3) *"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 45:6-7)

Those whom we will call "probationists" set forth the theory that the creation of the world was more or less a grand experiment on the part of the CREATOR wherein HE made a world which was perfect and placed a perfect man in it in order to see what would occur. Lo and behold some outside source introduced evil (i.e.; darkness) into the mix and the grand experiment went awry, with man falling from his lofty perch and failing the test (or probation). Thus it became necessary to do something to remedy this problem, therefore the scheme of redemption was formulated.

Those who believe in a "semi-sovereign" GOD, then, tell us that out of this mass of fallen humanity the LORD decided to choose some to be saved and some to be lost. Those who believe in a "quasi-semi-sovereign" GOD explain this "election" as being according to HIS being able to predict the future and with that "foreknowledge" firmly in mind, HE based HIS choice of those who would be saved on knowing who would ultimately choose HIM and desire to be saved.

Of course there are also the "probationists" who deny that there is even an election at all, except one where-in man is the sovereign "chooser" and either forces the hand of GOD to save him by complying with HIS "plan of salvation" by believing the gospel; or to destroy him by

continuing on in his rebellion against HIM by rejecting the many overtures and attempts on the part of GOD to rescue HIM and refusing to believe the gospel. In all of these cases man occupies the place of a sovereign, since it is he who determines his own destiny.

The scripture indicates that there is but ONE SOVEREIGN and HE is the GOD of heaven and earth. *"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 4:35)* HE is the *"high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy."* (Isa 57:15) *"But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased."* (Psa 115:3)

Therefore we must conclude that every action, reaction, event, and activity which takes place in the heavens and the earth, can only occur according to HIS grand design and sovereign will. HE alone determines the destiny of every part of HIS creation. HE created Adam for a purpose which Adam perfectly fulfilled just as HE created Judas for a purpose which he perfectly fulfilled. In the same fashion HE raised up Pharaoh (Egypt in general) to magnify the glory of HIS power in his certain destruction. (see Rom. 9:15-24)

HE did this in order to ultimately manifest the glory of HIS grace in the deliverance of HIS people out of the very hand of this despotic and rebellious ruler, and thereby to illustrate HIS redemption of all of those children which HE chose in CHRIST before the foundation of the world. Therefore HE directs Jacob to go down into Egypt and declares that HE will not forsake him while he is there and will surely bring HIM out at a future time.

Jacob was already in the land of Canaan when he was directed by the LORD to go down into Egypt. Little did Jacob know of the enslavement that would ensue as a result of the fulfillment of GOD's purpose to redeem the children of Israel and deliver them from this oppression.

There is no time known unto men when the children of GOD have not been the children of GOD, the appointed heirs of grace, and the objects of the everlasting love of the FATHER. It is upon this basis that they were chosen unto salvation. *"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father."* (1Pet 1:2) They have thus always been the delight of their FATHER and those in whom HE has taken pleasure, according to their union to CHRIST; the ONE in whom HIS soul delights. *"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles."* (Isa 42:1)

In the purpose of GOD it did please HIM to bruise HIS SON for the purpose of manifesting the glory of HIS grace in the deliverance of HIS people from the bondage of sin. HE was appointed as a LAMB slain before ever there was such a thing as a sinner. HE did manifest HIS love for HIS own and demonstrated HIS determined purpose to save them by the laying down of HIS life for their redemption and in order that HE might be both JUST and their JUSTIFIER. So in order for this to be demonstrated it was necessary that they be subjected unto vanity in order that they might be seen as the willing subjects of sin who according to their own natural state were rebels against GOD despising HIS way and were each one worthy of destruction in their flesh.

Jacob whose beginnings were in Canaan nonetheless died in Egypt, and though he was not a witness of it, his posterity was brought into slavery and under the lash of a hard taskmaster. Yet Jacob died in hope because HE was given faith to believe that HE who promised is also faithful to perform that which HE promised. HE told Jacob that HE would *"surely"* bring him again to the land of Canaan, even though death would be the only thing that Egypt could provide for him.

The people of GOD have here in this world no continuing city and can but view Canaan's land from afar. Yet in the midst of the darkness that swirls about here in Egypt's land there is light in each household upon whose doorposts is sprinkled the blood of the everlasting covenant. The same JOSEPH who closes their eyes (*"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints."* (Psa 116:15)) in death is the same ONE whose touch shall awaken them and shall carry them out of Egypt even as Joseph took his father's body back to Canaan. HE is that ONE who has promised never to leave nor forsake HIS own. *"Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end."* (John 13:1)

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