

# 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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## A PLACE OF NATIVITY

*And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah.*

*Psalm 87:5-6*

The history of Zion is quite interesting. Zion was a fortified position on the outskirts of Jerusalem, which David was able to conquer and in which he established his habitation. We find it first mentioned in the book of II Samuel, when David took Jerusalem from the Jebusites. *"Nevertheless David took the strong hold of Zion: the same is the city of David."* (2Sam 5:7)

This "city of David" is also called Bethlehem (which means "house of bread") where we read that David, when but a lad, fed his "father's sheep". *"But David went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem."* (1Sam 17:15) Of course the most notable event that occurred in Bethlehem is found in Luke's gospel, *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."* (Luke 2:11) Micah prophesied this event seven hundred years before it occurred: *"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."* (Mic 5:2)

Zion is a symbol and type of the Kingdom of GOD which has its manifestation in the church of GOD, and we find it prominently used in this fashion throughout the word of GOD even as we see the Psalmist use it here in our text. Some other notable examples are: *"Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."* (Psa 2:6) *"Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."* (Psa 48:2) *"Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined."* (Psa 50:2) *"When the LORD shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory."* (Psa 102:16) *"For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation."* (Psa 132:13) *"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."* (Isa 28:16) *"And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."* (Isa 35:10) *"But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect."* (Heb 12:22-23)

While the manifestation of Zion in the earth (in the plain view of the Earth's inhabitants) is the church which CHRIST came to establish (see Mat.16:18; I Tim. 3:15); the nature and essence of Zion is a spiritual kingdom which cannot be "inherited" by flesh and blood. (see Heb.12:22-24; Mat.16:17; I Cor.15:50) The inhabitants of Zion are not in any wise able to see or understand their "inheritance" apart from a birth into that Kingdom, even as a man cannot know the place of his natural nativity apart from being physically and naturally born and raised there.

Someone has said that most men spend the first half of their life trying to get away from the place they were born and raised, and the last half trying to get back to it. My observation would uphold that notion. There are many clichés which are thus appropriate, “There is no place like home”, “Home is where the heart is.”, “Home sweet home”, etc just to name a few. That men have a link to the place of their nativity goes without saying.

This is especially illustrated for us as we consider that each of those who has an inheritance in the kingdom of GOD must also have their “birth” there. It is impossible for a man to claim natural citizenship in a land in which he had no natural birth and in the same fashion it is impossible that a man should consider himself to be a part of this spiritual kingdom who has not been born there.

This is exactly what the LORD JESUS meant when HE told Nicodemus, *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”* (John 3:5-7) Apart from a spiritual birth which is “from above” a man has no reason to hope in his inclusion in this kingdom which is not of this world, nor which can be seen by the natural eye.(see Luke 17:20)

It goes without saying that a man cannot choose the place or the time of his natural birth. Neither can a man “choose” to be born into this spiritual kingdom, nor does he have any power or influence as to “if or when” it may occur. Those who are “born again” confess that their “re-birth” was as John described it, *“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* (John 1:12-13) Notice that their “belief” is a result of their birth and not vice versa, even as the LORD told Nicodemus, *“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* (John 3:8)

One of the gravest of errors that is found in modern, (so called) gospel preaching is the declaration that natural men can choose to become heirs of a heavenly kingdom by a simple exercise of their free will. It would be easier for a man to re-enter his mother’s womb and be re-born in a natural birth than it would be for a profane and sinful man to become a spiritual man by choosing to do so. The natural man despises the truth of GOD and will not seek HIM, nor can he in any wise receive spiritual knowledge by his own effort nor can mortal flesh be made spiritual. *“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”* (1Cor 2:14)

The Psalmist said; *“The LORD shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.”* (Psa 87:6) We might paraphrase that to read “When the LORD appears to number HIS own and receive HIS purchased possession, HE will recognize those whose names HE has written in the LAMB’s book of life, as those who are born into that kingdom by the power of HIS SPIRIT.” They are not strangers to HIM since HE has loved them from before the foundation of the world and they are inheritors of that which HE has prepared for them as those “born out of due time”.

This is the same Kingdom which the LORD JESUS CHRIST was “born into” though HE was the possessor of it from Eternity. They have a possession in it because they have been hidden in HIM from the beginning and they share in HIS birthright as heirs and joint heirs with CHRIST according to the riches of HIS grace. *“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.”* (Rom 8:15-17)

Upon what dear friend does your hope rest? Is it upon the sinking sand of your own free will or upon the power of HIM who raises dead sinners to life? JESUS CHRIST is the HELPER of undeserving beggars and the HOPE of all who are “born again” by HIS power.