

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

SALVATION IS NIGH

Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Psalm 85:9

I remember hearing a story about two men who had gone on a fishing trip out of Horseshoe Beach, Florida about sixty years ago. They were in a small boat and late in the afternoon a sudden storm came upon them and their boat capsized and sank. They had no life preservers with them and so their bleak hope of salvation was to swim back to the shore which was about five miles away. It quickly became dark and all they could see was a few lights in the distance which did not seem to be getting any closer even though they had been swimming for hours.

Finally one of the men had grown so weary that he gave up swimming and consigned himself to drowning. When he ceased swimming and his legs went limp, he discovered that the water was only about four feet deep as the tide had gone out. They were both able to wade on into the shore. One can only imagine their relief when the discovery of the nearness of their salvation was revealed unto them, which was actually under them the whole time.

The scripture says that HIS salvation is "nigh" (i.e.; near, close) to those that fear HIM. Yet it is often true that those who fear HIM are the very ones who also fear that they shall miss that salvation and wind up among those that perish. One thing that the LORD has made very plain in the scriptures is that HE will not abandon those who tremble before HIM; who seek no other way of salvation than that which is found in JESUS CHRIST.

The gift of ETERNAL LIFE which is given to those who are born from above, causes a man to hunger and thirst for deliverance from this sinful flesh in which he currently dwells. It is that sinful flesh that is constantly seeking to rob him of any sort of assurance which is set forth by the SPIRIT, and to convince him that he is merely deceived and does not genuinely desire the true salvation of CHRIST or that the word of GOD is not really true.

It is because of this constant battle of the flesh against the SPIRIT, that all of the promises and assurances of GOD to HIS people are set forth in the scriptures. That man who finds in himself no conflict, no disturbance, and no doubtings and fears, concerning his standing with GOD is likely devoid of the work of the SPIRIT.

Man in his natural state has no genuine longings after the way of CHRIST nor does he have any love of the TRUTH. Such a man can be easily satisfied with his religious doctrines and practices, and the entertainment of the thoughts of his own performance of this good deed or that. Yet when the SPIRIT moves in a man, he begins to roar against himself and to yearn to be found numbered among them whom the LORD calls, though he often finds little evidence to think that he is..

The flesh will whisper in his ear that he is a fool to think that he cannot gain the blessings of GOD by the establishment of his own righteousness. Thus he is torn between two opinions and the SPIRIT does ever strive within him, to convince HIM of the perfect righteousness of CHRIST, and also of the fact that he has no righteousness of his own. While the flesh will either seek to convince him of his own righteousness or turn around and speak out condemnation to him, that he is beyond the help of the LORD and all his hope is but a pipe dream.

Thus the soothing promises of GOD are set forth to comfort those that mourn, to dry the tears of those that weep for their sin, and to strengthen the feeble knees of those who think they cannot pray while lifting up the hands of those who cannot praise the NAME of HIM whom they know is worthy to be praised. Indeed *"glory may (i.e., does) dwell in our land"* as a result of that which HE has accomplished for us.

"Mercy and truth are met together". (Ps.85:10a) *"For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."* (John 1:17) The law was given as an occasion to demonstrate our sinful condition, while CHRIST came with the remedy for both the broken law and the broken hearts of the awakened sons of GOD. The redemptive work of CHRIST manifests both the mercy of GOD shown to that elect people, to whom HE will show mercy, and the truth of GOD that HE would be both *"just and the JUSTIFIER"* (Rom.3:26) of those who believe in HIM.

"Righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps.85:10b) True righteousness can be found only in the LORD JESUS CHRIST. All of man's supposed righteousness, regardless of the extent or motivation thereof, is but *"filthy rags"* (Isa. 64:6) in the sight of GOD. A man can do nothing to improve his condition before an absolutely holy GOD who is *"of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity"* (Hab 1:13); who will *"by no means clear the guilty"* (Ex.34:7), and *"will not at all acquit the wicked."* (Nah 1:3)

Yet in CHRIST this HOLY GOD has imputed the perfect righteousness of JESUS of Nazareth to those whom HE has loved with a perfect and everlasting love, and set forth HIS purpose in the promises declared in HIS word and clearly demonstrated in the preaching of the gospel of CHRIST. To be enabled to hear this glorious message of hope with hearing ears is truly to be kissed by the very mouth of GOD.

"Truth shall spring out of the earth." (Psa 85:11a) Indeed HE who is "born of a woman" is that TRUTH which was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. HE has walked among men, declared the message of GOD, and manifested HIS purity by always doing the FATHER's will. HE has committed the preaching of TRUTH to men rather than angels. Thus is that TRUTH declared even in the present age and gladly heard and believed by the recipients of HIS grace. (see Acts 13:48) Though the world, in general, considers this message to be foolish, those, who can hear and believe it, testify that it is *"the power of GOD unto salvation".* (Rom.1:16)

"Righteousness shall look down from heaven." (Psa 85:11b) CHRIST JESUS is our RIGHTEOUSNESS and HE does behold the sons of men, and does impute HIS perfections unto those who are the sheep of HIS pasture. HE causes them to hear HIS voice and follow HIM. *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* (John 10:27-28)

"Yea, the LORD shall give that which is good; and our land shall yield her increase." (Psa 85:12) When the LORD JESUS walked among men HE went about doing good. *"That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judaea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him."* (Act 10:37-38) Though the whole earth is blessed by the presence of JESUS of Nazareth, the land yields her increase as those who are grafted into the VINE believe. *"And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. The meek also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel."* (Isa 29:18-19)

"Righteousness shall go before him; and shall set us in the way of his steps." (Psa 85:13) Every step that HE took was preceded by the reputation of HIS glory even though HE laid it aside, insofar as men were able to see. HE is a righteous MAN among unrighteous men, yet HE has turned our feet to walk in the way of salvation. *"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."* (Luke 1:78-79) *"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."* (Psa 34:18) mam