

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

ENDURING PRAISE

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever. Psalm 111:10

We often hear people use the phrase, "Praise the LORD", when some unexpected (but usually happy) result occurs in the course of life. We certainly have no objection to hearing the NAME of the LORD praised but we are saddened to think that this phrase has been turned into a hackneyed cliché expressing carnal joy at some welcome outcome. The use of it is seldom an expression which is preceded by a measured consideration of the glory which is due to that ONE who sits upon the throne of Heaven and whose hand cannot be stayed or HIS purpose questioned. (see Dan.4:35) True praise is due unto HIM, both, when we are made to experience those events which make us happy and those which bring us to tears.

Job's wife would have fit in well with today's crowd which is quick to speak "praise" when they are surrounded with an abundance of this world's goods. One does not have to search long to find a multitude who believe that GOD is in charge of trying to bring good things to folks, but that it is Satan who is in charge of bringing those things we consider bad. Yet Job knew the SOURCE of all things, both good and bad (as men would judge). Thus he upbraided his wife with these words, "*Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.*" (Job 2:10)

The LORD has ordained that all things shall praise HIM. Even the very anger and wickedness of men shall render praise to HIM, who asks for no one's aid, nor seeks any advice from the potsherds of the earth. "*Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*" (Psa 76:10)

From HIS own lips we read HIS declaration, "*I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*" (Isa 45:7) Some are quick to point out to us that the word "evil" is merely synonymous with "calamity" and we would have no quarrel at all with them but would also point out to them that this Hebrew word is translated as "evil" 442 times in the Old Testament and as "wickedness" 59 times. GOD is not ashamed to claim HIS right as a sovereign GOD who ordains all things to come to pass according to the good pleasure of HIS will. "*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)

It is with this knowledge that all true praise is rendered. To fail to recognize the right and power of the self-existent GOD to predestinate all events according to the HIS own purpose is to seek to render praise to a god which is a figment of the imagination of men, just like those gods of the heathen which are made of wood and stone and do not see nor hear. (see Psa 115:4-8) "*But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" (Psa 115:3)

This is the ground from which all true praise must rise. HIS praise "endureth forever" because: HE is ETERNAL. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." (Psa 90:2) HE is the very essence of ETERNITY which the scripture says that HE alone inhabits. "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen." (1Tim 6:16) (see Isa.57:15) Both light and darkness have come into being according to HIS sovereign will. "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) Therefore even HIS praise must endure for HE is the AUTHOR of all praise and has plainly said that HE will share HIS glory with none.

HE has ordained HIS praise to spring forth from HIS creation. When the LORD made HIS entrance into Jerusalem upon a "colt the foal of an ass", the Pharisee's rebuked the LORD JESUS and demanded that HE tell the people to stop praising HIM. HE replied, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." (Luke 19:40) It is impossible that even the very natural things of the earth should not praise HIM. Even as we read in Isaiah, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands." (Isa 55:11-12) "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." (Psa 19:1)

Praise must accompany HIM. "According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth." (Psa 48:10) "The LORD reigneth; let the people tremble: he sitteth between the cherubims; let the earth be moved. The LORD is great in Zion; and he is high above all the people. Let them praise thy great and terrible name; for it is holy." (Psa 99:1-3) "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." (Isa 6:1-3)

HE has a people in which HIS praise shall abide forever. "The king's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. She shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needlework: the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee. With gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought: they shall enter into the king's palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth. I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations: therefore shall the people praise thee for ever and ever." (Psa 45:13-17) The LORD has loved HIS people with an everlasting love. HE has created them to be the objects of HIS redeeming work that HIS praise might be manifested by them throughout the endless ages. The Psalmist has testified that HE inhabits the praises of HIS elect. (see Ps.22:3)

The crowning work of CHRIST's redemption demands praise for ever. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." (Rev 5:9-10) "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy." (1Pet 2:9-10)

HE "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." (Eph 2:4-7) "HIS praise endureth forever." mam