

# 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 SECRET PAVILION

*Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.*

*Psalm 31:20*

The children of Israel traveled in a circular path between Mt Sinai and Canaan (i.e.; the land of promise) for forty years. Their wanderings through this wilderness and thorny desert serve to remind us that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of GOD. The generation that entered the promised land was not the one which was led by Moses. He presided over Israel from the time of their departure from Egypt until they were to actually enter Canaan, yet he was not able to lead them into this land of promise because of his death at the hand of GOD. He was allowed to view that glorious land from Pisgah's lofty heights but could not enter therein.

His death reminds us of the killing nature of the law, the fact that the soul that sinneth shall die, and also that there is no compatibility between that which is of the law and that which is of the promise. Even as the LORD told Nicodemus, *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (John 3:6) Throughout the scriptures there is a comparison and contrast between these two opposite principles. Thus we see Joshua (whose name means "JEHOVAH is salvation"; see Matthew 1:21) raised up by the LORD, specifically to lead HIS people into the land of promise.

Down through the ages men have sought to define the promises of GOD to HIS children as being contingent upon the keeping of the law in some measure or fashion. In this they do demonstrate the fact that the law is written in the very heart of man. It is this principle which causes men in their religious flesh to go about seeking to establish their own righteousness before GOD.

These "lawkeepers" (as were the Pharisees) seem to honestly believe that GOD will be impressed by their adherence to a moral code and in return bestow various blessings of one type or another on them as a result of their varying degrees of obedience to it. Yet to pursue this notion is to ultimately perish, not having entered into Canaan even as Moses died in plain sight of that glorious land.

The reality is that man has never merited or earned one blessing from GOD on the basis of anything which he has either performed in his flesh or avoided by the same. All of the benefits which have befallen the sons of GOD in this world or that one which is to come have been the result of HIS unmerited favor. This is the very definition of grace which is captured well in the words of a hymn by Horatius Bonar,

"Not what my hands have done Can save by guilty soul;  
Not what my toiling flesh has borne Can make my spirit whole.  
Not what I feel or do Can give me peace with GOD;  
Not all my prayers and sighs and tears Can bear my awful load."  
THY grace alone, O GOD, To me can pardon speak;  
THY pow'r alone, O SON of GOD, Can this sore bondage break.

No other work save THINE, No other blood will do;

No strength, save that which is DIVINE, Can bear me safely through.

Now there are many who will pay lip service to believing that Bonar's words are true. They will say that they believe eternal salvation is truly and completely the work of CHRIST from beginning to end. Yet they try to resurrect Moses from his hidden grave on Pisgah's heights, in the land of Moab, by contending that men can either gain or forfeit the blessings of Canaan by their levels of obedience or disobedience to the commandments of GOD in the journey.

All the while Moses is dead and buried and JOSHUA leads HIS people to inherit the riches of Canaan because of the promise which was given to Abraham and his SEED, not because of any adherence to the law or foreseen acts of obedience. Every victory which they gained, and yes every defeat which they suffered, was ordered by the hand of HIM who gave them this land by promise. In like fashion do those who are appointed by the LORD, gain every blessing which they enjoy simply by HIS grace and mercy; completely apart from any human merit or endeavor except that of the MAN CHRIST JESUS.

Thus we read of a "SECRET PAVILION", in which the people of GOD are hidden. They are, there, said to be "*hidden from the pride of men*". "*That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*" (1Cor 1:29-31)

By nature, religious men will seek a place of glory in the deeds and supposed, relative merit of their fleshly endeavors. They will measure themselves against one another and either accuse or excuse one another on the basis of those endeavors. They will boast of their knowledge and gifts, their positions, their religious practices and orthodoxy, and even their supposed "humility". All are prone to such "dung". Paul lays the axe to the root of such pride as he reminds the sons of GOD of the source of all of their blessing, "*For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?*" (1Cor 4:7)

This "PAVILION" is a SANCTUARY into which none can enter, except those whom the LORD is pleased to "hide" there. We read that HE will "*hide them in the secret of HIS presence*". The Psalmist said, "*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*" (Psa 91:1) I have often heard various "teachers" use this scripture as a means to try to stir up men to enter this "secret place" as if they could do so by their own power and will. Yet this scripture is not an exhortation to action but rather a statement of fact of the place where the LORD is pleased to "keep" HIS children in safety. The only man who has ever dwelt in the secret place of the most high is the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and it is in HIS shadow that we are given the privilege to be hidden with HIM even as HE hid Moses in the CLIFT of the ROCK while HIS glory (i.e.; HIS GOODNESS) passed by.

It is in this PAVILION that the sons of GOD are kept from the "*strife of tongues*". The LORD confounded the "tongues" of men on the plains of Shinar, at the "Tower of Babel". The "strife of tongues" however, began much sooner than this for we see the "Accuser of the brethren", early at work, seeking to bring Adam, Eve, and Job into destruction. We see it demonstrated as Cain slew Abel, and Ishmael persecuted the child that was born after the SPIRIT. (see Gal.4:29)

The "strife of tongues" does not always come from someone else, but is quite often our own flesh which would seek to accuse us and bring us into condemnation, as the "*flesh lusteth against the SPIRIT*". Yet the LORD would speak sweetly to HIS child of promise and remind her that HE has accomplished her salvation. "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.*" (Isa 40:1-2) To them HE says: "*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.*" (Isa 55:1) "*Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.*" (Matt.11:28) mam