

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

THE PROMISE OF LIFE

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus.

II Timothy 1:1

We have often been told that we over emphasize the Sovereignty of GOD in HIS predestinating purpose. In my estimation it is impossible to overemphasize that which is absolute and upon which all other activities depend. To do so would be like telling a man that since his heart is beating, he shouldn't overemphasize the need of breathing. The beating of the heart is dependent upon the intake of oxygen. So too, do all of the activities of men, have their basis in the outworking of the will of GOD. To deny that is to deny the very declaration of GOD HIMSELF, who is not afraid of any overemphasis of HIS absolute predestination of all events even to the outcome of a craps game in a back alley or the flight of a bird. *"The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD."* (Prov 16:33) (see Isa.45:5-13; 46:9-11)

Thus Paul is a continual proponent of a GOD who does according to HIS will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, whose hand cannot be stayed nor HIS actions brought into question. So here in this verse he states that he is an apostle, *"by the will of GOD."* Paul understood that those who inherit the kingdom of GOD, being afforded a station therein, obtain that standing not by the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD.

The real aberration which is manifested in the so called "gospel preaching" of our day is not the declaration of too absolute a GOD, but the attempted emasculation of GOD in favor of a message which appeals to the corrupt flesh of man, giving him grounds upon which to establish his own righteousness. It was this very principle which plunged mankind into the darkness of death when Adam, "by transgression fell."

It is this same emphasis on "free will" which impugns the glory of GOD which HE declared to Moses, when HE said, *"I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy."* (Exo 33:19) Apart from the sovereign prerogative of GOD to dispense mercy according to HIS sovereign pleasure, there is no basis upon which mercy can be considered. Mercy dispensed in response to something a man does or withheld according to the same is no mercy at all, but rather the payment of a debt.

Grace must indeed be granted according to the good pleasure of GOD, completely without regard to good or evil, or it is not grace. *"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;)"* (Rom 9:11) *"So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy."* (Rom 9:16) (see Rom.11:6)

Thus Paul declares HIS standing in the gospel as resting upon the "promise of LIFE" which is found in CHRIST JESUS. It is this "promise of LIFE" from which all of the blessings, both temporal and eternal, flow to the sons of GOD who are chosen in HIM from before the foundation of the world. *"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works,*

but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (2Tim 1:9-10)

We notice that this “promise of LIFE” is preceded by the article, “the”, which denotes a particular “promise”. “The” adds specificity to that which is “promised”. The English word “promise” appears in the New Testament, fifty-two times. It is preceded by “the”, twenty-four of those times. This “promise of LIFE” is not some general declaration but is a specific promise made to a particular PERSON and all of those which are hidden in HIM as their HEAD and SUBSTITUTE.

The “promise of LIFE” is that which is given to HIM who is the APOSTLE and GREAT HIGH PRIEST of those whose names are engraved upon HIS breastplate. (see Ex.28:29) We read that it is to HIM that “the promise” is given. *“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” (Gal 3:16)*

The benefits of that “promise” come to the sons of GOD through the LORD JESUS CHRIST alone, as HE is in union with those who are the recipients of HIS mercy, and has ever stood as their covenant HEAD. Any promise which is HIS, directly benefits those who are in HIM, having been chosen in HIM from before the foundation of the world.

Thus they have no grounds upon which to boast nor can they, by comparing themselves to others, find any room to glory except in the mercy of GOD. *“But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.” (2Cor 10:17-18) “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.” (1 Cor.1: 30-31) “Salvation belongeth unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. (Psa 3:8)*

As we look at the Greek word which is translated into English as “promise” or “the promise,” we discover that the basic definition of the word is “an announcement or proclamation of a divine assurance of good.” This is sweetly in keeping with our understanding of what the “gospel” is, for it is though this means (*“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1Cor 1:21)*) that the knowledge (light) of the “promise” is brought unto those who are given ears to hear it, as the SPIRIT awakens them from the grip of sin’s death.

This is a “promise of LIFE”. As such it must be, since the ONE to whom this promise is given is “the LIFE”. *“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” (John 1:4)* All life springs from HIM who made all things, but this “promise” has reference to a “LIFE” which is not given to all, but rather to those included in the promise. The FATHER said to the SON, who is HIS KING, set upon the holy hill of Zion, *“Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” (Psa 2:8) “Because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself.” (Heb 6:13) “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath.” (Heb 6:17)*

We see the fruition and manifestation of this promise (i.e. declaration of good news) set forth in the LORD’s prayer in Gethsemane as HE said, *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.” (John 17:2) “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.” (John 17:9-10) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37)*

This promise has a two fold manifestation to the sons of GOD as we read *“Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. (1Tim 4:8) “Even when we were dead in sins, (HE) hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)” (Eph 2:5) This is a current realization of “the promise of LIFE.” *“He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Rom 8:11) “So shall we ever be with the Lord.”(1Thes 4:17)* This is that “promise of LIFE” which is to come. Absent from the body is to be present with the LORD. It is the same LIFE. mam*