

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XIV

Issue 46

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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

TWO HARLOTS, A MOABITE, AN ADULTERESS, AND A VIRGIN

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost . . . Matthew 1:18

The grandest mystery that has been set forth in the earth before men and angels is the incarnation of JESUS CHRIST. The Eternal GOD taking on human flesh, condescending to be born into this world in the same fashion as every other human being, does in both its scope and its meaning eclipse the comprehension of mortal men. This is not an event which can be received in its fullness, by any but those who are given the gift of faith to behold its glory.

Religious men can latch onto it as the basis for their celebrations and holy days, but apart from the grace of GOD, opening their eyes to behold its majestic glory, they can have no appreciation for its import, nor find a place of true worship in its proper consideration. For apart from being given an understanding of the purpose of it, it is but another wonder which feeds the natural religiosity of fallen men and gives them occasion to incorporate it into their religious traditions.

This is an event which was heralded by angels as they announced to those shepherds, "*Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.*" (Luke 2:10-14) Yet it is an event which those very angels cannot grasp nor can they have any understanding of the transaction that was begun in the unfolding of this event. This is reserved for those mortals who are given faith to embrace the SAVIOR of sinners who came forth from Mary's womb that day.

The veracity and verbal inspiration of the scriptures, found in the Bible, is proven over and again by the details that are recorded in them, which are in many cases hidden from plain view and only revealed as the purpose of GOD in the redemption of HIS people is set forth. The human lineage of this ONE who was born in Bethlehem, holds many wonders and could most certainly not have been designed by religious men intent upon establishing their own righteousness.

In the book of Matthew is recorded the genealogy of the LORD JESUS CHRIST as it would be legally considered by the Jews. As such it must be traced through Joseph whose lineage appears here. It is interesting that Matthew (being of the tribe of Levi, those to whom the priesthood and declaration of the Law was primarily given) would be the one to record this lineage through Joseph. Yet at the same time he clearly declares "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.*" (Mat 1:18)

In the book of Luke, (the physician), HIS genealogy is traced through Mary and both Mary and Joseph have common ancestry in David, with Mary descending from David's son, Nathan, and Joseph coming through Solomon. Both Nathan and Solomon were the sons of Bathsheba.

If men had concocted this story they surely would not have designed the ancestry of the LORD JESUS CHRIST to have come through such a convoluted and checkered parentage. There are five women directly spoken of in this lineage in Matthew's record.

The first to be mentioned is Tamar who was the widow of two of Judah's sons whom the LORD killed. Tamar, in order to not be left out of an inheritance, dressed as a harlot and sat by the roadside with the intention of seducing her father-in-law with hopes of becoming impregnated with his child. She was successful in her quest in exact keeping with the predestined purpose of GOD. Two sons were born out of this incestuous union, with Phares being the progenitor of the LORD's earthly family as he broke forth from the womb of his mother. (see Micah 2:13)

The next to be mentioned is Rahab (see v.5) who is spoken of in the book of Joshua as a "harlot" who hid the Israelite spies before the siege of Jericho. She was the mother of Boaz (see v.5) who was eventually married to Ruth, who had returned to Judah with her mother-in-law. Naomi, thus producing Obed who was the grandfather of David.

Ruth was a Moabite. Just like Rahab she was a Gentile, without any bloodline from Abraham. The origin of the Moabites is another chapter in infamy as man would describe it. As Lot fled from Sodom with his wife and two daughters, his wife was turned into a pillar of salt. His two daughters, (after some time had passed) thinking themselves to be bereft of any hope of finding a husband, decided to get their father drunk enough on wine so that they could lay with him in hopes of getting pregnant. Once again we see the predestinating hand of GOD causing all things to occur according to HIS purpose as both became with child by another incestuous union, even more perverse than that of Tamar, as men would judge it. The child born to the first daughter was named Moab, and from him that people known as the Moabites sprang. (see Gen.19:37)

Next we read of Bathsheba, though she is not mentioned by name but referred to as the wife of Uriah, (see v 6) even though she was now married to David when Solomon was born. Prior to that, she was involved in an adulterous relationship with David, which ultimately led to the murder of her husband, Uriah, by the scheming of David, according to the predestined purpose of GOD.

Finally we read of Mary, the wife of Joseph, (see v.16) and the mother of the LORD JESUS. In contrast to some of her ancestors she was a pure young maiden, having never been with a man in a carnal relationship, when the HOLY GHOST overshadowed her and she became with child by HIM, according to the predestined purpose of GOD. Thus CHRIST was born of a virgin, and not having been sired by the seed of one of the sinful sons of Adam was without the imputation of Adam's sin by natural conception. So we read of HIM, *"We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."* (Heb 4:15)

Being untainted by the natural sin of Adam's race, HE had no inclination to sin and we read of HIM after this manner, *"Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."* (1Pet 2:22) Thus according to the "determinate counsel of GOD" (i.e.; predestinated purpose) HE was perfectly fit and suited to fulfill the purpose for which HE came into the world, which was to magnify the glory of HIS grace in the redemption of HIS people, offering HIMSELF as a proper SUBSTITUTE as a LAMB without blemish or spot, to make atonement for their sin.

While HE had no sin, by HIS own human nature, yet it behooved HIM to demonstrate HIS willingness to be identified with the vilest of men as we see manifested in HIS human ancestry and to take their sin by a designed imputation as their KINSMAN REDEEMER. It is no wonder then that *"The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!"* (Luke 7:34) HE took upon HIMSELF the sin of HIS people and has carried it away as far as the east is from the west. Well did Paul confess as do all of GOD's children, *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."* (1Tim. 1:15) mam