

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XVI

Issue 19

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

THE SWORD IN THE LORD'S HAND

Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is thy sword.

Psalm 17:13

Those who glory in the free-will of men, suppose that GOD has many contingencies and multiple plans as HE waits upon men to decide what they will or will not do. They would have us believe that HE is constantly changing course based upon the outcome of various scenarios which HE will not (or perhaps cannot) control due to the myriad of decisions which are yet to be made by men, which would, of necessity, alter the course of history. Not to mention the multitude of prayers that might yet be prayed which would require HIM to act in various fashions in order to fulfill those which are of sufficient fervency and "faith".

If we have learned anything at all, we are quite certain that the GOD of Heaven and Earth is truly GOD. HE does not simply know the end from the beginning due to HIS prescience (or foreknowledge as many would define it) but rather because HE has determined the end and the beginning as well as all events in between. HE is not ashamed to declare that this is exactly what HE does and makes no apology for doing precisely as "HE wills in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." HE says that none can "*stay HIS hand*" or even question HIS doing, let alone change any of the words which have gone out of HIS mouth. "*I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.*" (Isa 42:8)

The graven images or idols of men are seldom carved out of wood and stone in the present day. Rather they most often consist of false ideas and notions of a limited god whom they would gladly bow their knees to, while rejecting the absolute GOD, who describes HIMSELF in the pages of scripture. Just like the Philistines had Dagon, and the Babylonians and Moabites had Baal, so too do the modern confusion mongers present a supposed deity which has neither feet, hands, nor a mouth that speaks. Rather he is the servant of men who waits upon them to determine what actions he will take and can only determine the number of occupants of his kingdom by hoping that some of them will avail themselves of the "opportunity" which he has provided for them to be included therein.

The modern day "deity" is a force for "good" (as men would define it) who has set himself in opposition to all that is "evil or bad" (as men would define it). He is helpless to defeat the wicked (as men would define them) apart from man's willingness to join in the fray by standing for good and praying for divine assistance to defeat these powerful forces of evil, who are led by his arch enemy, Satan, who is presently having a field day due to man's complacency and disobedience.

The LORD who forms the light and creates the darkness, does also make peace and create evil, so that all things are done in accordance with HIS purpose which cannot be changed. (see Isa. 45:5-18) HE does bring HIS will to pass through every activity and action of men, angels, and Satan, as well as the fowls of the air, the beasts of the field, the winds, and the waves of the ocean. While most men would concur that HE controls the "forces of nature", they will not acknowledge that HE also determines the wills and destinies of all men, having set the bounds of their habitation that they cannot pass. (see Job 14:5; Acts 17:26)

Only as a man is humbled before this SOVEREIGN CREATOR and REDEEMER can he truly rejoice and find rest in desiring HIS will to be done in the Earth as it is in Heaven. Only then can he find a place of true repentance for his ignorance and will worship, even as Job expressed at the end of his saga, of discovery. "*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*" (Job 42:5-6)

When we examine the book of Job and how the trials of Job came to occur, we see a perfect illustration of the LORD's use of the "wicked" to perform HIS will and to accomplish HIS purpose. We must ever keep in mind that Satan, just as all of creation, was formed in order to fulfill that purpose for which he was created. He is the father of lies and demonstrated his nature when it pleased GOD to manifest him as such. In the case of Job, we see the LORD bringing Job to Satan's attention and issuing a challenge to him which he gladly undertook.

The LORD determined the scenario and set the bounds of Satan's ability in order that the LORD might prove HIS own power to keep that which is HIS from the "snare of the fowler", causing all things to work together for the good of Job, whom HE desired to bring to a place of repentance which we see occurring in the last chapter. *"So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning."* (Job 42:12) The carnal mind of men only allows them to focus on the trials and troubles of Job, but the theme of the book of Job is a commentary upon the purpose of GOD to show mercy to whom HE will show mercy. This is Job's testimony.

A "sword" is a weapon or tool which is used to accomplish a purpose. The Psalmist (David who wrote the words of the LORD JESUS who dictated them) says, that the "wicked" is the "sword" of the LORD. HE does ordain the actions of "wicked men", to fulfill HIS purpose as well as HE does the actions of the "righteous". *"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain."* (Psa 76:10) We see this demonstrated in the wickedness of the prophet Balaam as HE used him to bring chastening upon the children of Israel. We also read that HE used the man with a "lying spirit" to bring about the just destruction of Ahab as he was persuaded to go into battle where the LORD caused a man to "draw a bow at a venture" (i.e.; in a random fashion, without aim from the man) and sent the arrow straight to Ahab. So the king died and the dogs licked up his blood as was prophesied by Elijah. (see I Kings 22)

Yet all of these illustrations pale in comparison to those "swords" which were used to wound and kill the LORD JESUS CHRIST who came into the world to fulfill the exact purpose for which the LORD created the earth and its inhabitants. In order to manifest the glory of HIS grace in Heaven and Earth, the FATHER sent HIS SON, to bleed and die, a substitutionary death for that people which HE loved from before the foundation of the world.

If HIS death was ordained by the LORD then every activity which brought that to pass was surely ordained as well. Peter speaks of this when HE said, *"Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."* (Act 2:22-23)

Judas was a "sword" in the LORD's hand, for it was he who betrayed HIM with a kiss (i.e. a show of affection) for thirty pieces of silver. Was it not prophesied? *"Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lifted up his heel against me."* (Psa 41:9) His every action was ordered by the LORD, yet he gladly performed that awful task and the LORD said of him, *"The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."* (Mat 26:24)

Every one of those Jews which delivered HIM to Pilate was a "sword" in HIS hand in order that the SHEPHERD might be smitten. Each one who cried out "crucify HIM" was a "sword" in the hand of HIM who hath laid on HIM the iniquity of us all. *"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."* (Isa 53:3-5)

Was not each one whose sin HE bore, one of these "swords", for it was our iniquity which brought about HIS sorrow? Surely had we not been sinners we should have needed no SAVIOR. Yet it pleased the LORD to suffer for us. The JUST for the unjust that HE might bring us to GOD. Through the ages to come the children of GOD shall ever praise HIM who has created them to fulfill HIS purpose and to be found among that throng around HIS throne which no man can number, saying *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."* (Rev 5:12) mam