

# 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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## SET THE CAPTIVES FREE

*But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man, his handmaid, whom ye had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for handmaids. Jeremiah 34:16*

The sands of time are littered with the carcasses of those men who have despised and transgressed those conditional covenants which the LORD made with them. We understand that the LORD's purpose in the giving of these types of covenants was so that HE might illustrate both the wickedness of men by nature and their total inability to embrace and abide by HIS precepts without any mixture of error. (see Rom.7:7-11)

This is first seen in Adam as he transgressed against the one commandment which the LORD gave him. It is later seen with that grand display of the Mosaic covenant, with the giving of the Law written in tables of stone. Before these Tablets could be brought down from the mount, the people had risen up to play, despising that which the LORD had spoken to them. (see Ex.20:1)

Man, by nature is totally incapable of obeying the law of GOD, even though religious men of all stripes and in all ages, have presumed to do so and demanded the same of others, even seeking, in many cases, to make the law stricter than even the LAWGIVER demanded. This penchant had reached its zenith just as the LORD had come upon the scene, clothed in human flesh. As a result, we see HIM constantly at odds with the Scribes and Pharisees.

They were the epitome of "righteous men", as men would judge. They tithed faithfully, kept the Sabbath, made many disciples (proselytes), were skilled in the art of public prayer, and even carried the scriptures with them wherever they went. They had the highest of regards to the Mosaic Law (as they understood it), and faithfully made offerings in accordance with that pattern which Moses received on the mount. Yet the LORD said they were farther from entering the kingdom of GOD than the most immoral creatures that they could imagine. "*Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.*" (Mat 21:31)

Some have opined that now that the Gospel has been revealed, in the work which CHRIST came to perform, that these same laws which men have never been able to fulfill, are now once again to be laid upon the conscience of those for whom HE has fulfilled every jot and tittle thereof with a perfect satisfaction. We know that CHRIST came not to destroy the law in any sense, yet we are certain that HE did indeed satisfy all claims which that law could ever demand, and that the sons of GOD are made free from all condemnation which could ever arise therefrom. The LORD said "*And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*" (John 8:35-36) Paul describes the liberty which has been brought to the household of GOD, saying, "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*" (Rom 8:2-4)

The LORD has made those for whom HE shed HIS precious blood, to stand in perfect RIGHTEOUSNESS. That being the case we rejoice not in conditional covenants which we could never keep, but in HIM who is the KEEPER of the EVERLASTING COVENANT which is built upon better promises. *“But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”* (Heb 8:6-13)

The blessings of the conditional covenants (i.e.; the old) depended upon human obedience, but this New Covenant, rests in the power of HIM who has an endless life and has promised to bring deliverance to HIS children apart from any endeavor on their part. HE is the INHERITOR of all things and has made HIS people to be heirs and joint heirs with HIM.

In the book of Jeremiah, we read of a conditional covenant which the LORD made with the house of Israel (when HE delivered them from Egypt) which they turned from. (see 34:13) They were to set their servants free after seven years, but they did not do so. Jeremiah prophesied unto Zedekiah that they should now preach liberty to the captives and set their servants free. Amazingly, the people did so for a season, but then they reneged on this covenant and brought their servants back into bondage, making their latter end worse than the beginning. The LORD was wroth with them saying that they had polluted HIS NAME by visiting those who were set free, with the same bondage that held them at the first. This is what Paul admonishes the Galatians and Colossians about when he said, *“But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.”* (Gal 4:9-10) *“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances.”* (Col 2:20)

Many today speak of the liberty of the sons of GOD, preaching a form of salvation by grace without works, but then they are fearful of “liberty” and seek to bring them back into the bondage that they were under before they knew this freedom in JESUS CHRIST. The station of the sons of GOD is not that of servants, (though they gladly serve HIM, as those whose ear is bored through with an awl, see Exo. 21:6), but sons; and they rejoice in the law of the SPIRIT of life in CHRIST JESUS rather than being forced to submit to a law they cannot keep, which is able only to minister condemnation. Their rejoicing is primarily because the same ONE who spoke this “new law” is also the ONE who performs it for them. (see John 13:34,35) Paul made his joy known when he said, *“For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”* (Gal 2:19-21)

The resurrection of JESUS CHRIST testifies to this “glorious liberty of the sons of GOD” for we have been given the first fruits of HIS resurrection, in the work of the SPIRIT in us testifying of the HOPE we have in HIM. We presently wait in these mortal bodies (i.e.; the creature) to be set free from mortality, even as we are set free from the condemnation of the law. (see Rom.8:18-23) mam