

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

A FLOOD, A STANDARD, AND A COVENANT

So shall they fear the name of the LORD from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever.

Isaiah 59:19-21

Throughout the scriptures we see the record of the trials, failures, and triumphs of the LORD's people. These occurrences do not happen randomly nor remotely but are all a part of the grand work of a faithful GOD to bring HIS people by a way which they knew not, (Isa.42:16) to deliver them to a "wealthy place." (see Rom.8:28; Ps.66:10-12) HIS ways are not our ways and we are often puzzled as to the reasons such troubles befall the sons of GOD, most especially when we are those directly affected. Yet we can rejoice that what the LORD has begun HE will see through to the end, and the latter end of the children of GOD will be better than at the first.

This is clearly demonstrated in the trials of Job, which were brought upon him, directly, by the order and purpose of the LORD. Though HE was pleased to use Satan, as HIS tool, to afflict Job, all of Job's troubles were designed and applied according to HIS purpose to bring Job to a place of greater understanding and repentance. (see Job 42:6; 12-17) We see the same thing played out as Joseph was sold into slavery and then rose to honor, to ultimately bring Jacob and his family to Egypt, where the children of Israel might fall into bondage. Yet this bondage was brought upon them in order that the LORD might demonstrate most clearly the separation that HE puts between those that belong to HIM and those HE has ordained unto destruction.

In this scenario HE would ultimately teach them (and us) of their own weakness before their enemies and in greater fashion demonstrate, their (and our) weakness before HIS Law. They could in no wise deliver themselves from the hand of the Egyptians, nor could they keep that Holy Law which HE was pleased to give unto them as HE set them apart from the other tribes of the Earth. "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God." (Rom 3:1-2)

The glory and mystery which surrounds the ETERNAL GOD is revealed in no small part by HIS absolute faithfulness to uphold the Covenant of Redemption which is found in CHRIST JESUS the LORD. Paul reveals the true nature and RECEPTOR of this Covenant of promise in his letter to the Galatians. "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. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham **by promise.**" (Gal 3:16-18)

Though the "spiritual offspring" of Abraham (see Rom.2:28,29) are the benefactors of this Covenant, yet it is quite clear in the scriptures, that HE to whom the promise is made is CHRIST

alone. *"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."*(Psa 2:7-9)

Those who are hid in CHRIST are those who reap the blessings which the LORD will bestow upon HIS children, because of HIM, in whom, they stand forever justified, sanctified, and blessed. HE is their COVENANT HEAD who has purchased for them an eternal redemption by HIS own blood shed in their behalf. Who can disannul that which HE has done, in the same fashion as none could destroy those for whom HE opened the Red Sea and led through on dry ground. This same ROCK which followed the children of Israel through the wilderness, their SHADE by day and their LIGHT in the darkness, is HE who shall deliver all of those who are given to HIM.

The "flood" to which the prophet has reference, is a description of the multitude of troubles that do regularly assail the sons of GOD. The enemies of the LORD's people are multifaceted and numerous, yet each one moves according to the purpose of GOD, even as we see in the LORD's use of Satan with Job and even more apparent in the case of Judas (whose heart Satan had filled), ordained to betray the LORD JESUS into the hands of HIS tormentors. HE was tempted (tried and distressed) in all points like as we are, yet completely unlike us was without sin of any kind, always desiring to see HIS FATHER'S will accomplished even to HIS own hurt.

Paul describes the many difficulties and hardships which he faced. *"But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings."* (2Cor 6:4-5) By the grace of GOD he declared that such things were useful in the ministry of the word. This flood has to do, not only, with the external troubles of the sons of GOD, but likewise, those that arise from within, which are conflicts, doubtings, fears, and other inward trials of various kinds. *"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."* (Gal 5:17)

It is against all of this great deluge (i.e.; a flood), which the LORD in HIS sovereign mercy is pleased to lift up a "STANDARD." The LORD JESUS declared this STANDARD when HE said, *"Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die."* (John 12:31-33) Our REDEEMER has come and has triumphed gloriously over all of the enemies of the children of GOD which were given to HIM from before the foundation of the world. HE alone is that COVENANT HEAD who has led captivity captive and given gifts unto men. *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Rom 8:31-39)

This is the fruit of the everlasting covenant which is clearly manifested in the bringing of these benefits to those who are found in CHRIST where they were chosen (see Eph.1:3,4) from the beginning. *"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."* (Heb 9:14-15)

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