

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

THOU ART MINE

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. *Isaiah 43:1*

There are no more powerful words found in the Scriptures than these, when applied by the SPIRIT of GOD to the man who is brought to the feet of the LORD laden with sin's guilt, broken with contrition, and owning his own just condemnation by that same RIGHTEOUS JUDGE. If he were to hear the words "*depart from me*", he could in no wise find any place of argument, nor could he demand anything if he were met with utter silence. But to hear these wondrous words must elicit a torrent of emotions from absolute joy to complete disbelief that such favor could be found.

Was this not the same emotion that humbled Simon Peter when he witnessed the outpouring of the LORD's goodness, as their nets were overwhelmed with the abundance of fish which they had toiled for all the night to no avail, and yet was bestowed upon them in a moment by the MASTER of the fish. "*When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*" (Luke 5:8)

When the LORD looks upon HIS children, HE does not see them as the world might view them, nor even as they might see themselves. Rather HE looks upon them with the love which HE has had for them from the beginning. HE knows their faults, their unthankfulness, and even their unbelief, and yet HE never wavers in any wise in HIS love and devotion to them, for they are HIS possession.

The more children that an earthly father has, the more likely he is to confuse their names and call one when he intends to call another. Yet the LORD, who is the GOOD SHEPHERD, knows the name of each one of HIS little lambs. "*I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.*" (John 10:14) HIS sheep are not born, knowing who HE is. Yet in HIS own time as HE is pleased to call them by name, they are made to know HIS voice and cling only to HIM. The woman taken in adultery and brought in open shame before HIM, did not know who HE was when she came there, yet when HE spoke those words, "*Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more*", she could never again forget HIM.

Nor could the Samaritan woman who came to draw water from the well, ever forget that "stranger" who confronted her there, telling her all the things she ever did, (see John 4:7-29). She did not know HIM on her journey to that well, but she "knew HIM" from that time forth as HE revealed HIMSELF unto her and she with joy left her water pots and published HIS NAME to all who would listen. When Zaccheus climbed the tree to get a better look at this MAN whose fame was spreading, he had no acquaintance with HIM, but was curious just like the multitudes around him. Yet before that day was done and the LORD came to abide in his house, he was ever more, joyfully, known by him. For the LORD had called him by name. "*Zaccheus (O what a startling sound), make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.*" (Luke 19:5) No doubt there were others, as curious as him, who had climbed the trees along that way, but Zaccheus belonged to the LORD and HE knew his name.

Saul of Tarsus, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, held the coats of those who stoned Stephen and gathered letters of authority, with which to seek out and put to death many followers of CHRIST. He zealously pursued them even to Damascus, with no heart knowledge of the ONE they followed. Yet this vile persecutor of the faithful, was known by the SAVIOR, and was no less loved while in that

wicked pursuit than he was when he later laid down his own life for the glory of the CHRIST which he once hated. The LORD knew his name and his whereabouts when HE called him on the road to Damascus. In a moment of time, the ignorance and rebellion of Saul was destroyed as he meekly called upon the ONE who had made him HIS own before the foundation of the world.

There can be no place of boasting for any of these men and women, for they were not seeking HIM when HE manifested HIS determination to draw them to HIMSELF. They did nothing to cause HIS favor nor inherit HIS blessings. HE “redeemed” the disgraced woman. HE “redeemed” this Samaritan adulterer. HE “redeemed” the despised tax-collector. HE even “redeemed”, this self-righteous Pharisee, all because they were HIS, even as HE told the house of Jacob many years before, *“I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.”*

The whole concept of “redemption” is built upon the basis of prior “ownership” of that which is “redeemed”. I once heard an old preacher say, “you can’t **re**-deem something that has not been “deemed” in the first place.” A person must have ownership of, or be kin to the person who has ownership of a “property” in order to “redeem” it.

When the LORD brought the house of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt HE said, *“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments.”* (Exo 6:6) We see the concept of a kins-man redeemer, set forth in the law of Moses. *“If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.”* (Lev 25:25) The clearest illustration of this “kins-man” redeemer, which can be found in the Old Testament is in the book of Ruth concerning the kindness of Boaz to “redeem” the field of Naomi and therefore marry Ruth.

Apart from an ownership interest in a property it cannot be “redeemed” and the kinsman who undertakes to “redeem” the property cannot be denied. This is illustrated for us as the LORD said, *“And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”* (John 6:39) *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.”* (John 10:27-28)

When men concoct a theory of a “universal redemption”, (i.e.; a redemption which is designed for every individual upon the Earth.) They must disregard the necessity of a near “KINSMAN” as the REDEEMER. Not only that but they must disregard the Biblical teaching of what constitutes “redemption”. Redemption is always associated with the purchase of a prior owned property. But the most egregious error of such a scheme is that it must deny the power of the REDEEMER to actually purchase anything of lasting worth and thereby rob the REDEEMER of HIS rightful glory.

The LORD never speaks of HIS “redemption” as if its fulfillment and efficacy, should depend on the will or action of any other. CHRIST does not “attempt” to redeem that which is HIS. Nor does HE “hope” to redeem that which is HIS. HE is a REDEEMER who redeems that possession which HE has owned from the beginning which HE hath made “subject unto vanity” (see Rom 8:20) according to the good pleasure of HIS will. Subjecting the same in “hope” even though those loved by HIM from the beginning have sold themselves into slavery and bondage even as Israel of old sold themselves into the darkness of Egypt.

Thus, just as surely as HE says to sinners, *“thou art mine”*, HE demonstrates to these same sinners a perfect redemption wherein HE has bought them out of bondage and restored them to their rightful place as the sons of GOD, purchased with the blood of CHRIST which is of such worth as to never fail to procure that for which it was shed. *“But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* (Heb 9:11-12) HE will lose none for whom HE died. Have you heard the SHEPHERD’s voice as HE calls HIS own sheep by name? *“Thou art mine.”*

“Those who have strayed were sought by the MASTER HE who once gave HIS life for the sheep

Out on the mountains still HE is searching Bringing them in forever to keep

We will not heed the voice of a stranger For he would lead us on to despair

Following on with JESUS our SAVIOR We shall all reach that country so fair”.(by HW vanHoose) mam