

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

PLEASURE IN STONES AND DUST

Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.

Psalm 102:13-14

It is impossible that any of the sons of men, could ever grasp the depths of the soul sufferings of CHRIST. Yet, for our learning and humbling HE has seen fit to give us a record of them in the Psalms. In the words and experiences of those whom the LORD was pleased to ordain to write these Psalms, we get a small glimpse of some of that grief which HE underwent in our behalf. Psalm 102 is one of those Psalms.

The very title of this Psalm is "*A Prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.*" HE begins this record by calling upon the ONE in whom HE trusted and whose will HE came to perform in the Earth. "*Hear my prayer, O LORD, and let my cry come unto thee.*" (Psa 102:1) CHRIST became the "*AFFLICTED*" for us. "*Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all. He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.*" (Psa 34:19-20) Who can doubt that the "*RIGHTEOUS*" who is spoken of here is CHRIST HIMSELF, since this very passage is quoted in the NT in reference to HIM. "*For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.*" (John 19:36)

"*For my days are consumed like smoke, and my bones are burned as an hearth.*" (Psa 102:3) What anguish of heart is upon HIM as HE sees HIS life consumed and feels the pain of the sin of HIS people in HIS very bones. Every day of HIS life HE bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, and not one of those for whom HE underwent this suffering either understood it nor could any stand with HIM in the midst of it. HE gave of HIMSELF to teach HIS disciples, yet they remained in great measure, dull of hearing and slow to believe HIS words. "*Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?*" (Luke 24:25-26) "*Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.*" (Mar 16:14)

"*My heart is smitten, and withered like grass; so that I forget to eat my bread.*" (Psa 102:4) We read that HE spent much time in prayer and fasting. Most notably HE fasted for forty days. HIS "fasting" was not some religious exercise which HE undertook out of habit or conformity to dogma, but rather the burden of our sin which HE bore was so great and occupied HIS mind and heart to the extent that HE "forgot to eat." The concerns of HIS flesh were overridden by that task which HE came to do, loving not HIS life even unto death.

"*I am like a pelican of the wilderness: I am like an owl of the desert. I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top.*" (Psa 102:6-7) Both the owl and the pelican are solitary birds. You will not find a "flock of owls" nor a group of "pelicans". The LORD JESUS CHRIST had meat to eat that the world knew not of. HE trod the winepress of GOD's wrath alone and there was no beauty seen in HIM by the men of this world. While sparrows are generally seen in great flocks flitting about here and there, yet HE likens HIMSELF to a single sparrow which is indeed an oddity

in the natural realm. There is none like HIM. HE said that not even a sparrow could fall to the ground apart from the ordained purpose of ALMIGHTY GOD. So too was that work which HE came to perform, predestined to occur in the exact fashion which HE desired. *"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."* (Acts 2:23) No one else could or would have undertaken our redemption apart from HIM who loved HIS own even unto the death of the cross. *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."* (1Pet 1:18-20)

"Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come." (Psa 102:13) How glorious it is to consider that before the world was ever formed, the LORD of GLORY determined a particular hour wherein HE would manifest the deliverance of HIS people upon whom HE would show mercy. *"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ."* (Gal 4:4-7)

Herein has HE demonstrated HIS great "favor" to ZION which HE chose in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. The whole creation centers around this "set time". *"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."* (Heb 1:1-4)

This is indeed that "set time" which prompts all of creation to fall upon their faces and worship HIM who is the BEGINNING and the END. *"And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."* (Rev 11:15-17)

The "reign" of CHRIST is set forth as we see HIM fulfill that "new covenant" which HE promised to give, *"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."* (Jer 31:33) (see Heb.10:16-18) *"The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power."* (Psa 110:2-3)

Not only has HE cancelled the debt of sin which HIS people owed but HE has made an OFFERING which could and has "taken away" their sin, not only judicially but in the heart and mind. *"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins."* (Heb 10:1-4) *"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God; From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (i.e.; set apart)"*(Heb 10:12-14)

This is "reconciliation". Those who were rebels by choice and nature do now throw down their arms and worship at HIS footstool, loving even the dust and stones of HIS kingdom. *"For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."* (Psa 84:10) Are you reconciled unto HIM? mam