

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XX

Issue 8

Published occasionally for mourners in Zion

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

WHAT GOD HATH WROUGHT

Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.

II Corinthians 5:5

Balaam certainly qualifies as one of the most enigmatic and mysterious men found in the scriptures. The LORD employed Balaam to demonstrate the fact that HE will use wicked men to declare HIS TRUTH. Balaam is also quite demonstrative of the fact that the LORD confounds the mighty and causes even their evil intents to be used for HIS glory and to serve HIS purpose in the Earth. Balaam was quite intent on cursing the chosen people of GOD (from which he expected to receive great reward from King Balak) yet the LORD turned his cursing into blessing. No doubt Balaam was as surprised with the words which came from his lips (Balak was astounded by the same) as he was when his donkey shamed him with a spoken rebuke.

The LORD stands in need of nothing which men can supply and directs the steps of HIS creatures to perform HIS sovereign will, often to their own consternation. I think of Joseph's brothers as they sold him into slavery, only to later find that the LORD used their wickedness to bring about their own deliverance. We can see this same scenario played out in Peter's testimony on the Day of Pentecost. *"Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."* (Acts 2:23-24)

Little did these men know that their wicked and cruel action, would not only fulfil the purpose of GOD, but would bring salvation to some of them under the sound of Peter's voice. *"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."* (1Cor 2:7-8) The "princes of this world" have no desire to bring glory to GOD, yet all that they do redounds unto HIS glory as HE uses them to fulfill HIS will. *"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will."* (Prov 21:1)

Balaam desired to curse the LORD's people with his whole heart and did everything in his power to do so, yet the LORD caused him to speak forth a truth which he despised. *"Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel: according to this time it shall be said of Jacob and of Israel, What hath God wrought!"* (Num 23:23) He recognized the folly of men in trying to overturn the blessing of GOD upon that people which HE chose in the Earth to demonstrate HIS everlasting love for that elect bride which HE loved from the beginning and chose in CHRIST.

Down through the ages of time, mankind has demonstrated, their hatred of GOD's way and HIS people as we read in the book of Hebrews. *"And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being*

destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.” (Heb 11:36-38)

In spite of all of these manifestations of man’s malice toward GOD; the LORD has preserved HIS people and caused them to grow stronger by these same afflictions, meant by their enemies to destroy them. Who can observe this history (in honesty) and not be compelled with Balaam to exclaim with wonder at what GOD hath wrought? Whether or not you love the LORD and the unfolding of HIS purpose, you cannot deny the faithfulness of the LORD to watch over those that are HIS. They shall never perish nor can any man pluck them out of the LORD’s HAND. *“Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work; and I have created the waster to destroy. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.” (Isa 54:16-17)*

The word “wrought” appears one hundred times in the KJV (77 in the OT and 23 in the NT). It literally means “to work fully to accomplish”. The Greek word which is used by Paul here in 2 Cor.5:5 is most often translated in the NT as “worketh” and is also translated as “do, done, perform, and working.” In any event we can see that the reference here is to convey an operation which is carried out by the LORD in the behalf of those who are so “wrought upon”.

Paul says, *“we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (2Cor 5:1)* He speaks of that dwellingplace which the saints shall occupy in the “ages to come”, in which there will be no groaning or longing, as we now experience. For the saints of GOD do indeed *“in this-- groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven” (2Cor 5:2)* *“For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.”(2Cor 5:4)* This “tabernacle” in which this “groaning” (i.e.; murmuring, sighing, grieving) takes place is clearly, (I might say “obviously”) referring to these houses of clay in which we presently dwell (i.e.; our bodies of corruptible flesh and blood.) These bodies are those which are susceptible and subservient to the law of sin and death according to the curse of Adam.

That which causes this “grief” (in the sons of GOD) is the sin which doth so easily beset us and its results which cannot be escaped. *“the wages of sin is death.”* It is against this “flesh” that the SPIRIT does ever war, and this flesh does resist the SPIRIT. This causes great grief to those who are exercised by it and a desire to be rid of the body of this death. While the man who is not made a new creature in CHRIST may groan because of the natural decaying of this flesh yet he does not long to be rid of that which is the root cause of his maladies, only its symptoms. Thus, is manifested the difference between the natural and the heavenly birth.

GOD, who is the FIRST CAUSE of all events has created HIS people (wrought us) to be the dwelling place of HIS SPIRIT through the ages to come. Thus, HE has ordained a new tabernacle (this selfsame thing, i.e. an incorruptible body) for our future habitation. In this present “tabernacle” (in which we presently groan), HE has blessed us with the “EARNEST” (i.e., a pledge or security deposit) of our inheritance. This ministers to HIS children, in the midst of their “groaning”; a very present HELP in time of trouble. *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1Pet 1:3-5)*

What wondrous things the LORD “hath wrought” in becoming the “FIRST FRUITS” of them that sleep (i.e.; die in these mortal bodies). “Christians, dismiss your fear; Let hope and joy succeed; The great good news with gladness hear, The Lord is risen indeed. The promise is fulfilled; Salvation’s work is done; Justice with mercy’s reconciled, And God has raised his Son. His death procured thy peace, His resurrection’s thine; Believe; receive the full release; ’Tis signed with blood divine.” (Joseph Hart, #487 Gadsby’s Hymns) Is CHRIST your HOPE? mam