

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

OUR TREE OF LIFE

In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:2

The LORD formed man from the dust of the ground, breathed into him and he became a living soul. He was created with a desire to live but lacking the ability in himself to either gain or sustain his own life. When the LORD placed him in the Garden of Eden, HE also provided the tree of life which Adam had continual access to with no restrictions upon him of eating its fruit. *"And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil." (Gen 2:8-9)* True to his nature, and GOD's purpose, Adam eschewed the tree of life, and chose to eat of the only tree which the LORD had forbade him to eat. The LORD foretold Adam's disobedience and the consequences of his actions. *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (Gen 2:16-17)* Adam's eyes were opened to know good and evil, but he had no idea of the calamity that awaited him.

Now it is certain that Adam did not immediately die a natural death, but the sentence of death passed upon him and his posterity, and the seed of death was planted in himself and, consequently, his offspring. He no longer had access to the "tree of life", for the LORD drove him from the garden with a guilty sentence upon his head. *"And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (i.e.; prevent his access to it) (Gen 3:22-24) "For the wages of sin is death." (Rom 6:23)*

Man in his natural state is in spiritual darkness and cannot comprehend spiritual things, even as Paul told the Corinthians, *"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."* (1Cor. 2:14) The LORD was very plain in HIS teaching upon this matter, as HE pointed out Peter's inability in his fleshly understanding to grasp the identity and glory of who HE is, *"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Mat 16:17)* This is the exact same truth which HE conveyed to Nicodemus. *"Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)*

So, man is in a dilemma which HE cannot even comprehend much less extricate himself from. He has no remedy for his condition and is completely at the mercy of GOD to deliver him. He is spiritually dead and naturally dying. He has a sentence of death hanging over his head like the "sword of Damocles", but carelessly passes on oblivious to his condition. *"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Heb 9:27)* In their natural state men do not fear GOD nor have any regard to the coming judgement that awaits each one. *"As it is written, There is none*

righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.” (Rom 3:10-12)

The LORD in HIS mercy has had pity upon HIS natural creation, manifesting HIS purpose to show peace and goodwill toward men, as HE sent HIS only begotten SON into the world, born in humble circumstances to live alongside them and to die in the behalf of sinners. HE had no obligation to come to the aid of rebellious men, but because of the great love which HE has for those whom HE chose in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world, HE has demonstrated HIS purpose to redeem them, solely through the offering up of HIS body on Calvary. *“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)

JESUS CHRIST is the only “TREE of LIFE”. Without HIM a man cannot possess eternal life nor obtain the benefits of living in this world as the sons of GOD. *“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”* (John 14:6) *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”* (1John 5:11-12) *“For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”* (Php 1:21)

JESUS CHRIST is the healing “TREE of LIFE”. The greatest “disease” that has ever invaded the heart of men, is the incurable cancer of sin, which ultimately destroys them, and leaves them in darkness. Yet CHRIST has come as the GREAT PHYSICIAN who applies the healing balm directly from this TREE. *“And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins.”* (Eph 2:1) *“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”* (Eph 2:5-6) So HE not only cures their disease, but gives them immunity from it, while raising them up to a place of perfect health, far exceeding their imagination.

JESUS CHRIST is the evergreen and fruitful “TREE of LIFE.” The scriptures tell us that HE is planted “on either side” of the RIVER of LIFE. We know HIM to be both MAN, as HE came to redeem HIS people as their SUBSTITUTE, and also to be GOD as HE who determines the end from the beginning, and all things in between. *“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”* (Psa 1:3) True prosperity is HIS. *“Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”* (Isa 53:10-12) *“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.”* (Isa 9:6-7)

JESUS CHRIST is the central “TREE of LIFE.” We read that HE is not only on both sides of the river but HE is in the “midst of the street.” The glory of Heaven and Earth is found in JESUS CHRIST. We often hear men talk of “streets” of gold in that city “the New Jerusalem” which descended out of heaven. Yet the scripture only speaks of ONE STREET of Gold. (see Rev.21:21) CHRIST is that STREET, the central FIGURE who reveals the Glory of GOD in HIMSELF. HE is that ONE before whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess. *“For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”* (Rom 14:11)

“Eat of the tree of life, my friends; The blessings that my Father sends; Your taste shall all my dainties prove, And drink abundance of my love. Jesus, we will frequent thy board, And sing the bounties of our Lord; But the rich food on which we live Demands more praise than tongue can give.”

(Isaac Watts, stanza 7,8 Gadsby's Hymns #363)

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