

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

ANSWERED PRAYER

In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.

Psalm 138:3

In every age the sons of GOD have confessed that this world is not their home as we can read of them in the book of Hebrews. *“These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.”* (Heb 11:13-14) Those specifically mentioned here are those Old Testament saints who could only look forward to the coming of their MESSIAH. They did not know HIS NAME nor did they have any concrete idea as to how HE would deliver them to that state which they longed for. Yet they pressed on, undeterred, by what the murmurers considered to be an interminable delay in receiving the blessings which they desired to obtain. The sons of GOD in the present day have now *“received the promises”* (i.e.; seen the revelation of HIM who is the PROMISE) yet still confess the same expression of dwelling in a strange land of which they have no communion with the inhabitants thereof and seek a country wherein dwelleth RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Peter recognizes the standing which the children of GOD are given in CHRIST and the purpose for which such an honor is bestowed. *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”* (1Pet 2:9) He even refers to them as strangers in I Pet. 1:1 and goes on to exhort them to walk according to the “holiness” to which they have been ordained. They are holy (i.e.; set apart) even as HE is HOLY by the power of the Eternal SPIRIT who causes them to *“pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.”* (1Pet 1:17) A sojourner is a stranger in the land through which he travels. He is not a resident of that country in which he sojourns nor does he desire citizenship there. *“If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.”* (John 15:19)

LIGHT and darkness can have no communion (i.e.; partnership or fellowship). *“And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”* (2Cor 6:15-18)

It would be fair to say that all men have an idea in their minds of what “prayer” is. I am sure that the vast majority of folks would even say that they engage in prayer, most especially when times are tough, someone is sick, or they need a promotion or victory of some sort. Yet it is clear from the scriptures that *“all men have not faith.”* (2Thess 3:2) For FAITH is the GIFT of GOD without which FAITH it is impossible to please GOD. We must not, therefore, copy and adopt the understanding of the world as to what prayer is and how it is carried out.

The world's notion of prayer, by and large, views GOD as a giant vending machine which grants wishes and blessings according to the amount one puts into it. The more one prays, the more "likely" he is to get what it is that he asks for, much like the proverbial genie in a bottle. Yet true "prayer" is more about the conditioning of the heart than it is about the "thing" for which a man might "ask", for the LORD knows the things that we need before we even think of them, much less ask. Paul's testimony about his "*thorn in the flesh*" (see *II Cor. 12:7-10*) proves this to be true. At the same time, the Pharisee's "prayer" illustrates the folly of the prayers of religious men, "*The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.*" (Luke 18:11)

True prayer is, first of all, primarily, concerned with the glory of the ONE to whom prayer is addressed. The LORD began HIS model prayer with these words, "*Our FATHER which art in heaven, Hallowed* (i.e.; revered, feared, and set apart from men) be THY NAME." HE instructed HIS disciples to pray with the understanding that the ONE to whom they are addressing themselves is "*high and holy*", "*separate from sinners*", "*Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.*" (1Tim 6:16)

True prayer is concerned with the establishment of the Kingdom of GOD in the Earth as the LORD taught us to pray, "*THY Kingdom come*". HE rules in the Heavens and in the Earth, which thing is the delight of those who truly pray. In like fashion true prayer is always concerned with seeing the will and purpose of GOD done in the Earth as it is determined in Heaven. The fruit of the SPIRIT's work in those that pray is to bring them into conformity to that will and to give them a desire to be reconciled unto it, even when the outworking of that will is contrary to their fleshly desire, as we see with Paul's example, and more importantly demonstrated by the LORD JESUS when HE prayed, "*nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*" (Matt 26:39) This is a key element of true prayer which sets it apart from the vain repetitions of the natural religiously (and self centered) driven man.

The men of this world (whether or not they consider themselves to be "religious") define the "answer to prayer" as being a successful fulfillment of whatever they asked for. As such they would (if they are consistent) have to conclude that Paul did not receive the "answer" to his prayer concerning his "thorn in the flesh." The present-day witch doctors and medicine men, calling themselves, preachers of prosperity, exclaim that men can "back GOD into a corner" and if they can generate enough "faith" (i.e.; the product of their free will), they can force HIS hand and cause HIM to grant their wishes, especially if the "pray-er" has sent some money (i.e.; sowed seed) into the coffers of these blind guides of deception. This is utter blasphemy and ought never to be considered by the sons of GOD as anything but a lie.

The Psalmist declares his reliance upon the GOD of his salvation, when he said, "*In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.*" Though the LORD gave these words to David, as he recounted his experience, we cannot help but to understand that this Psalm (as well as most of them) is the testimony of the LORD JESUS CHRIST who tabernacled among the men of this world. The LORD testified that HE was "always heard." (see John 11:41,42) Will the LORD give HIS children a stone if they ask HIM for bread? No a thousand times no, rather HE helpeth our infirmities. "*Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*" (Rom 8:26-28) True prayer is that which is the work of the SPIRIT within the sons of GOD. HE who ordains this prayer will indeed answer it according to HIS will and their benefit. HE is our PEACE and our COMFORT which the world knows nothing of. We cannot help but wait upon HIM? mam