

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XXII

Issue 10

*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

---

## OUR REST

*There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.* Hebrews 4:9-10

There is no shortage of religious men striving to obey what they believe are the commandments of GOD in order to enhance their standing with the LORD. They are convinced that they can earn eternal and/or temporal rewards or blessings by doing the same. The present-day preachers of “health and wealth” are the epitome of such, but there are many who, while being more doctrinally sound, actually promote the same notion under the guise of what they call “sanctification”, especially “progressive sanctification”.

Exhortations (unto the sons of GOD) to obedience and faith are abundantly found throughout the scriptures. Yet the effect of those exhortations on the man who is convinced that he is a sinner without one shred of personal righteousness, is to cause him to flee to CHRIST for refuge. (which is the actual purpose of them in the first place, see Rom.3:20) The LORD used an illustration of two men who went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, (a very moral and religiously upright man) and the other a Publican (who was a Jew hired by the Romans to collect taxes). The Pharisee, taking note of his own righteousness and mentioning his own efforts of tithing and fasting, thanked the LORD that he was not like other men who were “sinners”, especially this despised Publican. The Publican on the other hand knew himself to be a sinner and had no consideration that he possessed any righteousness at all. He did not so much as look unto heaven but smote upon his breast saying “*GOD be merciful to me a sinner.*” (Luke 18:13) The LORD said that he went down to his house justified by GOD, while the Pharisee, was justified in his own mind.

After the ascension of the LORD, and the subsequent Day of Pentecost, the LORD visited HIS apostles with power from on high, enabling them to preach the glorious riches of CHRIST. Thus, they went unto all nations preaching JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified and risen from the dead. However, it was not long before confusion arose (due to the weakness of the understanding of some) concerning the new Gentile believers. They convened a counsel in Jerusalem wherein some of the Jews thought it proper to demand various requirements of the Law of Moses to be laid upon them. In some measure the things that they ultimately set forth as “requirements” were quite innocuous, but the gate was opened to mixing the works of the Law with the freedom from the Law which the sons of GOD are granted in CHRIST. “*For the law (i.e.; the principle) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law (i.e.; the principle) of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*” (Rom 8:2-5)

In Paul’s letters to the various churches, he often alludes to this very matter. Most specifically in his epistle to the Galatians he sets forth the clearest of teaching concerning the principle upon which the sons of GOD are called to walk in. “*For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*” (Gal 2:19-21) No longer do the sons of GOD look to the coded Law of Moses, for guidance, comfort, or help, for none is there to be found. Rather the principle which directs and motivates the sons of GOD, is the knowledge of the

redemptive work of CHRIST and the work of HIS SPIRIT in them leading them in paths of righteousness as he exhorted the Philippians. *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Php 2:12-13)*

GOD's people are motivated, not by the threats or even the promises of the Law, but rather by the knowledge that CHRIST is our GREAT HIGH PRIEST over the household of GOD. In HIM we find all that we stand in need of, either in this world, or that which is to come. *"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." (Col 3:9-11)*

In the fourth chapter of Hebrews, Paul reminds these Jewish Christians of the LORD's example of "resting" from HIS works on the seventh day. They were all quite familiar with the Mosaic commandments, in particular, *"Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy (i.e.; set apart)."* (Exod.20:8) Yet the true purpose of this command was hidden from their eyes (see Rom. 11:8; II Cor.3:14,15) and the concept of looking at a particular "day of the week" satisfied their religious mind while its purpose was to point to the liberty which is ultimately revealed in CHRIST. Many of the LORD's recorded healings and deliverances took place on the "Sabbath Day", much to the chagrin of the Pharisees who held that day of the week to be "holy" even to the point of superstition and a willingness to observe it above showing mercy.

The LORD upbraided these Jews for their religiosity and their hardness of heart in regarding religious observances above love for one another. HE declared to them the true origin and nature of this Sabbath, saying, *"The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath."* (Mar 2:27-28) They preferred their own concept, as religious men still do to this day.

JESUS CHRIST is the "REST" for the people of GOD. The Greek word that is here (v.9) translated "rest", only occurs one time in the NT. The word is "sabbatismos" and literally means "a sabbath keeping". We are certain that GOD's people are exhorted to "keep the SABBATH", but we are equally certain that our SABBATH is CHRIST. When a man is looking at a calendar to "keep" the sabbath, he has missed the mark. CHRIST alone is our "DAY of REST". It is in HIM that we have ceased from our labors, even as HE did from HIS own.

JESUS CHRIST is our "REST" since HE has finished HIS work. HE prayed thusly, *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4) "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) HE did not simply justify HIS people from the condemnation of the Law, but HE has delivered them from the darkness of sin and the death thereof. *"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 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 2:4-6)* The same POWER that raised CHRIST from the dead has given HIS people LIFE.

JESUS CHRIST is our "REST" from our own efforts and work. Just as HE has ceased from HIS labors, we have ceased from our own. We have no expectation that we could do anything to either enhance our standing with HIM nor to earn any blessing by our "labor". *"Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."* (Luke 17:9-10) However we are exhorted to "labor" (v.11) to enter into HIS "REST." How is this accomplished? By the warfare that is wrought in us by HIS SPIRIT as the *"flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh."* (Gal 5:17) In our flesh, which is stirred with religious fervor, we would be constantly going about to take note of our own devotion and obedience. Yet by HIS SPIRIT we are led to cast off these works of the flesh and to ever look to HIM as our only "RIGHTEOUSNESS", in body, mind, or soul. *"But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."* (1Cor. 15:10) Have you entered into HIS REST?

mam