

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 NAIL

And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house. Isaiah 22:22-23

The popularity of the LORD JESUS CHRIST began to fade as HIS message was made clearer to those who followed HIM for the loaves and fishes. The day came, as HE unequivocally declared HIS DEITY and sovereign choice of some to eternal life, that many decided to leave off listening to HIS message. *"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."* (John 6:63-66)

Men of religion will follow the LORD (as they might describe it) as long as they perceive some benefit for themselves and they feel comfortable with an innocuous message which leaves them in charge of their own destiny. Yet the unequivocal declaration of the absolute sovereignty of GOD, wherein nothing of their fleshly endeavors are considered to be of any lasting worth; (*"the flesh profiteth nothing"*) nor can enable them to approach unto the LORD (*"no man can come unto me except it were given to him"*), will give them cold feet and send chills up their spine. Men love religion but hate the GOD of all gods who does according to HIS will in the army of Heaven and among the inhabitants of the Earth.

On the other hand, those who are convinced by the SPIRIT of GOD, that they are sinners without anything to offer to the GOD whose law they have trampled, are humbled before HIM and can do nothing but cry out to HIM for mercy. The Gospel of HIS Grace and Glory is a very sweet and welcome message to their ears. Their rebellion against HIM is laid to rest as they are reconciled unto HIM by the revelation of the work which CHRIST JESUS has done in the behalf of sinners. *"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;---For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* (2Cor 5:19,21)

Sinners will rejoice in the understanding that HE is a sovereign GOD who shows mercy to whom HE wills. They find no place to accuse HIM nor to question HIS doing like those "disciples" who heard unsettling words from the MASTER's lips, did. They cannot walk away from HIM as those did but must confess as Peter did, when the LORD asked if they too would go away. *"Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."* (John 6:67-69)

The SALVATION of the sons of GOD is not some formula which natural men can fill in the blanks of. They have neither any desire to seek the LORD nor the ability to do so apart from HIS grace which makes men willing in the day of HIS POWER. The SALVATION of the sons of GOD has its sum total in JESUS CHRIST who has loved HIS people from the beginning, come into the world in order to save them from their sins, and has accomplished exactly what HE has set out to do. A man can only be delivered from his sin by the work of CHRIST who has come to seek and to save that which is "lost". Something can only be lost when ONE has it in HIS possession to begin with. This is exactly what the LORD described when HE prayed, *"I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine."*

(John 17:9) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:37-40)

Isaiah speaks of "a NAIL in a sure place." Now the immediate and natural fulfillment of this prophecy came as HE raised up Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah to rule over Judah as her king. It is interesting that Eliakim's name in Hebrew literally means "whom GOD will raise." We cannot help but see CHRIST in this prophecy. "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power." (1Cor 6:14) So while the natural fulfillment of this prophecy came in Eliakim, the actual substance of it comes in CHRIST, since HE is the FULFILLMENT of all prophecy. "Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev 19:10)

The first time that a "nail" is mentioned in the scriptures is found in Judges 4:21 "Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died." Sisera was a mighty man of war who captained the army of Jabin, King of Canaan. He was quite a formidable foe, with his nine hundred chariots of iron. "And the children of Israel cried unto the LORD: for he had nine hundred chariots of iron; and twenty years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel." (Jdg 4:3) It seemed naturally impossible for the children of Israel to rid themselves of his dominion.

Yet the same GOD who had put the children of Israel under the hand of Jabin (see Judges 4:1,2) is HE who effected their deliverance. They could not deliver themselves from Sisera's army, but the LORD could and did. "The LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him. And the LORD discomfited Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host, with the edge of the sword before Barak; so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet." (Jdg 4:14-15)

The demise of Sisera could not have come in a more unpredictable fashion. Who could have known that this humble wife of Heber would be the one to end the mighty warrior Sisera's life with a "nail" (i.e. probably a tent peg). Yet the LORD ordered it in the same fashion as HE was pleased to subject the nation of Israel to the bondage of Jabin and Sisera. In like fashion we read "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." (Rom 8:20) The bondage of the sons of GOD was no less ordained by HIM than was their deliverance from it by the most unpredictable method. The Jews assumed that their deliverer would ride into Jerusalem in a mighty display of power and glory as he exalted them above their enemies.

Little did they know (even though the scripture spelled it out) that HE would come upon a colt the foal of an ass. They did not recognize HIM when HE came, nor did they desire HIM. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (Isa 53:2-3)

Just like Sisera's death (and Israel's deliverance) was the predestined result of a "nail"; so too is the deliverance of GOD's people. For wicked men have nailed HIM to the tree. "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)

CHRIST is that NAIL in a sure place. HE is become the HOPE of those that mourn in Zion. HE is their mighty DELIVERER who opens and none can shut and shuts that no man can open. "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." (Isa 12:2) We are not afraid to trust in HIM.

CHRIST is that NAIL in a sure place. Our confidence is not in our activity of faith but our FAITH is that which HE has done. "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 9:12)

CHRIST is that Nail in a sure place who is seated upon a glorious throne. "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." (Heb 10:12)