

# GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XXI

Issue 46

*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 KEEPER

*Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. Jude 1:24*

Throughout the Bible, the weakness and unfaithfulness of mankind in his natural state is on clear display. At the same time, the faithfulness and strength of the LORD to preserve and deliver HIS people is manifested time and time again. Nothing is more common than to see a multitude of those that profess to be the followers of the True and Living GOD, turn away and walk no more with HIM. We see this demonstrated quite plainly as we view the ups and downs of the nation of Israel as they were one day declaring their determination to walk in obedience to the LORD, only the next to begin to murmur and complain and then to turn back unto the idols which they had recently renounced.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST lived upon the Earth, in a body of flesh and blood, for approximately thirty-three years. HIS public ministry of declaring the Gospel of HIS glory and the advent of HIS Kingdom lasted about three years. During that period multitudes flocked to hear HIM and many gladly sought HIM out and pursued HIM from place to place. Yet the day came when these multitudes turned back from following HIM. *“From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.” (John 6:66)*

The LORD turned to the “*twelve*” which HE had chosen and asked, *“Will ye also go away?” (John 6:67)* Peter, then made a stunning declaration. *“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 6:68-69)* I say this is a stunning declaration because not many days after this we see Peter denying, three times, that he was acquainted with the LORD let alone was HIS disciple. (see Mark 14:66-72)

A couple of months later we behold this same Peter standing before a crowd of thousands in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost, boldly and without equivocation, declaring the same Gospel which HIS LORD had preached. How can this be explained? The teachers of natural religion would tell us that Peter simply decided to change his life and preach. They would point out how he was a naturally strong-willed individual who finally made up his mind to carry on the LORD’s ministry. They would remind us how much influence men can have upon others by their testimony.

Peter was indeed a man with a strong will, determination, and very bold. In fact, he demonstrated these characteristics when he pulled out a sword to defend the LORD in Gethsemane as the soldiers came to arrest HIM. He would have cut off Malchus’s head were it not that the LORD directed his blow to merely sever the man’s ear. We see the same “determination” at work in Peter before this incident when he boldly stated that he would follow the LORD even to the death. *“And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.” (Luke 22:33)*

I have no doubt that he “meant” every word. Yet Peter was not fully acquainted with his own weakness and wherein his STRENGTH was, but the LORD was “FAITHFUL” to him, and would not leave him in his own delusion and pride. HE plainly told Peter what he was going to do, yet Peter was certain that HE was wrong. *“And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.” (Luke 22:34)* Yet even before HE prophesied Peter’s denial, HE had already supplied the remedy. The truth of the matter was not in Peter’s determination and will, but in the LORD’s gracious work in Peter’s behalf. *“And the Lord said,*

*Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke 22:31-32) A man who does not understand that FAITH is the GIFT of GOD might argue that Peter’s faith did indeed fail. Yet HE who has loved HIS people with an everlasting love has also determined to supply the FAITH which never fails. It is not Peter’s faith, but Peter’s FAITH that cannot fail. The LORD alone “kept” Peter when Peter in his weakness denied the LORD.*

When the LORD spoke the “parable of the sower”, HE described the weakness and fickle nature of men and their religious “commitments”. All of the seed was sown by the same SOWER. HE sowed the seed (which HE said was the “word of the Kingdom”, i.e. the Gospel; see Mat.13:19) knowing that some would perish as it fell upon soil that was not prepared to receive it. HIS purpose was to have a crop that was fruitful and thus HE prepared the ground which HE called the “good ground” and in order to plant that crop, HE was willing to have some of the seed be unfruitful.

The only ground which brought forth fruit was that which HE had prepared to receive it. “*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*” (John 6:44) Some seed fell by the “*wayside*” and the birds quickly ate it. Multitudes pay no attention at all to the declaration of GOD’s word. It is, to them, as mere noise which they have no consideration of. Some fell on “*stony ground*” but quickly withered almost as soon as it sprouted. These are those who are moved in their flesh, perhaps even “persuaded” by skillful orators to “make a decision, go to the altar, sign a card, etc”, yet as quickly as they were “persuaded” they fell away, since they had no ROOT. Then there was that seed which fell “*among thorns.*” These comprise the majority of those who “profess faith”, are baptized, and even “join a church.” Yet the cares of this world are to them more important than those things which they profess to believe and they are soon overcome by the world and choked out.

That seed which fell on the “good ground” took ROOT, sprouted, and produced fruit, not because of the “nature” of the ground but because of the prior preparation of it by HIM who is the HUSBANDMAN (i.e.; farmer) and the SOWER. “*For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.*” (Isa 55:10-11) CHRIST is the KEEPER of HIS elect and shall lose none which were given to HIM. (see John 17:12; 18:9) “*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*” (Eph 1:11)

The FATHER has made this promise to HIS SON. “*He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The LORD is thy keeper: the LORD is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The LORD shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The LORD shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.*” (Psa 121:3-8) If CHRIST is kept by HIM who neither “slumbers nor sleeps”, then HE will surely “keep” those who are “*in HIM*”, according to HIS eternal purpose.

Peter would surely have been destroyed were it not that CHRIST kept HIM from falling. We see the same as we view Saul of Tarsus holding the coats of those that stoned Stephen to death and headed to Damascus with letters of reprisal against the followers of CHRIST. Yet the LORD met HIM in his journey and “kept” him from ruin. The thieves on the crosses flanking the LORD both mocked HIM, and yet one of them was “kept” from destruction, by the grace of our LORD whose prayer in Gethsemane was answered. “*And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.*” (John 17:11)

The “keeping” of the LORD’s people is made certain by two things. One is that HE has decreed that HE would “keep” them from falling and HIS will shall be done. The other is that HE has purchased their redemption by the offering of HIS own body and blood upon the cross of Calvary. HE does presently intercede in their behalf by HIS presence at the throne of GOD. If HE is for them, who can be against them? HE is their KEEPER and they shall never perish. mam