

# 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*

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## THE HARMONY OF JUSTICE AND MERCY

*Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him; that glory may dwell in our land. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven.*

*Psalm 85:9-11*

The LORD gave the Law to Moses, shrouded in secrecy with fire and smoke, in order to show to men the high and lofty nature of that Law. Anyone surveying that scene would rightly be struck with fear and trembling. Everything which the Law demanded was contrary to the natural bent of men and was not intended to minister peace unto men but to cause them to see their wickedness. Yet some have come along in later times thinking that the Law was given as a checklist for men to use in judging their relative righteousness.

The same ONE who gave this Law to Moses is also HE who in the fulness of time came into the earth in the likeness of sinful flesh to demonstrate complete adherence to that law. This was a "mystery" which was kept hidden from the beginning. Yet now HE has declared HIMSELF, with power to be the FULFILLMENT of that Law in its every jot and tittle. Rather than this declaration being hidden in clouds of fire and smoke, HE has openly walked among men as an obedient SON.

CHRIST is the SALVATION of those that fear HIM. For them HE came into the world, was tempted (i.e.; tried) in all points like as they, and has completely fulfilled every jot and tittle of that Law which could do nothing but condemn those who had broken its precepts. John sets forth the stark contrast between that Law which was given to Moses and that TRUTH which was ushered in by JESUS CHRIST. "*For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*" (John 1:17)

The Law which was given to Moses was indeed "true", but that work which was brought in by JESUS CHRIST was "THE TRUTH". A man might learn many things about himself by the trueness of the law, but it is only by "THE TRUTH" that a man might become acquainted with the kingdom of GOD. Before any Law was given to Moses, the promise had already been made to CHRIST. "*Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.*" (Gal 3:16-17)

The Jews assumed (as do many today) that GOD's promise to Abraham was a blanket promise to all who sprang from the loins of Abraham. Yet the scripture clearly states that the promise was given to the "SEED" of Abraham, which is CHRIST. Thus, it is plain that the giving of this promise is the single most important covenant which exists in the kingdom of GOD. It is according to the promise of this covenant that all of the blessings which are given to CHRIST are found to be equally shared by those who are "in CHRIST". "*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.*" (Rom 8:16-17) We presently enjoy the benefits of all that CHRIST possesses. Thus, we can say with the Psalmist, "*glory dwells in our land*". It is in HIM that we find the SOURCE of all of our JOY. And the HOPE of an even greater manifestation of that JOY when we are enabled to see HIM "face to face".

Mercy is the sovereign prerogative of HIM who has said, *"I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."* Men have no claim upon it, nor any reason rising from within themselves to expect that HE should show mercy to them. Yet the glorious revelation of JESUS CHRIST, discloses to men, the great willingness of GOD to show mercy. This was that glorious and comforting message given to the Shepherds, *"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."* (Luke 2:10-14) This is a picture of that which the Psalmist describes, *"Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."*

The Psalmist then says, *"Truth shall spring out of the earth; and righteousness shall look down from heaven."* Can there be any more graphic and suitable imagery set forth to describe HIM who "sprang" from the loins of HIS mother, all the while under the watchful gaze of HIS heavenly father. CHRIST came on a mission not to do away with the Law, but to satisfy its every claim, which might present itself against the sons of GOD in the courts of heaven. Paul declares as much, *"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Rom 8:31-39)

To the thinking of natural men, justice and mercy cannot coexist. Men might from time to time suspend justice in order to show mercy. Out of this notion arises the thought that GOD will weigh the "good" of men, over against their evil and in some measure seek a modification. This is what they generally consider when they think of "mercy". Yet GOD is perfect in all of HIS ways and will not at all acquit the wicked nor by any means clear the guilty. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. There are no modifications attached to that judgment and its swift recompense of justice. When the woman was taken in adultery, many believe that the LORD ignored her crimes and due to the fact that she was no worse than the man involved; HE let her off the hook. Yet the reality is that HE forgave her, because HE became sin for her, and took upon HIMSELF all of her crimes. It was impossible that any man could condemn her whom the LORD made clean.

The Pharisees hated this "revelation", when HE forgave the sins of the man with the palsy. *"And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."* (Mat 9:2-6)

This harmony of justice and mercy exists no where in Heaven or Earth, except in JESUS CHRIST. *"For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."* (Rom 5:6-9) mam