

# 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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## OUR DEATH

*"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." Hosea 13:14*

The LORD's creation of man is described quite differently than HIS creation of all other living creatures. HE made man to have dominion over all of that creation. The world was made for his benefit, thus subservient to him and he the ruler over it, in the same fashion as GOD is the RULER of the Universe. *"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*" (Gen 1:26-28)*

A close look at man being made *"in the image of GOD"* gives us no indication of any "noble," or spiritual aspect to his creation, but rather the position that he was given in the Earth as its natural ruler. Some have sought to make this "image" to be more than the scripture speaks of. Especially those who are determined to make man in his "free will" to be a sovereign or to possess some innate desire to honor his CREATOR. Some liken this "being made in HIS image" to his supposed "creativity", never pausing to consider that man has never had an original thought, much less ever "created" anything. *"O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." (Jer 10:23) "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD." (Prov 16:1) "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun." (Eccl 1:9)*

So, we understand that man was created with a complete dependency upon the ONE who made him from the dust of the Earth and has no life apart from that which is bestowed by HIM. *"And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen 2:7)* It is interesting to consider that the scripture does not speak of man as having been given a "soul", but rather that he is a "soul." (i.e.; a living creature) There is no "part" of man which is immortal apart from being given immortality by the same ONE who created him. He possesses no "moral compass" nor desire for HIS CREATOR's glory, apart from such being granted to him by that same CREATOR. He is completely and utterly reliant upon the LORD to sustain him. *"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (i.e.; the breath) shall return unto God who gave it." (Ecc 12:7)*

The same ONE who gives LIFE is HE who also administers death according to HIS good pleasure. *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." (Deut 32:39) "The LORD killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up." (1Sam 2:6) "He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death." (Psa 68:20)* Thus we see that death was instituted by GOD and was not brought about in opposition to HIS purpose for man's creation, but rather as a means whereby HE might be glorified in life as well as death.

HE introduced the concept of death to Adam when HE apprised Adam of what he would do in disobedience to HIS command. *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* (Gen 2:16-17) We take note that the LORD did not say “if” you eat of it but rather “*in the day that thou eatest*”. Some say that Adam was on “probation” and the LORD was waiting to see what he would do, yet it seems quite obvious that he fulfilled the sovereign purpose of GOD in bringing death and destruction upon himself and his posterity and was quite satisfied in the process. *“Because that, when they knew God, (i.e.; they could plainly see HIS handiwork) they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”* (Rom 1:21-22) Adam’s children have gladly followed in his footsteps.

Death is the common denominator among men, rich or poor, wise or ignorant, young or old, male or female, all are progressing towards the grave without any remedy. *“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”* (Heb 9:27) While this is true and most will recognize the reality of this appointment, yet it is almost universally true that men expect the death of others more than their own. As the poet Edward Young wrote in 1742, “All men think all men mortal but themselves.” This is especially the case with the man who dwells in spiritual darkness as Solomon wrote, *“A prudent man (i.e.; an awakened man; see Eph.2:1) foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished.”* (Prov 22:3)

The awakened sons of GOD (“*ye must be born again*”) can see most clearly their fallibility, mortality, and weakness, and while they might not welcome the prospect of dying, yet the thought of departing from these mortal bodies holds no morbid fear for them. For they are given a HOPE which looks beyond that passing, to the prospect of immortality because of HIM who has died in their behalf and removed the sting of death by HIS satisfaction of the Law and the cancellation of their debt of sin which does daily so easily beset them. *“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (1Cor 15:53-57)

The MAN CHRIST JESUS has tasted the same death that all men must face, yet HE has made HIMSELF the SUBSTITUTE for HIS elect children whom HE has loved from the beginning. HE has poured out HIS soul unto death for them in the Garden and laid down HIS LIFE for them in order to obtain eternal redemption for them. Thus, HE is our death, dying for us that we might live in HIM.

The MAN CHRIST JESUS has triumphed over the very death which HE has ordained. In HIS death, HE has led captivity captive, and arising from the tomb on the third day has manifested HIS utter victory over that sentence of death which has hung upon the heads of HIS elect due to their ancestor, Adam. *“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: --- For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.”* (Rom 5:12,15) Thus HE is our death, a triumphant SAVIOR.

The MAN CHRIST JESUS has destroyed the power of death for HIS children. *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* (Heb 2:14-15) The devil is not spoken of as having the “ability” to cause death, but rather was given the “power of death”, according to the purpose of GOD. He exhibited this power when he deceived Eve and tempted Adam, bringing great bondage upon them. He presently is about that same work, yet he has no power to bring the sons of GOD into death. Thus, we read of Peter’s exhortation to the sons of GOD, *“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”* (1Pet 5:8) The LORD told Peter, that Satan desired to sift him as wheat, yet the LORD stayed his hand, and he could bring no destruction to Peter. *“When I tread the verge of Jordan, Bid my anxious fears subside; Death of deaths, and hell’s Destruction, Land me safe on Canaan’s side; Songs of praises, I will ever give to thee.”* (#462 Gadsby’s Hymns) mam