

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

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Romans 4:13

If we listen to the vast majority of those who teach on "faith" today in both the "religious world" and the "secular", one would come to the conclusion that "faith" is an activity which can be both produced and stirred up by the natural ability of men. The religious scam artists who have mesmerized whole segments of the so called "christian" community, with their health and wealth teachings, depend wholeheartedly on their ability to convince men to "have faith", "sow seeds of faith", and "keep the faith."

There is probably no greater deception that has ever been foisted upon men, (outside of Satan's lie to Eve, "ye shall not surely die"), that this one which teaches men to trust in their faith. To know how big a lie this is one only has to go to the scripture record which plainly says, "As it is written, *There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*" (Rom 3:10-12) Whatever man may be capable of, we are quite certain that he does not naturally possess the ability to have the faith which is described in the scripture thusly: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." (Heb 11:6)

When asked about the reason for their failure to cast out devils the LORD told HIS disciples, "Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." (Mat 17:20) Many try to use this passage to show men what they can do if they will "just have faith", yet clearly the LORD is teaching HIS disciples the fact that they have no faith. Even as HE instructed them when HE said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5)

The whole teaching about "faith" in the scriptures is summed up in the description of the faith of Abraham. Abraham did not conditionally receive the promise of GOD because he believed what GOD said. Rather the promise was given to Abraham according to the sovereign purpose and mercy of GOD, and Abraham was then given faith to lay hold upon it and rejoice in its revelation. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph 2:8-10)

That "faith" which is spoken of as "righteousness" is built and contained in the "object" of the faith and not the "act" of faith. The fact that Abraham exercised faith is of no importance at all if the "object" of his faith was not the "promises of GOD.". In fact the scripture even plainly tells us that the promises which Abraham enjoyed were not even given to HIM directly but rather, *"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."* (Gal 3:16)

All of the benefits of the sons of GOD are wrapped up in JESUS CHRIST. HE is our FAITH (see Gal.2:20), HE is our HOPE (see I Tim.1:1), HE is our RIGHTEOUSNESS, WISDOM, SANCTIFICATION, and REDEMPTION (see I Cor.1:30), HE is our LIFE (see Col.3:4), succinctly put HE is our ALL, "but Christ is all, and in all." (Col 3:11) So it is clearly revealed in the scriptures that the "righteousness of faith" is not the act of faith but rather the ONE who is RIGHTEOUS before GOD and who gives "faith" to those who are the objects of HIS favor and delight.

GOD is pleased to manifest HIS elect children in the earth by causing them to flee to HIM for refuge. HE said *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* (John 10:27-28) HE said this in contrast to those who believed not and HE gave the reason for their unbelief, *"Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you."* (John 10:24-26)

The "righteousness of faith" is here contrasted with the "works of the law". Sadly many have taken the faith whereby the sons of GOD are made manifest in the world through belief of the gospel, (see II Thes.2:13) and turned it into a "work of the flesh" thereby negating the truth which the scriptures plainly reveal. They do this by telling men that they can "become the sons of GOD by believing". They often mean well but their message is nonetheless a deception and has populated the earth with a multitude of "stony ground" and "thorny ground" hearers. There are thousands of these (so called) "believers" who not only are convinced and satisfied with their own faith but go about to proselyte others into the same deception.

If a man can convince another man to "believe" then yet another can come along and overturn that "belief". Yet when the "righteousness of faith" is applied by the HOLY GHOST to a lost sinner, then nothing can turn him aside nor can he be destroyed by the sophistry and deceptions of the world and Satan. (see Mark 13:22) This "righteousness of faith" is not of men and can in no wise be negated by men because "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.) (Phi 1:6)

Still others come along who say that they believe all that we have said. Yet they cling to the notion that while "faith is the gift of GOD" yet it is according to man's exercise of that faith which is given to him that the blessings of GOD are bestowed. They say that if a man has more faith he will have more blessings. If he is more obedient, he will gain more of GOD's favor. We must confess that we do not see any difference in this line of thought than that which is expressed by those who are confused about "faith" being the gift of GOD.

The blessings of GOD are manifested upon the sons of GOD based alone on HIS sovereign pleasure. Any and all of their blessings are the result of that which has been purchased for them and is theirs according as GOD has dealt to every man the measure of faith. Because some are blessed (as men see it) in this life more than others is simply due to the mercies of GOD. But none of the sons of GOD are without blessing from the same source from which all of their blessings flow nor is one greater in the kingdom as a result. (see Mat.20:1-16)