

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

CHOSEN, SET APART, AND CLEANSED

Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

I Peter 1:2

Peter addresses his epistle to the “strangers” who were in Greece, Turkey, and Asia in general. He calls them “strangers”; in part, because they were (for the most part) not natives of these lands but were scattered (see Acts 8:1) or dispersed there by various persecutions against believers, which had arisen in the early days of Acts. In a more important sense he calls them “strangers” because all of GOD’s children who are called to be the followers of CHRIST are “strangers and sojourners” in this present world, for we have here no continuing city and this world is not our home. The people of GOD are a peculiar lot, who don’t fit in very well with the inhabitants of this world and as righteous Lot in Sodom, are vexed daily with the wickedness which they see on every hand around them. They desire a deliverance from this “*present evil world.*”

They did not become strangers in the land in which they presently dwelt because they chose to be strangers in it, but rather because they were compelled to be. What fellowship hath light and darkness? The awakened sons of GOD are what they are by the grace of GOD, and do not find the world strange because they choose for it to be strange. The reality is that in their flesh they have an odd secret affinity for it. Yet they cannot embrace it because the SPIRIT of GOD dwells in them and works in them according to HIS good pleasure causing them to be like fish out of water. “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.*” (1John 2:15-17)

Generally speaking; the sons of GOD are a despised people in the earth. Even as Cain slew Abel, and Ishmael despised Isaac, so do the sons of the bondwoman continue their persecution of those who are the sons of the free born wife. This is primarily because they hate CHRIST. Even those who pay lip service to being the followers of the “Christian religion” will manifest their own disdain for the true gospel when it is declared. As long as these religionists are undisturbed in their worship of “free will” they will own CHRIST as a quasi-King.

Yet when the axe is laid to the root of this many branched tree of free will and duty faith, as the sovereign electing grace of a HOLY GOD is declared; they will often rise up and seek to rend those who declare salvation to be by grace “alone” apart from all human endeavor. All men, without exception, will seek something to glory in. Those who are delivered by the HOLY GHOST can find no place to glory except in JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified.

Peter says that these same “strangers” to which he addresses his letter are “elect” or “chosen”. Most nominal believers will acknowledge that the scripture does speak of an “elect” people. Yet they will derive many explanations of the use of the term in order to avoid the clear and direct truth of the fact that GOD has chosen and ordained some unto salvation while ordaining some

unto destruction. Most preachers spend more time explaining why “elect” doesn’t really mean unconditionally chosen than they do in rejoicing in the fact that apart from this “election”, none would be saved. The election of a people in CHRIST is a glorious revelation of the mercy and grace of GOD who resides under no obligations to any and the whole scheme of redemption is a testament to HIS magnificent purpose to manifest HIS everlasting love to those HE has hid in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world.

Peter says that these “*strangers*” were elect according to the “*foreknowledge*” of the FATHER. The “*explainers*” tell us that “*foreknowledge*” means that GOD is like a celestial fortune teller and really left the choice up to man and merely based HIS choice of them on their choice of HIM. This is a grave error and overturns the truth of election making it subject to the freewill of man rather than the sovereignty of GOD.

The foreknowledge of the FATHER is not about prescience (or knowing something before hand) but rather is a description of the fact that GOD chose HIS people because HE loved them with an everlasting love. We have no way to describe the beginning of that love, except to say that it was before the foundation of the world and is the basis of their election. HIS choice of them was not some arbitrary whim but rather based upon HIS love for them from the beginning. “*As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.*” (Rom 9:13)

Peter goes on to say that their election which is on the account of the everlasting love of the FATHER for them is made manifest as they are “*sanctified*” or separated and set apart from the citizenry of this world by the SPIRIT of GOD. It is this sanctifying SPIRIT that puts a difference between the precious and the vile. “*So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*” (Rom 8:8-10)

Some would corrupt the scriptural doctrine of sanctification and make this separating work to be a progressive work wherein the children of GOD are made more righteous over the course of time. The only righteousness which the sons of GOD possess is that which is imputed to them by the righteousness of CHRIST. They are made righteous in the sight of the FATHER by it. As long as they live in this world of sin and sorrow their flesh shall be plagued with the corruption of it only to be released from it in the day of the resurrection.

Peter says that the elect are sanctified “*unto*” (which is a Greek word meaning reaching ones destination) the obedience and cleansing of the blood of JESUS CHRIST. So I think we could paraphrase Peter’s statement like this. Those who are strangers in the earth are chosen of GOD because of HIS great love for them and set apart by the SPIRIT to be made righteous by the obedience of JESUS CHRIST and cleansed by HIS blood.

The obedience of the children of GOD is the obedience of JESUS CHRIST. For HE did undertake to perform all righteousness in their behalf and now they are obedient sons because HE has fulfilled all righteousness for them. “*For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*” (Gal 2:19-21)

Thanks be to my Head, the great King of kings, My life from the dead, the death of my sins;
Who took all my woes, and was made sin for me; Who died, and who rose, and from sin set me
His Spirit he sent, to soften my heart; The old veil to rend, and life to impart; free.)
To bring me from darkness to light in the Lord, And kill me to Moses, to sin, and the world.
Thus I, through the law, dead to the law am, Yet married am I to Jesus the Lamb!
This union is sealèd, all heaven’s agreed; From sin and from Moses I henceforth am freed.
My soul, then, rejoice; let Christ be thy song; With heart and with voice, with lip and with tongue,
Before men or angels, sing, Worthy’s the Lamb Of unceasing praises, for ever. Amen.