

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 PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS

Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

Revelation 14:12

When I was growing up, my mother used to have a little poem that she would delightedly recite whenever my father exhibited some annoyance with the amount of time being expended in some endeavor (usually getting ready to go somewhere). I can still hear her, in the back pages of my mind, reciting it with a certain amount of mock disdain and glee; "Patience is a virtue, possess it if you can, it's seldom in a woman and it's never in a man." She was right in her assessment that patience of this type is indeed contrary to the natural bent of both men and women.

Patience is, according to the scriptures, one of the hallmarks of true love, "*Charity suffereth long, and is kind*" (1Cor 13:4) It is also one of those "fruits of the SPIRIT" which we are exhorted to exercise, "*Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*" (1Thess 5:14-15)

The Greek word which is here (in I Cor.13:4) translated as "*suffereth long*" appears in the New Testament, ten times. It is translated as "*patience*" or "*patient*" seven times. So we get the gist of the literal meaning of this word as being kindly longsuffering or willing to wait with forbearance while avoiding annoyance with others with whom we are dealing.

As with most lessons taught in the scripture, there is a carnal application which is profitable in this world in a natural sense, but there is a greater application which can only be applied by the SPIRIT of GOD. We would not desire to disdain that natural lesson of learning patience in our carnal bodies, but we would more greatly desire to see that truth which is eternal made applicable to us as HE is pleased to work in us both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure.

John, here in the book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, speaks of the "*patience of the saints.*" It is interesting to note that the Greek word used here is different than the other word which we mentioned before as being translated "*patience*". This particular word means, "a cheerful or hopeful endurance." This Greek word appears thirty two times in the New Testament and is translated as "*patience*", thirty times.

One of the other times it is translated as "*patient continuance*" in Romans 2:7. "*To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life*" The other time it is translated as "*enduring*". "*And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.*" (2Cor 1:6)

While the first word, which is translated as patience, deals primarily with the trait of being longsuffering towards our fellow man (which is indeed a good and useful characteristic) this word which is used here in Revelation 14:12 is concerned with the exercise and manifestation of the gift of faith which is enduring and not easily laid aside.

The "patience of the saints", is that which rests in the finished work of CHRIST. This is that "patience" which surveys the work and perfections of CHRIST and is completely satisfied, therewith. That man who has this "patience" is seeking no other righteousness than that which is fully supplied in the person and work which CHRIST has performed in HIS substitutionary atonement, and in that which HE presently performs as HIGH PRIEST over the house of GOD. This is that "rest" (or patience) which is spoken of in the book of Hebrews. *"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."* (Heb 4:9-10) Therefore HE is our SABBATH; that true REST which no day of the week, time, nor season upon this earth could ever be.

The "patience of the saints" is that which is manifested as endurance in the face of trials and difficulty. *"Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."* (Rev 14:12) This "keeping" which is spoken of here does not specifically have reference to the saints as being "perfect law keepers". Rather it has reference to a holding on to the commandments (or teaching) of CHRIST which is the "faith of JESUS". They "keep it" because it is their only HOPE. The LORD said, *"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."* (Mat 10:22) If a man casts off "the faith of JESUS", upon what then would he have to stand. The endurance of the gift of faith, is insured by the GIVER of faith whom the scripture describes as *"able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,"* (Jude 1:24) This is of great comfort to that man who desires to be found faithful but sees in himself an evil heart of unbelief.

The "patience of the saints" is that which is "holding on to that which is precious." The Greek word used here for "keeping" is closely akin to the word which is translated "kept" in Luke 2:19; *"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."* She "kept" these sayings, and "pondered them" because they were highly prized and of great value. A man's regard to the gospel of CHRIST and the priority of it in his thinking is a testimony to the presence of the gift of faith. That man who only has a partial or divided interest in such matters proves himself to be devoid of this gift, not having received, *"the love of the truth, that they might be saved."* (2Th 2:10)

The "patience of the saints" is that which causes a man to desire to separate the precious from the vile. Those who have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof are said to be *"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."* (2Tim 3:7) They skirt around the truth and will not give GOD all of the glory in all things, which is, in essence, to deny HIS power. They are like the Pharisees whom the LORD upbraided saying, *"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life."* (John 5:39-40)

These impostors attribute a man's salvation to an act of his own free will rather than praising GOD for HIS sovereign grace. The saints on the other hand are "ever learning" and coming to the knowledge of the truth. They confess that they know nothing as they ought to know, but they are determined to magnify the glory of HIS grace and to separate themselves from those who deny HIS power. They own no other message than; *"JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified."*

The "patience of the saints" is the same in all ages, and in all circumstances. If one's view of prophecy brings forth another conclusion, then that view of prophecy is skewed. Of this we are certain, *"for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."* (Rev 19:10) CHRIST as the ruler of HIS Kingdom is the very substance of all prophecy, and all prophecy has its fulfillment in the manifestation of HIS glory.

This is true whether it was Abraham, who *"sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise"*, or Joseph, who *"when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones."* (Heb 11:22); or Paul saying *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."* (2Tim 1:12) They confessed that they looked for *"a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is GOD."* (Heb 11:9-10) *"This is the patience of the saints."* mam