

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 APOSTLE OF OUR PROFESSION

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 3:1

The leopard cannot change its spots nor can the Ethiopian change his skin. (see Jer.13:23) By the same token that which is unholy cannot become holy. Yet we here read of those whom the writer calls "holy brethren". All men without exception are sinners by nature and by choice and cannot depart from that which is theirs by that very nature. It is impossible for that which is profane to be "holy" except it have "holiness" conferred upon it by ONE who has that power.

We usually think of and use the term "holy" to describe something or someone who is pure, not having fault or sin of any kind. This is indeed an accurate description of "holiness" but it is not the entire meaning of the term. The Greek word which is translated here as "holy" occurs 229 times in the scriptures, and is the word used with "SPIRIT" or "GHOST" to describe the SPIRIT of GOD. While we are certain that HE is "pure", "untainted", and "without blemish" of any kind, yet the more complete consideration of how the scripture describes that which is "holy", is that which is "consecrated" or "set apart". This is most assuredly true in consideration of the fact that HE dwells in the light to which no man can approach, having never been seen by men.

This is the most common usage of the word when it is used to speak of those who are described as the "saints", the "brethren", or the "people of GOD." They are "sanctified" (i.e.; set apart, made a peculiar people) by the power and purpose of GOD before the world ever was. They are not "holy" because they have never sinned, but rather they are "holy" because they have been set apart from the rank and file of humanity as the elect of GOD, the appointed heirs of salvation. This is what Peter speaks of when he says. *"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."* (1Pet 2:9)

They are also called "holy" because CHRIST has come into the world as their SUBSTITUTE and has imputed HIS righteousness to them even as HE has taken their sin as HIS own. Thus they are seen in the eyes of the Law and before the tribunal of GOD as those who are without sin even as HE is without sin. *"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* (2Cor 5:21)

They are called "holy" because HE has sent HIS HOLY SPIRIT to dwell in them working in them both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. Paul confesses this work to be real when he said, *"So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God."* (Rom 7:25) *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* (Rom 8:2) *"Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."* (Rom 8:9)

They are called "holy" here, specifically, because they have been made *"partakers of the heavenly calling."* The LORD JESUS CHRIST knows them that are HIS and HE calls them each by name. *"he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."* (John 10:3) HE describes

them in John 6:37 when HE says, *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."*

The writer of this epistle to the Hebrews, is here specifically speaking to those (of fleshly descent from Jacob) who were given the privilege of "hearing HIS voice", or being "called". This is a supernatural work that is not influenced or controlled by anything which men can do or fail to do. Yet this is a work which is normally conducted through the preaching and hearing of the gospel. (see Rom 10:13-15) These Hebrews had heard that gospel and professed to believe it. Believing themselves to be numbered among those whom Peter described on the day of Pentecost. *"For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."* (Acts 2:39)

The true work of GOD in those whom HE has called is never devoid of the evidence which HIS SPIRIT is pleased to demonstrate in those whom HE is pleased to begin a work. *"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."* (Php 1:6) Yet nothing is more common among the religious folk of the world than claiming to begin to follow CHRIST only to fall away and walk no more with HIM when it becomes inconvenient or out of vogue.

There were many of those calling themselves Christians, among the Hebrews, who had turned back to embrace the way of Moses and their forefathers and it is this very error which the writer here addresses exhorting those who laid claim to having begun the journey as believers but were now turning back like a sow which was washed returns to the mire or a dog to his own vomit. The exhortations given in the scriptures to the sons of GOD are for the purpose of reminding them of the basis and power upon which they are made to stand. That man who is devoid of the work of the SPIRIT will not hear or heed these exhortations. Yet those who have been "given an ear to hear" are kept by the power of GOD as they are caused to heed that to which they are exhorted.

The writer here specifically exhorts these Hebrews (and all others who may read this) to remember the foundation upon which their hope as believers is built. Thus he says *"consider the APOSTLE"* of their profession. We read of twelve "apostles" in the scriptures which were appointed and empowered by the LORD with "foundational ministries" to establish the gospel in the earth. HE spoke directly to them of this "commission" just prior to HIS ascension saying *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* (Mat 28:19-20) Of course at that time there were only eleven of them present. Paul who is the twelfth apostle was later called and appointed *"as one born out of due time"*. (I Cor. 15:8)

Now as great, useful, and necessary as these appointed "foundational" offices were, they were but the second tier of the "foundation" of which JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF is the "CHIEF CORNERSTONE". (see Eph.2:20) In fact we read *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."* (1Cor 3:11) This is the exact line of reason which he uses to contrast the work and ministry of Moses to that of CHRIST. *"For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honour than the house. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God."* (Heb 3:3-4)

There are many in our day who would seek to do the same thing that Peter desired to do on the Mount of Transfiguration. When Peter saw the glory of the LORD and saw HIM in the company of Moses and Elijah, he wanted to build tabernacles for all three. So too there are those who would still seek to make the law of Moses an adjunct to the gospel. Yet the LORD spoke from heaven and told Peter, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* (Mat 17:5)

There is no other gospel, nor is there any other basis upon which the faith of GOD's called out sons is to rest than that which is spoken, manifested, and performed by JESUS CHRIST alone. HE alone is our "APOSTLE", the FOUNDATION upon which we stand, we look for no other and expect that HE has no rival or partners. *"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."* (Col 3:11) mam