

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

THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. Hebrews 6:9

There is no definitive proof that Paul is the author of this epistle to the Hebrews. There are certainly a great number of "scholars" who cast doubt upon his authorship of it. We do not claim to be able to prove that this epistle fell from Paul's mind and pen, but we are willing to press on in our relative ignorance with the opinion that he did write it. On one hand it does not really matter who the earthly author is, but a comparison of the message which is at the heart of this book, to Paul's other epistles seems to lend the greatest credence, that he is indeed the author of it.

Paul never strayed from the message of the crucified CHRIST's centrality to the gospel. He was indeed a champion of declaring that work which CHRIST performed as being the beginning and the end of the redemption of the LORD's people. There is no clearer statement, of this truth, found anywhere in the scriptures, than here in the epistle to the Hebrews "*Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb 9:12)* This is the end of all argument about what CHRIST did and the extent to which HE did it.

The book of Hebrews begins with an unequivocal statement of the finality of GOD's purpose in the sending of HIS only begotten SON. "*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb 1:1-3)* Paul wrote to the Colossians, "*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*" (Col 2:9) which is exactly what he said to the Hebrews, when he wrote, HE is "*the express image of HIS person."*

Though Paul was sent to the Gentiles, (see Gal.2:7) he, being a Jew, longed in his heart to see his kindred awakened to the TRUTH of JESUS CHRIST. "*Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*" (Rom 10:1) "*I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.*" (Rom 9:1-2) If he desired that his kindred after the flesh be saved, how much more was he moved to exhort those who were his kinsmen both in the flesh and the SPIRIT to steadfastly cling to that FAITH which they professed. (see Heb,10:33-39)

He often alluded to the Patriarchs and the history of GOD's dealing with Israel whenever he preached the gospel, as we see when he spoke at the Synagogue in Antioch (see Acts 13) and to King Agrippa (see Acts 26), yet he never failed to declare that CHRIST was the very basis of the HOPE of Israel. So he uses the example of all of those who died in FAITH (see Heb.11) in order to stir up his hearers to hold on to that TRUTH which is the very SUBSTANCE of their profession. He is not doubting their desire to be steadfast, yet his exhortation and his admonitions are strong nonetheless for as he said, "*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)

He identifies those to whom his words are addressed as those who will not turn aside from that confession which they have made. "*But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.*" (Heb 10:39) This is very much akin to what he wrote to the Thessalonians, "*For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord*

Jesus Christ.” (1Thess 5:9) “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.” (2Thess 2:13-15)

Much of Paul’s emphasis throughout his writings is the declaration of GOD’s sovereign choice of a people in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world. This is a much maligned and hated doctrine by the rank and file of those who profess to be the followers of CHRIST in the present day, but has in times past been a most widely recognized truth, even though never embraced by those who love the paths of religion and delight in the activity of fleshly traditions. Some think that it is possible for a man to move in and out of faith according to the whims of his flesh. This gives rise to the notion that a man can be saved and then lost, perhaps numerous times, according to his obedience, devotion, and faith.

Paul defines quite clearly that there is a demarcation between those that are “of the flesh” and those that are “of the SPIRIT”. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.” (Rom 8:5) This is that which the LORD told Nicodemus of when HE taught him the necessity of being born again (i.e.; born from above), “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:6-7) Paul went on to define this difference by using the natural birth of the Jews in contrast to those who are “Jews in truth.” “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”(Rom 2:28-29)

An equally grievous doctrine that is popular in some circles is often defined as “once saved, always saved.” Now this doctrine arises out of the basic truth of GOD’s preservation of HIS people, but it is an errant doctrine in the hands of those who teach that a man can obtain this salvation by an act of his free will, rather than the sovereign grace of GOD bestowing faith upon HIS elect. Thus we see many who bring forth no evidence of the operation of faith, nonetheless assured by the mud daubers (see Ezek.33:10) of their eternal bliss because they have made a “decision for CHRIST”, “let HIM into their hearts”, or been baptized and/or joined the church.

Another doctrine that is held by a few is that election merely has to do with those who shall enjoy eternity in heaven rather than an election which is known by calling and manifested in this present world. Paul declares that he is encouraged by the evidence which he sees in these believers among the Hebrews as he speaks of observing in them the “things that accompany salvation”. That man who has “none of these things”, has no basis upon which he could expect to wake up in heaven simply on the basis of election. The LORD knows them that are HIS and HE calls each one by name and they follow HIM. “Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom 8:30) So what are those things which “accompany salvation”?

Clearly the first is “FAITH”. “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Heb 11:1) This “faith” is not a feeling nor an act of the will; but is a gift bestowed by HIM who is its AUTHOR and FINISHER. It is impossible to separate “faith”, from its “BASIS”. Thus Paul says “If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard.” (Col 1:23) and repeats to the Hebrews, (see 10:22-23)

Then there is “HOPE.” “Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;(Heb 6:19) While the “faith of GOD’s elect” is based upon the evidence set forth in the Gospel. Their HOPE is the result of the SPIRIT’s calling “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal 4:6) “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” (Rom 8:24-25) This HOPE cannot be fully explained but it cannot be denied either.

Finally there is LOVE. “For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.” (Gal 5:6) Even as the LORD clearly declared, “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.” (John 13:35) “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2Pet 1:8)