

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

KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS

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

Revelation 14:12

Benjamin Franklin is usually credited with originating the idiom, "in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except **death and taxes**." Yet the likelihood is that the credit for the origin of this oft quoted phrase should go to an English author named Christopher Bullock who penned these words in 1716, "is impossible to be sure of anything but **Death and Taxes**." In fact, another Englishman, Daniel Defoe (the author of the famed novel, "Robinson Crusoe") had penned basically the same phrase ("Things as certain as **death and taxes**") in 1726, years before Franklin's quote which is taken from a letter which he wrote in 1789. Regardless of who the originator (humanly speaking) of the phrase may be, it does set forth a reality which all men, sooner or later, come to believe is true.

The scriptures do not speak of the certainty of taxes, per se, although the LORD did direct HIS disciples to pay a tax (see Mat.17:24-27) and silenced the Pharisee's with HIS wisdom in describing the money of this world and HIS order which HE has set in the Earth concerning earthly governments. (see Mat.22:17-22) Yet the scriptures do speak of many certainties, one of which is death and another the fact that all men shall be judged by the RULER of Heaven, Earth, and Hell. "*it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*" (Heb 9:27)

The Bible is a book of many "certainties", none of which can fail because HE who has created the Earth out of nothing has ordained all things to occur according to the good pleasure of HIS will. HE knows the end from the beginning because HE is the BEGINNING and the END, and does direct the particles of dust, which arise from the wheels of a car, in their particular orbits as surely as HE ordains the placement of the stars and planets in the universe, with each moving in its prescribed path and according to HIS schedule.

Therefore, it should come as no surprise to find that HE has ordained that those who are HIS children, shall both hear HIS word; "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." (John 10:27) and walk in it according to HIS purpose. "*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained* (i.e.; predestined, for those not of faint heart) *that we should walk in them.*" (Eph 2:10) Great folly is set forth by those who suppose that such things are left to chance or that it is possible that those, who are the called according to HIS purpose, should ultimately despise or disregard the truth and precepts which HE has given them. To believe that the promises of GOD are conditioned upon the activity of men, is to propose that men can overturn the purpose of HIM whose hand cannot be stayed nor any of HIS actions ever brought into question.

Thus, we read in the Book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, that the saints "*keep the commandments*" and "*the faith of JESUS.*" These are two of the certainties which can be discovered in the scriptures. John speaks of having seen 144,000 (saints) on Mount Sion (Zion) with the LORD JESUS. Upon their foreheads was written the FATHER's name. Many have speculated over the years of the significance of these 144,000. I make no claim of any startling

insight into who they are, but it seems to me that they are one and the same with those he mentions in chapter 7 which were 12,000 from each of the twelve tribes of Israel. I would conclude that they are representative of that church of CHRIST which HE has purchased with HIS own blood out of every kindred, tribe and tongue. (see Rev.7:9) As such they are the beginnings of that multitude which no man can number. For the gospel was first preached at Jerusalem and then in Judea and to the uttermost parts of the earth. *“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* (Rom 1:16)

All of these saints are recipients of the same grace that made them heirs of the redemptive work which CHRIST performed for them. The fruit of this redemptive work, wherein HE poured out HIS soul unto death in their behalf was to give unto them those gifts which HE bought with HIS own blood. *“But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”* (Eph 4:7-8) *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”* (Gal 5:22-24) Paul speaks of this work when he said, *“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)

The 144,000 are described as those who *“were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.”* (Rev 14:4-5) What a glorious place which the sons of GOD are brought by that which CHRIST has done. HE has sent HIS angels (i.e.; messengers) into the earth to declare the good news to sinners. *“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”* (Rev 14:6-7) *“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!”* (Isa 52:7)

We see two other messengers whose message is not received well, for they tell of the fall of Babylon, which we believe to denote the futility and barrenness of man's religion. Also the third messenger speaks (to deaf ears) of the destruction of those who will not worship CHRIST. All of this is the same message but it will not be heard by those ordained unto destruction who received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. *“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”* (2Cor 2:14-17)

“Here is the patience of the saints”. They are described as those who delight themselves in two things: *“keeping the commandments of GOD”* and the *“faith of JESUS.”* These two are inseparably linked. For where you find those who rejoice in the *“faith of JESUS”*, you will also find those who delight in the teachings of CHRIST. The legalists will always try to bring the saints back under the law of Moses, yet the yoke of CHRIST is easy (i.e.; does not chafe) and HIS burden is light, for HE is the BEARER of the load. What HE requires, HE does also provide the power to perform. HE does work in HIS people both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. HIS commandments therefore are not grievous, for against such as HE is pleased to do in them, there is no law. *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”* (Gal 5:22-23) mam