

GRACE GAZETTE

Volume XVIII

Issue 19

Published occasionally for Zion's mourners

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 APPREHENDED, AND THE APPREHENDER

Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. *Philippians 3:12-14*

While the work of GOD in the behalf of the sons of GOD is in large part hidden from the view of the natural man, the work of GOD in the sons of GOD is made more openly manifest. We see this illustrated when Peter and John were taken before the Sandhedrin, and bore witness of the work of CHRIST in healing the lame man at the temple gate. *“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.”* (Acts 4:13)

The Pharisees and Sadducees had no understanding of the power of CHRIST to heal this man (*“The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”* (John 3:8)), yet they could plainly see the result of the work of CHRIST in the disciples *“who had been with JESUS.”* In their darkened minds they would not give glory to GOD in their observation but they could not escape the fact that something marvelous had taken place to cause these uneducated fishermen to set forth an argument which they could not answer.

The predestined purpose of GOD to redeem a people which HE chose in CHRIST from before the foundation of the world does not have its complete fulfillment in simply delivering them from the condemnation of the law and its resulting penalty. We rejoice that HE did indeed accomplish this very objective as HE became sin for them and they, in turn, were made the RIGHTEOUSNESS of GOD in HIM. Yet we read in the scriptures that HE had a more complete deliverance of them as HIS goal, which HE does not fail to perform.

Paul sets forth a “manifesto” of the complete work of CHRIST in the fulfillment of HIS purpose, in his letter to the Ephesians. Here he points out the very state of nature in which each of the sons of GOD did abide and the miracle of deliverance which HE performed in them by the quickening (life-giving) operation of the HOLY GHOST. *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* (Eph 2:4-10) This is not an optional scenario which may or may not come to pass but is just as certain as the decree which HE made in choosing a people in CHRIST

from before the foundation of the world. The end for which HE has redeemed and indwelt this people must come to pass.

Paul describes to us this very situation when he speaks of being “*apprehended*” by CHRIST. There was a purpose for which he was “*apprehended*”, rather than some random happenstance or response to some general call sent out without a specific purpose in mind. The English word(s) “*apprehend*” and “*apprehended*” appear only five times in the NT of the KJV. Twice they have reference to a physical arrest or being taken into custody, (see Acts 12:4; II Cor.11:32) and the other three times here in Philippians. The Greek word which is translated here in Philippians as “*apprehend; apprehended*” appears a total of fifteen times in the NT, but is elsewhere translated as other English words.

In Mark 9:18 it is used to describe the demon possession of a young boy; “*And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him*”. In John 1:5 it is used to describe the inability of men by nature to see the glory of CHRIST, “*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*” In John 8:3,4 we see it used of the “*woman taken in adultery*”. In John 12:35 the LORD admonished HIS disciples to “*Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you.*” Then in Acts 4:13 we see it as the awareness of the Pharisees, “*Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled.*” Peter used the same word when he said, “*Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons*” (Acts 10:34) We see it as “*attained*” (Rom.9:30), as “*obtain*” (I Cor.9:24), as “*comprehend*” (Eph.3:18), and as “*overtake*” in I Thes.5:4.

So, we can clearly see that the Greek word means to “eagerly seize or possess” with a purpose in mind. Paul could speak of his own literal “apprehension” as he was “arrested” on the road to Damascus and was completely disabled from his ability to pursue that which he zealously lived for as a “Pharisee of the Pharisees”. The LORD of Glory, whom he met in person on that day, had a greater design and purpose for him, than he could ever have imagined. Even the most ardent proponent of man’s (supposed) sovereign “free will”, will have to agree that the LORD “violated” Paul’s (nee Saul) free will that day. He had no choice but to follow CHRIST. For he surely was “*made willing in the day of the LORD’s power.*”

Few of the LORD’s people ever encounter as dramatic an event in their conversion as that which Paul experienced, yet the purpose behind each one who is called to be a follower of CHRIST is exactly the same. That HE might be glorified and reveal HIS SON in them. To this end they are “*apprehended*” by CHRIST even as Paul. One of the evidences that a man has indeed been “*apprehended*” by CHRIST, is seen in Paul’s admission that he, himself, had not yet fully gained that for which he was “*apprehended*”.

That man who believes he has arrived at some pinnacle is a stranger to the grace which reminds the sons of Adam, of how far they are from that STANDARD which CHRIST has called them to. If a man considers that he measures up to that STANDARD, he has not been taught of the glory of CHRIST, nor of his own innate depravity. We know nothing as we ought to know, nor have we even striven to gain the fulness of CHRIST in any fashion wherein we may glory. We have nothing at all that we have not received.

We cannot rightly discuss any desire we might have to “*apprehend*” the calling which we have been given, apart from clearly expressing our total reliance upon HIM who is our “*APPREHENDER*” who is faithful to call us, arrest us, and then to keep us from falling. HE is our PERFORMER in all things, working in us both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure. HE is the AUTHOR of all of our desire to reach forth and press to the mark for the PRIZE of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. HE will do that which HE has purposed, and we are the recipients of HIS mercy which daily surrounds us and binds us to HIM with cords of love which cannot be broken. How else could we possibly pay heed to the exhortations which we are given to “*strive to enter in at the STRAIT GATE.*” “*Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.*” (Heb 3:1) mam