

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

KEPT

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

1 Peter 1:5

In the religious tradition in which I was raised there was one doctrine which seemed to be emphasized more than any other. While “bringing all the tithes into the storehouse” was indeed part and parcel of nearly every message, this particular doctrine of which I speak stood head and shoulders above even that, and formed the basis, upon which, every man’s salvation ultimately rested. That “foundational” truth was articulated as “once saved, always saved”.

The way it was presented was this: JESUS CHRIST died, to give every man the possibility of being saved. All that any man had to do to take advantage of that which CHRIST had provided was to take HIM up on HIS “offer” of salvation by making a “decision” to accept CHRIST as his “personal SAVIOR” and thereby be assured of eternal life. Because once that transaction was made, a man was eternally saved and could then never perish, regardless of what else he might do or not do; even if he denied the faith which he once professed. He was in, his ticket to heaven was punched and nothing could take it away from him. He then had “eternal security.”

Akin to, nearly, every other “false doctrine”, this concept is extremely close to the truth, while in reality missing the mark and giving multitudes of spurious professors a false sense of peace and security while serving to plunge these religious captives into an even darker abyss.

The error in this instruction, as it was propagated at the time (and still is today), was not in the teaching that the LORD keeps those whom HE saves and none shall perish. For the scriptures are abundantly clear, that HE will keep HIS people from falling and will reject none who seek HIM. *“Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,” (Jude 1:24) “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:27-28) “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” (John 6:37)*

Rather, the error lies in teaching that salvation is some sort of covenant or agreement which a man has the power to accept or reject according to the whim of his own free will. This teaching has perverted the preaching of the gospel and turned it into a cooperative and collaborative effort between GOD and man to bring the man’s salvation to pass, rather than the gospel being (as the scriptures plainly teach) the declaration of that redemption which CHRIST has both purchased and applied to those who are the objects of HIS grace and mercy.

Peter clearly declares the sum total of the salvation of CHRIST’s elect bride as he defines those who are **“kept”**. This word which is translated into English as “kept”, literally means “to be a watcher in advance; to set a guard or sentinel over.” In verse 2 of chapter 1 he describes those who are “kept”; as the *“Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.” (1Pet 1:2)* This “foreknowledge” is that of which Paul speaks saying, *“Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.” (2Tim 2:19)*

How long the LORD has “known” them is revealed in Paul’s letter to Timothy, *“Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”* (2Tim 1:9) The LORD doesn’t “know them” because of something they have done or that HE foresaw they would do, but rather they are caused to believe because HE knows them, because they belong to HIM.

The determination of GOD to “keep” those that are HIS is revealed to be HIS determined purpose in the sending of CHRIST into the world to *“save HIS people from their sins.”* (Mat.1:21) Thus we see this set forth in HIS prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, *“As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do”*(John 17:2-4)

This determinate purpose is illustrated in the fulfilling of the Psalmist’s prophecy which was quoted by Satan as he tempted CHRIST *“For it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”* (Luke 4:10-11) As HE is “kept”, so are HIS children “kept” in HIM.

For, while this prophecy specifically refers to the preservation of CHRIST in HIS mission to fulfill the will of HIS FATHER, it also is applied to everyone of those which HE came to redeem. For they are hidden in HIM. *“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.”* (Col 3:3-4)

It is impossible that HE should lose any of those which are given to HIM, since HE is the faithful GUARDIAN or SHEPHERD of HIS flock. HE has specifically come into the world to secure their salvation by HIS life, death, and resurrection. HE does, also, manifest that same salvation to them by the gift of faith. *“I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.”* (John 10:14-16)

This “FAITH” is that which Peter clearly defines as the avenue through which the power of GOD is displayed to HIS children when he says that they *“are kept by the power of GOD, through faith”*. There is no other way in which the sons of GOD can be known or that they can know of this salvation apart from the application of FAITH which is the gift of GOD. We are justified by FAITH, not as an activity of the flesh, but by the revelation of CHRIST as the basis of that justification. In like fashion we are preserved by the same FAITH, which is the “POWER” of GOD.

This “FAITH” is synonymous with the “Salvation of the righteous”, (which is of the LORD according to the Psalmist; see Ps 37:9), since the sons of GOD are “saved by FAITH”. Since we are told that this “FAITH” is the avenue by which the LORD “keeps” HIS children according to HIS unrivaled, power, then we must conclude that the “FAITH” of GOD’s people is CHRIST HIMSELF. We look for no other, and will not rest in any but HIM.

Then Peter goes on to say that the saints are *“kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.”* The term “last time” (or last days) is sometimes used to denote the present age as we see in both Hebrews 1:2 and in I John 2:18 and it certainly would not be a complete error to consider that the SALVATION of GOD is indeed revealed in the present age, or currently. For CHRIST does visit HIS people and bestow upon them the knowledge (or revelation) of their SALVATION in HIM, and no other.

Yet I believe it proper and in context with the whole chapter which Peter writes, that he is referring to a future time, the end of days, or the appearing of CHRIST at the last trump. This “appearing” is certainly longed for and expected by those who are born again by the SPIRIT of GOD. Then it must be true that every one for whom the SALVATION which CHRIST procured in HIS perfect and finished work of REDEMPTION, must be preserved in that SALVATION until that very day, neither can any one of them perish in the mean time. Thus HE has indeed set HIS watch over them and does guard them lest one hair of their heads should perish. They are “kept by HIS POWER”, which in fact, shall be manifested in that day. mam