

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 FAMILY PATRIARCH

Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. John 8:42-43

One would be hard pressed to prove (from the Scriptures) that the LORD does not have a people in the earth which HE is pleased to call HIS own. It is likely that very few people would disagree with this premise. There are many who say that every man on earth has GOD as his father. Others would disagree while saying, only those who choose to follow HIM can rightly call HIM, FATHER. Others would say that being able to call HIM FATHER requires obedience to HIS laws and various precepts. There are two things in common with these views. One is the belief that man deserves to occupy such a place simply because he has been created by the LORD. The second is that men can do something to earn this privilege or to enhance the closeness of the relationship through the efforts of his free will. It is very difficult for men to abandon either notion.

The LORD confronted the Pharisees on more than one occasion about the folly and error of considering that men could call GOD their FATHER, either, through their efforts in keeping the law or by their natural birth as of the carnal seed of Abraham. It would actually be easier to support the idea that the Jews are the sons of GOD by the sovereign choice, made by GOD, of their father, Abraham and his descendants, than it is to contend that any natural man could gain this sonship through obedience to the law in any degree or the activity of free-will faith. To offend in one point of the law is to be guilty of breaking the whole law, and the scriptures are quite plain that "all have sinned". How can the natural man, stir up faith in himself when the scriptures deny such a possibility? *"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."* (Rom 3:11) So that leaves man in a great dilemma from which he cannot escape.

So, it is quite impossible to, scripturally, consider that any man could gain this relationship by the efforts and desires of his flesh, since the thoughts and intents of the heart of man is only evil continually. It would be easier for a man to add one cubit to his height than that HE could gain the privilege of calling GOD, his FATHER through any action or thought in his flesh.

Thus, we are left with only two possibilities. One is that all men have HIM as their FATHER by virtue of HIS creation of them. The other is that some are created as the sons of GOD and chosen in CHRIST to enjoy that relationship by HIS free and sovereign election before the foundation of the world. CHRIST destroys the first option as HE plainly tells the Pharisees that they are of *"their father, the devil"*. This is the plain truth spoken by the PROPHET of GOD.

Now HE could have meant that they alone were of this parentage. Yet the abundance of the scriptures would indicate that HE had reference to the fact that they were among a greater multitude of those known as the "reprobate" in contrast to those who are the "elect" of GOD. *"Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he*

may give it you.” (John 15:16) “As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” (Rom 9:13) “Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them.” (Jer 6:30)

If anyone can read these words and not tremble, then that man has no fear of GOD, nor any evidence of actually being one of those who have the privilege bestowed upon them of being a child of GOD. Others may enjoy spending time reveling in the underlying theories and doctrines concerning this situation, but those who have been given a desire to be the children of GOD, by faith in JESUS CHRIST, can but cast themselves upon HIS mercy, and wait as a leper before HIM desiring to be healed. They desire to be identified with HIM to the exclusion of all others. Such is the disposition of those who are the awakened sons of GOD.

The Pharisees became angry when HE properly identified their family tree, and they proved their parentage by their rejection of HIM. HE plainly said that if they were the sons of GOD then they would recognize HIM as being from GOD. Peter declared this confession of everyone of those who have GOD for their FATHER when HE said, *“Lord, --- thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” (John 6:68-69)* This is the very proof of sonship and the evidence of that standing. Can anyone doubt the sonship of that Ethiopian eunuch who confessed, *“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” (Acts 8:37)* And was he not gladly baptized in water as a testimony to that confession?

The Pharisees on the other hand could not and would not hear HIM. Thus, HE identified them for what they are. *“Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. 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. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.” (John 10:25-30)*

This is a doctrine that is dogmatically clear in the scriptures, there are no nuanced meanings that can be associated with what HE taught here. Both the cause and effect of true faith and the cause and effect of unbelief are set forth in plain language. The only argument that men can bring forth against this humbling truth, is that of a rejection of HIM who spoke it. *“And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.” (2Thes 2:10) “For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1Cor 4:7)*

When a man is taught this doctrine by the guiding hand of the SPIRIT of GOD and has it applied to his heart and soul by the SAME, he cannot be lifted up with pride. Rather he, who knows himself to be a sinner, is humbled in the dust at a consideration that he could possibly be called a child of GOD, having GOD as HIS FATHER. *“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)*

GOD is the FATHER of those whom HE has created and chosen in CHRIST and not those who simply think that HE is their father because of any action they have taken or some consideration that they deserve this honor. Ungodly men will rail against this TRUTH because they have not received a love of the TRUTH, and often will confess that if those things which we have spoken are true then they desire no part in it. This is the exact mindset of the Pharisees who went about to kill HIM.

Those who have GOD for their FATHER will tremble before HIM who is a CONSUMING FIRE. Those who have GOD for their FATHER will believe that CHRIST is the RIGHTEOUSNESS of GOD, apart from which they shall perish. Those who have GOD for their FATHER will take delight in HIS law and meditate therein and will love HIM, whom HE hath sent. mam