

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

PARTAKERS

Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Hebrews 3:1

In some Middle Eastern cultures, it is common to see families sharing a meal together and all eating out of one bowl rather than serving up individual plates. Thus, each one “partakes” of this dish along with the others. This is a fair illustration of how the word “partakers” is used in the New Testament. Though there are twelve different Greek words (some in combination) which are translated into English as “partakers”, they all basically mean to share with one another.

The English word “partakers” appears in the New Testament, twenty-two times. In our text (Heb.3:1) the Greek word for “partakers”, literally means to be “a sharer, an associate, or a participant.” Another prominent Greek word which is translated as “partakers” is “koinoneo” (and its derivatives) which is also translated as “distributing” (see Rom 12:13), “communicate” (see Gal.6:6); “fellowship” (see I Cor.10:20); “companions” (see Heb.10:33); and “partners” (see Luke 5:10; Phm.1:17). So we can get the general picture that this “heavenly calling” of which the saints are made “partakers”, is that which each shares a common interest in along with the rest.

This “calling” is not one which is “shared” by all members of the human race, but, is a blessing bestowed upon some according to the sovereign determination and purpose of the GOD who is pleased to call HIS own sheep by name. “*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.*” (John 10:1-3) It seems clear that the LORD is here speaking of a “particular” calling rather than one which is general in nature.

Peter spoke of this “calling” on the day of Pentecost when he described those to whom the gospel was sent. “*For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*” (Acts 2:39) Paul speaks of the “specificity” of this “calling” when he writes to the Romans, “*we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. 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 8:28-30)

This “calling” is that which all of HIS elect children are made “partakers” of. They all share a common bond which sets them apart from the world even as the LORD told HIS disciples. “*If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*” (John 15:18-19) This common bond which the sons of GOD share with one another is, even, more importantly that which they share with CHRIST HIMSELF as Paul describes his desire to be one with CHRIST as he denounced all earthly ties and attainments.

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." (Php 3:7-11) The Greek word for "fellowship" here is "koinonia" which has its root in "koinoneo", which is translated as "partakers".

It has been revealed to the sons of GOD that they have an inheritance (i.e. a possession tied to HOPE) which does not fade away to which they are called and prepared by HIS SPIRIT who indwells them. *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* (Rom 8:14-17)

Thus, those who are "in CHRIST" are made to be "partakers with CHRIST" in all things. HE is touched with the feelings of our infirmities by HIS identification with those whom HE loves, and they are caused to remember HIS sufferings in their behalf as they recognize that HE has borne their griefs and carried their sorrows. Though this is a great delight to them as "sinners", yet they are made to mourn for HIS sorrow in their behalf and to worship at HIS footstool in repentance as they see HIM as their bleeding SUBSTITUTE.

The Kingdom of GOD is not made up of "free-lancers" who each go about to establish their own righteousness. Rather the sons of GOD are all made to share in the ONE RIGHTEOUSNESS which is necessary in order to enter into HIS presence. CHRIST is indeed the BREAD of LIFE and HIS children have all eaten of the same LOAF. *"For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."* (1Cor 10:17)

There is no "mixture" of those things which are profane and of this world with those which are from Heaven. *"Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."* (1Cor 10:21) If a man would feed upon CHRIST, he cannot "partake" of those things which emanate from darkness rather than LIGHT. This is the fellowship of the saints with CHRIST their LORD. This is that "COMMON SALVATION" in which all of the saints rest. *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."* (Tit 3:5-7) *"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."* (Eph 5:6-8)

The offence of the cross never ceases. The men of this world and the purveyors of this world's religion (i.e.; based upon the power of man's free will) will be ever set against the gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD. *"And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation."* (2Cor 1:7) Shall the sons of GOD shrink back from declaring and standing upon that gospel in the face of those who despise it? *"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."* (1Pet 4:13-14) We have no grounds upon which to glory except in that which CHRIST has made us "partakers" of. *"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."* (Col 1:12-14) mam