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NO.228

CASTING THE DECISIVE VOTE

PROPELLED BY FAITH

In his exhortation to those who have obtained like precious faith with us, Peter made this statement, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Pet.1:10-11)

Peter was talking to those who have been given the same precious faith. They were the ones with the same vision and calling in Christ. He had given them godly advice on their need to escape the corruption that is in the world and he told them that if they followed these guidelines they would never be barren or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He also noted that it is necessary to keep on walking according to these virtues lest we forget that we have been purged from our old sins and fall back into them. But now in verse ten, he expounds the teaching by something that must follow. In other words, it is good and necessary to walk with diligence and virtue but because we do this, WHERE-FORE THE RATHER, all the more, let us make our calling and election sure.

Paul speaks extensively of our calling and election in Christ for he knows that unless we are securely anchored in the knowledge of who Christ is in us and who we are in Him we could be on a slippery slope. We know that the plan and purposes of our God for His people and His creation have been ordained from the foundation of the world. Therefore the history of the people, as it is written in the Scriptures, is a sure example for us who have now come to the end of the age.

All who have been called of God, in whatever situation or generation, were moved by the Spirit to fulfill their calling. The Lord did not waste words, He simply told Abram, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee." (Gen.12:1)

God also gave him great promises that would be fulfilled after he set foot in the land that God had chosen for him. But first Abram had to get out and away from all that he was attached to and embark on a journey across the barren and inhospitable desert. The power that propelled Abram was FAITH and TRUST in the call he heard from God.

God led him to the land of Canaan where Isaac was born. Later, Abraham sent his trusted servant Eliezer to find a bride for Isaac. This is the beautiful story of Rebekah and the camel train. Isaac then begot Jacob of Rebekah. Jacob's life had its many ups and downs but after he wrestled with the Angel of the Lord his name was changed to Israel. God had changed his scheming nature and Jacob never walked the same way again.

It was through Jacob's twelve sons that the nation Israel was formed. All of these people had a part in a plan designed by God before the foundation of the world and each was moved to fulfill that part but were they aware of their calling at the time? God had told Abraham about the land but He did not tell him about the many hurdles along the way. Jacob saw the house of God as he slept on the road to Laban's house, but he never expected all the unsettling events that followed.

Rebekah set out across the desert on the camels of a man she had never met, with a man she did not know. But God had placed faith in her heart. They were called of God and they followed that call without fail because along the way, they always trusted God. They were propelled by faith.

At times, they resisted and made the way more difficult for themselves. But in the end they fulfilled their calling because God had sent a strong Angel with them. We read, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for my name is in him." (Ex.23: 20-21)

For us, this Angel is the Holy Spirit. He is the One who keeps us in the way and will not permit us to go astray. He is the One who is bringing us all the way to our promised land. (the fulness of Christ). When we obey Him we are spared the rod of discipline, yet the rod is our friend for it delivers us from our adversaries.

Paul found this to be true when he wrote, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom.8: 28) Then Paul continues to explain that "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate...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." (Vs.29a,30)

Paul explains that those who are called according to God's purpose have been predestined by His foreknowledge. Because of immaturity, many Christians discard this teaching, but without it there would be little hope for creation. It is because God has foreseen all things from the beginning that all is being fulfilled according to His plan. Those who are "called out" are not God's elite, they are simply elected to fulfill their calling. They are those who follow the Lamb wherever He goes...the cross and the resurrection first. It is not an easy walk. It was not easy for the saints that were called to stand for the faith and who were tortured and martyred as a result. Yet they knew their calling and they embraced it joyfully.

It was not easy for the firstborn Son of God. Jesus knew His calling and He did not turn away from it. The love of the Father was in His heart and He could not turn away from the cross. Many enter God's kingdom but not all have the same calling. Jesus said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt.19:14)

Jesus has been building His church. The word church means "called out." It is certain that in time, those who are the church will find out that all that has happened to them is because of their calling.

Paul's prayer for the church was "*That the God of* our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.." (Eph.1: 17) As we mature in Christ we are endowed with the spirit of wisdom and revelation from God. This is why it is SO important to remain open to the Word that the Spirit speaks to us.

THE SURE CALLING

David was a young and tender lad when Samuel came to find him at his father's house and anointed him with a mighty calling from God. David's calling was to rule and reign on the throne of Israel. This calling was so far removed from David that there was no way for him to comprehend all that it entailed. Yet David had learned to trust God and he did not hesitate to follow as the Spirit led him into a turbulent life that would take many turns before his calling was accomplished.

As David answered the called, he found himself faced with a formidable enemy. This enemy was

much stronger than the lion and the bear he once fought with his bare hands while keeping his father's sheep. This enemy was even more powerful than the giant Goliath; this enemy was Saul. He was the king that sit on the throne and commanded with all power and authority. To make his calling sure, David had to overcome ALL of his enemies, including Saul.

Our calling is the calling of the Christ in us. He is the Overcomer within and the promise is "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." (Rev.3: 21) To sit in His throne is to rule and reign with Christ. This is our calling.

The throne is within us and it has been occupied by the one who has cunningly ruled over our lives, even the carnal Adam man. We began to overcome him when we repented from our sins and turned our lives over to the Lord. Then by the Spirit of the Lord, we overcame the world and all that the world had to offer. Then the Spirit led us to overcome the lusts of our flesh, but then we were faced with the Saul in us. This Saul is the strong religious man who has been ruling us and coaching us to follow the laws that he imposes on us. He is the voice that we have thought was God but who indeed was only the counterfeit religious man with the head (thoughts) of the serpent (devil).

To fulfill our calling and rule and reign with Christ, the Holy Spirit leads us to overcome all of these enemies. When Christ rules in us fully, we will have crushed the head (thoughts) of the serpent and death will be under our feet.

And so there came a day when "David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies and out of the hand of Saul... As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all them that trust him. For who is God, save the Lord? And who is a rock, save our God? God is my strength and power. And he maketh my way perfect." (II Sam.22:1, 31-33) Can we not relate to these words as we come out of our daily battles with our "selves" and with this religious man who tries so hard to keep us in the dark? Thank you Father for the Christ that arises within us and for the word that tests us to make our way perfect before you.

In a letter to the church Paul explains THE calling. "When he (the Lord Jesus Christ) shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day. Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of THIS calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power: that the name (nature) of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thess.1: 10-12)

It is when we daily receive Him who is the Word and let that Word be our every day life that we become the Word and fulfill the calling. This is what Paul meant when he said that Jesus Christ will come to be glorified IN the saints and admired IN all them that believe. This is the appearing of Jesus Christ that we are groaning and travailing to see.

MAKING OUR ELECTION SURE

Recently I had a dream that is significant for today. In the dream, "I had left home suddenly and quickly. I had to hurry because I had to go and cast the decisive swing vote for this election. It was so important because my vote would seal the election. I had to walk all the way to the voting place and it was a very long and difficult walk but I knew that I had to get there on time.

So I did and now I was on my way home and I stopped to rest some place. It may have been a hotel or a friend's house. From that place I called my mother who was more than thrilled to hear my voice because she had not heard from me since I left and she did not know if I was dead or alive and well. She asked for direction so she could come up to me."

In the dream I represent the Word given to us at

the end of the age. All the called out saints of the past have already cast their vote for this election which is for the overcoming of death in the flesh and the rule and reign of Christ in earth. All were part of this election but the decisive final vote that seals the election has now been cast at the end of the age.

To do this, we had to leave all of our natural and religious ambitions behind and embark on a long difficult walk propelled by faith and the need to go cast the last "Yeah" that seals this election.

We have not wasted time, we have been on our way, propelled by the faith that He built in our hearts for this Word. Jesus has had His witnesses of the true Word all along, and now we are the final witnesses of this age.

This Word is to overcome death in the flesh and usher in the rule of Christ in our earth and in God's creation. To this we firmly and decisively cast a huge YEAH and AMEN! Come Lord Jesus! And the Spirit and the Bride say Come!

Ever since Jesus began to build His church, there have been those who were given a special Word for that day. Each of these have recognized their calling and their election. They have walked the walk and cast the "Yeahs" that sealed their election for that day. We, as well, have been given the Word for our day. We have been on the walk up to go and cast the Yeah for our election.

The dream also reveals the next step of our journey. It is when we enter into our rest that we are able to call on those that we have left behind. They are the creation waiting with baited breath on the manifestation of God's sons. They have been trapped in the ways of men but when they SEE the voice of this Word they will come up and join in. Just as John SAW the voice that spake with him, (Rev.1:12) so they will SEE the voice and believe. Then they will be delivered from the bondage of death and corruption. We will not go down to them, they will want to come up to the Word.

Beloved, this spiritual journey has been very hard

but this election is sure because He has built our faith and we truly believe this Word. Just as those who went before us have cast their vote of confidence, so nothing can stop us from doing the same.

Paul was reaching for the prize and he did not get it then but now he is rejoicing for the time has come for all to enter. He is among those who are assembled in the Sion Church waiting to be made perfect with us. The election has been made sure and Christ in His body has been secured.

THAT CITY BABYLON

After Jesus ascended to the Father, the disciples received His Holy Spirit and became faithful witnesses of His resurrection. They spread the Gospel everywhere they were sent but in spite of their tireless work it was not long until the spirit of Saul (antichrist) managed to work its way into the ministry. The "self" rather than the "Christ" was lifted up to draw all men unto its fold.

The "self" is the "ego" within. Whether it is lifted up in individuals, in communities or in nations it is the serpent spirit that works to deceive humanity into thinking man's intellect is God. The serpent is the spirit that has organized the world. The most devious part of that spirit is the counterfeit of Christ. It is found in the revered assemblies of churches everywhere people are taught to worship an outward god and a gospel according to the spirit of the world.

Dr. Richard Halverson, a former chaplain of the U.S Senate wrote, "Christianity started with Jesus and the twelve. Jesus preached the message of God's love, forgiveness etc...as a message to be preached to the hearts of people. Then this message went to Greece and became a philosophy (Origen, Augustine etc..)Then it went to Rome and became an institution, the Roman Catholic Church. Then it went to Europe and became a culture, the British Christian Culture. And then it came to America and BECAME AN ENTERPRISE."

An enterprise is a business. It is an activity directed toward material profit. The Gospel of Jesus Christ was quickly seized by the gluttonous "self" and became an activity directed toward much profit. The risen Lord describes this profitable "enterprise" as Babylon that great city filled with precious merchandise of gold, silver, pearls and precious stones. Also cinnamon and odours and ointments and fine flour and wheat, and ... "beasts and sheep and horses, and chariots, and slaves and souls of men." (See Rev.18: 12-13)

This great enterprise is not only the Roman Church, it is all of the churches that sprung out of her, using the labors and souls of men to bring all manners of wealth to its endeavors. This is the same spirit that the first apostles quickly encountered and that they called "antichrist." Look not for an individual such as Stalin or Khrushchev or the Pope to arise as the Antichrist in the world. Just look at the great enterprise called "church," proclaiming blatantly her power with God to get men to pledge their support and loyalty to her many works.

John wrote, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists: whereby we know that it is the last time." (I Jn.2: 18)

But in the Spirit, Jesus Christ has been building His church. He has been gathering her in Himself and now the Spirit speaks to all who are in Christ in these words, "But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel." (Heb.12: 22-24)

Because we are set apart, some wonder if we are forsaking the assembling of ourselves. To assemble means to function together as one. If we try to assemble in the churches of Babylon we will not be able to function. We may function on an earthly level but we will be void of spiritual growth. The church where we assemble is in the Spirit.

We have assembled together in churches or Chris-

tian groups because we all believed the teachings of that church. Paul said, "Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus." It is as He brings us through our individual trials that we learn to let His mind be in us. If we find some of the same mind near us, we will be blessed. If not, the Lord will equally bless us in His way.

LOOKING FOR HIS APPEARING

Paul writes, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col.3:4) When David was overwhelmed, he kept the vision of Zion and sang, "When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory." (Ps. 102: 16)

We know that Zion is His church and that is where He is appearing in full resurrection power for He is the resurrection. Exhorting us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, Paul in his letter to Titus also adds that we should be *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."* (Titus 2: 13) For a great number of Christians, the blessed hope has to do with dying and going to heaven but this is not what the Word reveals to us.

The blessed hope that Paul wrote to Titus about is the high calling of God in Christ. Paul was looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ from the graves (us) into which He has descended. We also read, "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM SHALL HE APPEAR the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb.9: 28)

This is a powerful word. We have all read this passage many times, and perhaps each time we have come up with a somewhat different idea. Understanding the Word is like unto the blind man that Jesus healed. At first he saw men as trees and then the picture cleared more and more.

Let us first see that the second appearing of Christ is not for everyone. It is for THOSE WHO LOOK FOR HIM. Paul wrote Timothy about the crown of righteousness that he will receive at that day and he explains that this is not for him only ... "but unto all them also that LOVE HIS APPEARING."

(II Tim.4: 8b) It is as we read earlier, when He comes to be *glorified in the saints and to be admired in all them that believe.*"

Although Christ was the Rock that followed them in the wilderness, His first appearing in the flesh was when He came to die on the cross as the perfect sacrifice for sin. The second appearing is a very private visit for those who love His appearing and who are looking for Him. Many Christians love Him for what they can get from Him but are they really looking for Him? Perhaps deep down they know that His coming means the end of their lives as usual- The end of the "SELF" and they fear. Do they really understand that the old Adam man is appointed to death and must die.

When Jesus first comes into our hearts, we receive forgiveness for all our sins. As we walk with Him we are forgiven of our sins through His blood sacrifice. However, a change still has to take place and we begin our journey toward our full salvation. To be fully born again is to be a new creature in Christ.

This is worked out as we walk daily with His Holy Spirit. Paul wrote, "Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, WORK OUT YOUR OWN SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREM-BLING." (Phil.2: 12)

This does not mean that anyone who believes in Jesus is in jeopardy of losing their salvation. "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Acts 2:21) Salvation is very personal. We can only work out OUR OWN SALVATION if we are given the means to do this. These means include a "regenerated" spirit that teaches our soul to submit. This is our daily "work out!" How we yield ourselves to the Lord each day and how we keep the faith determines how easy or how hard the work out will be.

At any rate, be assured that our salvation will be worked out, one way or another. Sometimes we may even lose our physical life in order to be saved. Paul instructed the church about the fornicator among them, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ." (I Cor.5: 5) I know of others whom the Lord took early in order to save them for that day.

The Lord is not playing church. He is finishing the work which He began in us. Paul told Timothy, "...I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (II Tim.1: 12b)

Each one will come in their own order. Christ the firstfruits is first. So the firstfruits have successfully worked out their own salvation first. But all who are Christ's will also attain to their full salvation at His coming. The working out is done individually and in the way that He has purposed for each according to their need.

Note that His appearing is unto full salvation. We have been saved in our spirits, we are being saved in our souls and the full salvation includes a new incorruptible body. The appearing that we are so eagerly awaiting, is from within. It will happen when He who is the Word is made flesh in us and we become as He is.

This is the appearing that we are yearning to see. When the death that was in us is swallowed up by His life. *"For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life."* (II Cor.5:4)

O the depth of this word! The tabernacle that Paul speaks of is this earthen vessel or body. In it we groan for we are burdened, fighting daily against sin and diseases. But Paul explains that we are not fighting to get rid of our bodies and be unclothed. We are not groaning to die and go to heaven. We are groaning so that mortality might be swallowed up of life. His life in us is what swallows up the death of these bodies.

How we appreciate the dear apostle Paul who saw all these truths and knew that he would go by way of the grave. Yet he pressed toward the prize as all who have had the vision have done since. Abraham had the vision for he looked for the city whose builder and maker is God. You can be sure God did not build this city with mortar and stones; God built a living breathing city- each stone an image of His Son. This is the city we all yearn to see.

JOHN SAW THE TRUE CHURCH

There came a day when John was in the Spirit on the lonely isle of Patmos and he heard a call from above. He writes, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev.21: 1-2)

Earlier we read that, "...we have come to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, the general assembly of the firstborn, which are written in heaven." We have come to that city whose builder and maker is God and she consists of all who are assembled in Christ and who form the true church of the firstborn Son. She is the beautiful bride that Christ has prepared for Himself. She is the city that John saw.

She has been cleansed and made beautiful and she is cherished of her Husband. She is adorned as a bride ready for her beloved. She is pregnant with His Seed (Word) and she is giving birth to the new creation in His image (the Manchild)-

She has been in the world but she has been hid in the realm of Spirit. John saw her in the Spirit and now she is beginning to appear to us in all her glory. She is coming down from God out of heaven. This means that now we can see that she is very realeven more real than the visible earthly "church." Now the Lord is introducing us to some of our members and if we open our spiritual eyes we will find that we are truly joined to this glorious church of the firstborn.

At this time we only know the few members that we have been privileged to meet along our journey. Some have moved behind the veil and with Abraham they are all anticipating the day of their better resurrection.

John continues, "And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." (Rev.21: 10) To see that city in more details, John was carried to a higher place in the Spirit. How could simple words describe what he saw?

We have made detailed studies of the symbols of that city in the past and they have opened many truths to us about our identity as Christ's church. The Lord likened the spiritual attributes to very precious stones. "And the city lieth foursquare...And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits..." (Vs.16a, 17a) Foursquare denotes perfection. Equal on all sides. The wall was a hundred and forty-four cubits which is 12x12 and denotes the perfect government or will of God. When John saw that city, she had come to perfect maturity in Christ and she was fully enclosed in the perfect will of God.

John saw the street of that city. The street speaks of our walk. There is only one street in that city and it is of pure gold. Indeed there is only one way to walk before our God; it is to move and have our being in His pure nature.

This is the true church that we have come to as we have been washed and purified by the Word. Now all the members are assembled by the Spirit and each function perfectly together in the unity of Spirit. This is the New Jerusalem that John saw adorned as a bride. She had been prepared in the secret place and now she comes together ready for her Bridegroom.

A NEW COVENANT

Because there are various teachings concerning God's covenant with the nation Israel, some have called me to inquire as to what God has shown me on the subject. Some Bible issues are vague and some are mysteries that can only be revealed by the Holy Spirit, but concerning Israel and the Old Covenant, the Bible is very clear.

In the Old Testament, Israel was chosen of God

and was in covenant with God. They were under the Law of Moses yet God said, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." (Ex.19: 4-5)

They could not keep the Law of this covenant, and when they rejected the Son of God, they did not enter into the New Covenant and the Old was obsolete. "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first one old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Heb.8: 13) God does not have two covenants with man.

Jesus could have opened their spiritual ears and eyes but He did only what He saw the Father do and the Father had chosen to close their ears and eyes so that the Gentiles could come in. "(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear) unto this day." (Rom.11: 8)

In Christ, God no longer deals with nations but with individuals. The Jews come into covenant with God when each of them recognizes Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. In the new covenant, there is no literal temple in Jerusalem and there is no longer need for animal sacrifices.

The Zionist movement of Christians who support the nation Israel and the rebuilding of the temple is in error. In Christ the Old Testament or covenant is abolished and anything added to the sacrifice of Jesus who offered Himself once and for all for the sins of the world, is an abomination unto God. To support this kind of thinking is to join in their affront to our Lord Jesus. It is as the writer to the Hebrews so well explains, "to crucify the Son of God afresh and anew."

Politically speaking, Israel as a nation of the world may well deserve the support of the US because it is the only true democracy in the Middle East. The nation Israel stands in jeopardy in the midst of some who hate them and want to obliterate and remove them from the earth. For this they may deserve our support and our prayers, but spiritually speaking they will not be saved until they come to Christ. The Covenant that God once made with them is as we read in the Word, "it has decayed and waxed old and is ready to vanish away." This is what the Lord has revealed to me at this time. Some who have come to Christ are still keeping the hope of the rebuilding of their temple- this is error.

The first Adam is a created son but Jesus is the ONLY begotten Son of God. Jesus knew who He was and He knew that His sacrifice was His Father's will for the world. He also knew that His own seed after the flesh, the Jews, would reject Him. He loved them dearly and He wept over them.

He prophesied, "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; BECAUSE THOU KNEWEST NOT THE TIME OF THY VISI-TATION." (Lk.19: 44)

Even though Jesus loved His own flesh, He could not help them. He tenderly told them, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt.23: 37)

Jesus could not open their ears to hear or their hearts to understand because all things must be fulfilled according to the Father's plan. And the Father had sent Him to save, not only Israel, but the world.

May the Father strengthen us to respond to the Spirit and not to the fleshly reasonings of our hearts. May our eyes and hearts be fixed on our calling and our election. May His will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

Because of His love, Jackie Caporaso