

“Blessed is the Man Whom Thou Choolest”

In John’s inspired Gospel account, we have the assurance of Messiah, given to his disciples during the events leading up to his crucifixion:

“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you ...” (Jno. 14:2).

These words provide an example of “wrested Scriptures”, which those who know not the Gospel of Jesus Christ misconstrue. This passage is given as a “proof” text to show that the immortal souls of believers will go to heaven following the death of the body in which they dwell. However, that is not what these verses state. They state that in the “Father’s house” there are many “mansions”, or “*abiding places*” as the Greek has it. Significantly, there are no passages in Scripture that position the Father’s “house” in heaven. Rather it is always upon earth. In the times of the Old Testament, the Temple at Jerusalem was considered to be where God symbolically dwelt (cp 1 Kings 8:13) amongst His People. And the certain word of prophecy reveals that this house will be rebuilt in the future, to become a “house of prayer for all people” (Isa. 56:7). As Yahweh spake through his prophet Haggai:

“I will shake all nations, and the desirable things out of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith Yahweh of Hosts” (Hag. 2:7).

These words express the certainty of Yahweh’s House being erected once more, to become a future world capital for worship, education, and administration. The latter chapters of Ezekiel describe the future house in intricate detail, along with the sacrifices and ordinances that will pertain to it.

In the words of the Master then, we have a promise that in the Father’s House – i.e. the Temple of the Age to Come, there are “many abiding places” for Messiah’s brethren to occupy. This teaching echoes certain Old Testament Scriptures, particularly the Psalms:

“... surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I ***will dwell in the house of Yahweh for ever***” (Psa. 23:6).

And again, in our Old Testament Reading for today:

“Blessed is the man whom thou choolest, and causeth to approach unto thee, ***that he may dwell in thy courts***: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple” (Psa. 65:4).

A man who will dwell in the courts of the future Temple therefore, will be “chosen”, being caused to approach to the Throne of Grace and Glory.

There is a principle in Scripture, that as the Gospel-Seed is sown, it will land upon all kinds of men’s hearts. As Messiah demonstrated with his Parable of the Sower, some pay no attention to the Word at all; others receive it with joy, but fall away in times of trial; others still receive it, but are so preoccupied with the cares of this life, that the

growing seed will quickly perish through neglect. But the fourth type of ground is fertile, and well attended to, enabling the Seed-Word to grow up and yield fruit in abundance. So it is, that the calling of the Gospel goes out to many men and women, yet out of these who are being “called”, only a very few give heed to it. The principle is, as expressed elsewhere: “... *many be called, but few chosen*” (Mat. 20:16). Only those whose hearts answer to the fertile ground of Messiah’s parable will be chosen at the last, even though a whole multitude of others had the Seed-Word sown in their direction.

Revelation chapter 17 describes those who will be glorified with their Master:

“they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Rev. 17:14).

We can readily see the import of what is here described: there is first a “calling” of men to repent, then there is a selection, or “choosing” of those who have responded well to the calling, who thus constitute the “faithful”.

It is interesting to note when considering these three points, that the only characters in Scripture to which each of them is applied, is Abraham, and our Master himself. Isaiah chapter 51 describes Abraham’s Calling:

“Look unto Abraham your father and unto Sarah that bare you: for *I called him* alone, and blessed him, and increased him” (Isa. 51:2).

Nehemiah chapter 9 describes how he was “chosen”:

“Thou art Yahweh the Elohim, who *didst choose* Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham ...” (Neh. 9:7).

And the same chapter shows that he was “faithful”:

“... and foundest his heart *faithful* before thee...” (Neh. 9:8).

These three principles therefore, characterise the man Abraham. But they are cited and applied together to Messiah’s brethren – which demonstrates that their hope is in the Abrahamic Covenant, as they look to this man’s faith as an example to follow. Walking in the steps of Abraham’s Faith (see Rom. 4:12), they become like him, and trust in the promised blessedness to come through his pre-eminent Seed.

This aspect of “few” being chosen out of the “many” who are called is brought out several times in Scripture, with one such occasion in Numbers chapter 16. In this chapter, we read of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, who sought to elevate themselves above Moses and Aaron, whom Yahweh had chosen to lead the nation:

“they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and Yahweh is among them: wherefore then lift ye yourselves up above the congregation of Yahweh” (Num. 16:3).

Notice that Moses, being the meekest man in all the earth (Num. 12:3), did not attempt to justify his position before the people, or in some way plead his own cause. He did

not issue a railing accusation as the manner of some is, but presented the matter before Yahweh, leaving it for Him to condemn or bless according to His Will:

“When Moses heard it, he fell upon his face: and he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even tomorrow Yahweh will *shew who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him:* even him *whom he hath chosen* will he cause to come near unto him” (Num. 16:4-5).

Here then, we see the many in opposition to the few. But rather than to present any kind of argument against the apostasy of Korah and his followers, Moses immediately presented the matter before Yahweh for Him to choose those whom He considered to be Holy, and who would be brought near in service to Him.

The chapter continues to describe the arrangement by which Yahweh would make his Chosen known amongst the camp. Every man of Korah’s company were to put incense in their censers, and offer it up before Yahweh. The people were commanded to separate themselves from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan and Abirahm, which had been erected in opposition to the Tabernacle of the Congregation established through Moses. And the judgements of Yahweh were manifest, in the destruction of these men:

“The ground clave asunder that was under them: and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation ... and there came out a fire from Yahweh, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense” (Num. 16:31-35).

By this means, it was declared to all the congregation who Yahweh had chosen, as those who despised Moses’ dominion perished a most remarkable death, being cast down into the pit, and being buried alive. To use the words of the prophet Isaiah, “hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth shall descend into it” (Isa. 5:14). If they had died the common death of all men, there would have been nothing to signify whom Yahweh had chosen. But in being rejected by Yahweh, it was evident that Aaron and Moses had been selected by the Father to come near to him, and serve in the manner appointed to them.

These events regarding the overthrow of Apostasy in Israel are alluded to in Paul’s letter to Timothy:

“ ... the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity” (2 Tim. 2:19).

So then, just as Yahweh was to make known “who are his” to all Israel, the Apostle testifies that He Knows who are his, amongst the multitude of Gentiles who receive the calling of the Truth. And just as all Israel were to depart from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan and Abiram, even so we, as followers of Christ, must depart from iniquity. There is then, a clear parallel in these events with the circumstances of our Calling and being Chosen by the hand of the Father.

Another way in which these principles of Calling and Choosing work themselves out in the process of salvation, is seen in Israel's being called out of Egypt, to be a holy nation to Yahweh:

“... thou art an *holy people* unto Yahweh thy Elohim: Yahweh thy Elohim hath *chosen thee* to be a *special people* unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth” (Deut. 7:6).

Israel were collectively a nation taken out from the midst of another nation (Deut. 4:34), being called out, and delivered by a mighty overthrow. Again, we read:

“thou art a holy people unto Yahweh thy Elohim, and Yahweh hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth” (Deut. 14:2).

The principles being brought to bear are clear: Israel were called out of Egypt, and chosen to be a special nation, being elevated above all other nations. How tragic it was then, that they failed to live up to their high calling, choosing instead to follow the ways of the heathen!

But we must not boast against the branches, lest we be found wanting ourselves. We stand by faith, and can be very easily be cut off from the Israelitish Rootstock, which is our Hope. The principles that governed Israel's calling are also applied to ours:

“ ... Ye are *a chosen generation*, a royal priesthood, *an holy nation, a peculiar people*; that ye should shew forth the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

We then, if we abide in the Light of the Word, are to chosen out of the Gentiles, to be a special people showing forth the glorious virtues of the One who has called us. This is what as a Nation, Israel failed to do in times gone by. But this is the purpose for our calling – it is not simply to receive salvation, which those who are short-sighted might assume. Rather, it is to show forth the glorious array of attributes and virtues possessed by our heavenly Father. We are a people most privileged indeed, for whereas many walk in darkness, we have been called from that darkness into light. To us have been given the whole counsel of God, that beholding our sinful state before the Almighty, we might trust in the Sacrifice of His providing, being cleansed with the sanctifying blood of Messiah. We truly have a high calling: let us therefore seek those things which are above, where Messiah sits at Yahweh's Right Hand, that in due time we might live and reign with him as part of a glorious multitude, called, chosen, and faithful.

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