

To Make Ready a People

If you are reading this, it is because God has called you. God has not called the wise or the noble, but rather the weak and the poor, that the powerful and rich might be confounded. 1 Corinthians 1:26, *'For you see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.'*

However, if you have faith in our Creator, believe His words, and act on that belief in repentance, you have shown that you love God and He has confirmed His choosing of you by granting you his Holy Spirit, through the laying on of hands, after your baptism. You have become one of the heirs of His Kingdom, to share rule there with Jesus Christ. James 2:5, *'Hearken my beloved brethren, has not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he has promised to them that love him?'* And Revelation 20:4, *'And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given to them and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.'*

God does not choose those who believe they have no weaknesses because those who *are* chosen, recognise their weaknesses and work to overcome them with the help of God's Holy Spirit, and so will understand why, in God's mercy, they will be able to help humanity in God's Kingdom gain *their* immortal life. This is why we are instructed to examine ourselves regularly so that we are aware of our spiritual condition, and what needs our attention, in order to overcome.

God is patient, but ultimately, we must overcome if we hope to be in His Spirit-born family. Exactly how much we overcome, based upon our ability, is pictured by the parables of the talents and the pounds, and will determine our God-given responsibilities in the Kingdom of God. Revelation 22:12, *'And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.'*

Failure to overcome, or even failure to recognise our sin because we have not been diligent enough to be aware of God's word, will mean that we lack the fruit Christ expects, Luke 13:7-9, *'Then he said to the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said to him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.'*

God expects us to bear the fruits of righteousness, even if he *is* patient with us, and our priority must be the Kingdom of God as it is Christ's, and whatever we can do to fulfil God's instructions to that end if we hope to be counted as faithful, and take part

in the First Resurrection. Mathew 7:21, ‘Not everyone that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **does the will** of my Father which is in heaven.’

We don’t know what the time limit is on God’s patience, but we do know that He will finally prove us; try us even as he will try the physical remnant of Israel in their future captivity, before they are allowed into His Holy Land. Zechariah 13:9, ‘**And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people: and they shall say, The Lord is my God.**’

We, however, who have been called and chosen, will need to meet an even higher standard, if we are to gain eternal life and serve God in His kingdom as Kings and priests, Malachi 3:3, ‘**And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering of righteousness.**’ This purging and refining as gold, the intense process which separates gold from the dross, will be something that many of us will experience, 1Peter 1:7, ‘**That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold which perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.**’

There is indication that this trial, particularly at this end of the age, will result in failure at this last hurdle for some, because their love **of God** is prophesied to wax cold at the end of this age, resulting in their lack of attention to God’s commands, Matthew 24:12, ‘**And because iniquity [lawlessness] shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.** In verse 13, the word ‘endure’ in the Greek indicates.... “Cognate: 5278 hypoménō – literally, remaining under (the load), bearing up (enduring); for the believer, this uniquely happens by God's power (cf. 1 Thes 3:5). See 5281 (hypomonē).” In other words, remaining faithful and diligent to God’s word.

Over confidence, presumption, a refusal to recognise God’s *extra* commands for this special End Time, which do not fit in to our accepted scenarios for the last days, such as may take us right out of our comfort zone, all of these could destroy our hopes and dreams of being in God’s family in the Millennium. But think about this. Why would God give such a great prize to anyone who is just content to live the average, ordinary life? Those in the First Resurrection attain to such a close relationship with Jesus Christ and our Father! No -one else *can ever* be added to their number! There can be nothing more valuable and we cannot afford a casual dismissal of *any* of God’s words!

It takes active effort *beyond the norm* to achieve a goal *beyond the norm*, so don’t be surprised to find that God makes extra demands on the called and chosen at the End Time. He often has, upon the very few prophets and kings in Old Testament times who were given the Holy Spirit; on the Disciples; on the persecuted Church at times

down the ages; in the refining of his End-Time Church through its fragmentation, and then in His instructions for the last seven years.

As we enter this final phase of the Church's work, let each of us make sure that we remain diligently faithful to His words. All of them: that we may pass this last trial that will make ready "a people prepared for the Lord," Luke 1:17. Only then, will we return from heaven with our Lord, as his Bride. Revelation 17:14, 'These shall make war with the Lamb, and the lord shall overcome them: for he is Lord of Lords and King of Kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, *and* faithful.

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