

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

BRETHREN

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. Hebrews 2:11

Isaiah was given a vision of the LORD *"in the year that King Uzziah died"*. He reports that the glory of the LORD was overwhelming as the Seraphim flew above the throne of GOD, crying out, *"Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."*(Isa 6:3) John recounts to us a similar vision in the Book of the Revelation of JESUS CHRIST, *"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever. (Rev 4:8-9)* It seems very clear that both men saw the same thing.

It is also striking that both had similar reactions when confronted face to face with the Majesty and Glory of HIM who sits upon the throne of heaven. John says, *"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead."* (Rev 1:17) Isaiah declares, *"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."* (Isa 6:5) That man who is confronted with the glory of GOD cannot stand in his own power even as the LORD told Moses, *"Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live."* (Exo 33:20) The very breath of a man is taken from him in the presence of HIM who first breathed into man the "BREATH" of life.

We also read of Paul's experience as he recounts being caught up to the *"third heaven"* where he, *"heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."* (2Cor 12:4) John declares that it is impossible that a man in his natural state should ever be able to look upon HIM who is High and Lifted up. *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."* (John 1:18) Apart from being *"born again"*, no man can see the *"KINGDOM of GOD"* (i.e.; HE who is the embodiment of that Kingdom, both in purpose and in power). This special gift must be bestowed from above or else a man may look upon JESUS CHRIST and only see HIM as a MAN among men.

Yet to some it is given to know HIM, seeing HIM as the *"only BEGOTTEN of the FATHER"*, *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14) Paul describes this blessed event saying, *"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."* (2Cor 4:6)

So, who are these upon whom this great blessing is visited, both now and in the ages to come? They are described in the scriptures as those who are *"the brethren."* And whose *"brethren"* are they and how are they so? The word *"brethren"* appears 231 times in the New Testament. There are a few instances when this word has reference to those who were the LORD's *"brothers"* by natural birth from the same mother, but the vast majority of times that it is used, it has no reference to natural relation. The Greek word which is translated as *"brethren"* or *"brothers"*

means "of the same womb". To say that "*brethren*" share an intimate connection is quite an understatement.

We read that "*both HE that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified are all of ONE.*" The LORD has a "familial" relationship with those HE thus describes as "*HIS brethren*". "*For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*" (Heb 2:11-13) To put it mildly, we speak of a union which the sons of GOD have with HIM from before the foundation of the world. This is a mystery which is quite beyond the grasp of men to fully realize or describe. It is a relationship which is the basis of HIS choice of them in the electing grace which is described by Paul in this fashion, "*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*" (Eph 1:4-6)

Those who are the "*brethren*" of the LORD are given the distinct privilege of "*hearing*" the gospel of the glory of the blessed GOD. Many men perish without this grace and none who receive it can boast, for the LORD alone gives men ears to hear and eyes to see, the glories of CHRIST revealed therein. They are enabled to "see" HIM as the REDEEMER of sinners, and to find a place of great comfort and help in that redemption which HE has procured. In fact, they cannot even know themselves to be "*the brethren of CHRIST*" until such time as HE is pleased to give them the gift of faith. They will then believe in HIM of whom they hear. "*Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.*" (Psa 110:3)

The "*brethren*" are given a "familial" likeness to HIM who is their ELDER BROTHER. "*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.*" (Rom 8:29) This "likeness" has its greatest fulfillment in the day of the resurrection. "*Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.*" (1John 3:2-3) This is a principle which is at work in the "*brethren*" as HE does send HIS SPIRIT to work in them "*both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" (Php 2:13)

Yet the greatest display of "brotherhood", found in the scriptures, is demonstrated not in our being in HIS likeness (though that is quite a glorious display), but rather in HIS being made in ours. "*For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.*" (Heb 2:16-17) This is the mystery which was hidden from the foundation of the world but is now made plain; "*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*" (1Tim 3:16) It is precisely as HE has walked among HIS brethren that HE is now able to be our HIGH PRIEST, "*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" (Heb 4:14-16)

HE has left us here in this world for a short season, giving us a "familial" SPIRIT with those whom HE has called HIS "*brethren*". We are commanded to love one another even as HE has loved us. "*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.---Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*" (1John 3:14-16) Are you a servant of the "*brethren*"? Let each esteem other better than themselves. mam