

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

THE ROD THAT BUDDERD

And it came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.

Numbers 17:8

The children of Israel, as they wandered in the wilderness, were often murmuring against the LORD and even arose in rebellion on occasion. None of these instances is more egregious nor blatant than the rebellion of Korah. Korah, along with Dathan, Abiram, and two hundred fifty "princes of the assembly" confronted Moses and accused him of taking authority unto himself that they did not deem proper. It appears that Korah, who was a Levite, felt that he had just as much right as Aaron to offer sacrifices in the tabernacle. He felt that Moses had bestowed too much honor upon Aaron as he set him and his sons apart, exclusively, to minister before the LORD in the offerings and oblations.

Korah's error was in rebelling against the authority of GOD, since the LORD HIMSELF had instructed Moses in the appointment of Aaron's house to minister of these things. This incident is quite amazing given the fact that two of Aaron's sons (Nadab and Abihu) had recently been slain for taking upon themselves to offer incense to the LORD in a manner not prescribed by HIM. Korah's rebellion serves to illustrate the natural enmity which men have against the sovereign right of the LORD to do as HE wills with HIS own. Unless the LORD is pleased to restrain the wickedness of men, they will be constantly rushing headlong to their own destruction, all the while convinced that they are "free" to do as they please. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished." (Prov 22:3)

The LORD made an example of these three men as HE caused the earth to open, swallowing them and their households. HE sent fire upon the two hundred and fifty who were confederate with them, consuming them in a display of HIS judgement. (see Num 16:26-35) "For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." (Deut 4:24) What folly is found among men who think to oppose the WAY of GOD. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom 11:33) Yet even in the midst of this awful display of judgement we see the mercy of GOD as well, since HE spared the sons of Korah. "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign. Notwithstanding the children of Korah died not." (Num 26:10-11)

Several of the Psalms are specifically written for the "sons of Korah". What a testimony they surely had of the sovereign grace of GOD, not only to spare their lives, but to give them a song of praise unto the JUDGE of all the earth, such as Psalm 42. "Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." (Psa 42:8-11)

As a result of this “rebellion”, the LORD instructed Moses to stage a demonstration, wherein HE would settle forever who the Great High Priest over the nation of Israel was. HE had them take a “rod” (i.e.; staff denoting authority), from each of the leaders of the twelve tribes alongside the “rod” of Aaron. The LORD caused the rod of Aaron to “bud”, bringing forth “blossoms”, and ultimately “almonds”. Nothing like this was seen before or since, as the LORD openly declared HIS choice for the office of High Priest, not only Aaron but Aaron’s seed after him.

In this “demonstration” we cannot help but see, by way of type and foreshadow, the LORD’s singular approval of our GREAT HIGH PRIEST whose priesthood is greater than that of Aaron. For Aaron could not continue in this office by reason of death, but HE who is the ONE TRUE HIGH PRIEST over the household of GOD, is a PRIEST forever after the order of MELCHIZEDEK. HE does ever live to make intercession for the sons of GOD, who are HIS seed, and are made in HIS likeness to be “kings and priests”. *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.” (Rev 5:9-10) “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” (1Pet 2:9-10)*

Yet as grand as that station is to which the sons of GOD are called, all of their power and authority resides in HIM from whom all of their blessings flow. Without HIM they can do nothing and it is owing to HIS PRIESTLY WORK that they have any standing whatsoever to minister among the household of GOD. HE plainly told HIS disciples that *“The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.” (Mat 10:24) “Whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Mar 10:43-45)* The LORD has given us HIS example that we should follow HIS steps.

CHRIST is that ROD which “budded.” These rods which were placed in the tabernacle of testimony were all “without life”. Yet the rod of Aaron “budded”. CHRIST is as that “root out of a dry ground”. There was nothing that men could see with the eye of the flesh that testified of the fact that “HE had life in HIMSELF” (see John 5:26). After all HE was only JESUS of Nazareth, the carpenter’s son. *“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” (John 1:46)* HE had no beauty that we should desire HIM, yet HE was that ONE sent by GOD, to give LIFE unto those which were hidden in HIM from the beginning.

Not only did that ROD produce buds but HIS lifegiving blood which was shed for many for the remission of sins is that nectar which causes those branches to grow from the VINE. It is by HIS power and LIFE that the branches are sustained even as it is by the shedding of HIS blood that they are made free from condemnation and the law of sin and death.

We read that this ROD “bloomed blossoms”, which are the portent of that which is to come. Blossoms are not the fruit, but rather the precursor to the fruit. There can be no fruit where there is no blossom. *“But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb 11:6)* Faith is the gift of GOD. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the WORD of GOD. HE gives men ears to hear the glorious sound of HIS call. *“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” (John 10:27-28)*

Not only “blossoms” were upon this ROD, but it brought forth “almonds”. Faith which stands alone is not true faith. Saving faith is that which alone is produced by the work of the LORD and not in anywise a part of some cooperative effort between the one who “believes” and HIM who brings forth fruit unto everlasting life. *“Faith without works is dead”.* While we do earnestly desire to see HIS works in us, we most fervently desire to be found holding fast to that work which HE who is our FAITH has performed for us. *“Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” (Php 2:12-13)* These are almonds which remain ever fresh and satisfying.