

HUMILITY VS. PRIDE

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"Be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." I Peter 5:5, 6.

Five main points are brought to our attention in this text. They are as follows:

1. Be clothed with humility.
2. God resisteth the proud.
3. God giveth grace to the humble.
4. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God.
5. God will exalt you in due time.

The first point reminds one of the importance of humility. It reminds us of the humility of our heavenly Father. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15

Our Lord is also an example of one clothed with humility. The apostle Peter is exhorting all those who would become Christlike to thus be clothed with humility. The clothing of a person often determines his profession or occupation. One who is clothed with humility is one who is desirous of being like Christ.

The second point in our text reminds us that God resisteth the proud. These words by Peter are in complete harmony with the thinking of James as recorded in Chapter 4, verse 6. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." The wise man wrote as recorded in Proverbs 29:23: "A man's pride shall bring him low."

There are many examples of those with pride as recorded in the scriptures. One outstanding example is that of Satan. May we read from the words of Isaiah, chapter 14, verses 12-17. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?"

These words remind us that there was a time when Lucifer was not fallen. He was created perfect for all of God's works are perfect. Lucifer was a son of the morning; i.e. he was created early in the dawn of creation. Our Lord (the Logos) was the first and last direct creation of God. The heavenly Father used his Son (the Logos) in bringing Lucifer into existence. As we have noted, Lucifer was created perfect, but he has fallen from that perfection.

Verses 13 and 14 remind us why Lucifer fell from the position which he had when created. The reason why he fell was that pride entered into his heart. Lucifer aspired to be like the Most High. He wanted a dominion like the Most High. We may suppose that this entering of pride into the heart of Satan was a gradual thing. No doubt our heavenly Father did everything possible to bring Lucifer back into the right way. However, the time came when Lucifer demonstrated that the pride and sin could not be separated from himself.

Our heavenly Father allowed Satan to manifest outwardly what was in his heart in the garden of Eden. The newly created man and woman (Adam and Eve) had the power of procreation -- a power not possessed by spirit beings. Satan reasoned that if he could gain control of Adam and Eve, he could have a dominion like the Most High God.

There in the garden of Eden, it was made manifest outwardly that the sin could not be separated from Lucifer the sinner. Therefore, Satan in due time will be brought down to the Bible hell (sheol-the death state) -- verse 15. Satan has never been in the Bible hell (the death state) up to the present time, but at the close of the little season following the Millennial reign of Christ, Satan will be destroyed. In Revelation 20:7-10 we read that fire will come down from God out of heaven and devour (not preserve) Satan and his followers. Satan will become an everlasting example of the course of rebellion against God. In Hebrews 2:14 we note that God will use his Representative (our Lord) in this work of destroying Satan. Satan will go out of existence for all eternity. Thank God for this assurance.

The prophet Isaiah, chapter 14, verses 16 and 17 reminds us that Satan has indeed caused the earth to tremble and made the world as a wilderness. He has blinded the eyes of the vast majority. Now that we are in the dawning of the Millennial age, Satan is losing his power and influence over some. He is casting out Satan; i.e. he is using Satanic power to temporarily heal one here and there. He is doing this not because he is interested in healing the groaning creation, but because he endeavors to keep thousands of others blinded by this deceptive means.

Satan, however, as Isaiah reminds us does not have the power to open the house of his prisoners. That is, he cannot release one from the prison house of death. It is our Lord (Revelation 1:18) who has the keys of hell and of death. In due time all the prisoners will

be released. Not only will those under the death condemnation be released, but in due time all who are in the graves will hear the voice of Jesus and will come forth. John 5:28, 29. Thank God for this assurance that Jesus, in due time, will release all the prisoners in the prison house of death.

In Proverbs 16:18 we read that "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." At the present time and in the immediate future all the proud systems, organizations and the like are being and will be destroyed. Only those things in harmony with the righteous kingdom will remain. Eventually all individuals who will not cease to be proud will be destroyed from among the people. This will be their second death.

In Proverbs 6:16-19 we are told that there are six things that the Lord hates; yes seven are an abomination unto him. At the top of the list the wise man says that God hates a proud look or haughty eyes. He also hates a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among the brethren.

Yes, God resisteth the proud, but as our third point reminds us, he giveth grace to the humble. Those with an humble disposition more readily recognize their need of a Saviour. God giveth grace to those possessing humility.

Those who have repented of sin, accepted Jesus as their Saviour, consecrated to righteous living, and then to sacrifice, after being called in the one hope of their calling, are justified to life by faith at the moment their consecration is accepted. In Romans 5:1,2, Paul reminds us that these are at "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

The fully consecrated can come boldly or confidently to the throne of grace. (Heb. 4:16) There we obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. What a privilege it is to come confidently to the throne of grace! The fully consecrated can ask what they will and it will be done unto them. The chief burden of their hearts will be for a larger measure of the Holy Spirit.

Paul assures us in II Corinthians 12:9, that God's grace is sufficient for us. Paul besought the Lord three times to remove his thorn in the flesh. No doubt Paul was referring to his poor eyesight. We remember how Saul on his way to Damascus to persecute the early Christians saw our resurrected Lord by means of a miracle as of one born out of due time. (I Cor. 15:8) The brightness was so great that Paul was blinded and was without sight three days (Acts 9:1-9). Paul's eyesight was partially restored but no doubt his thorn in the flesh was poor eyesight which was a constant reminder to him of how he had persecuted the Christians.

In spite of this trial, Paul realized that God's grace was sufficient for him. He said, (I Cor. 12 :9, 10) "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me... for when I am weak, then am I strong."

All down through the Gospel age the fully consecrated have also had fiery trials. Peter said, (I Peter 4:12, 13) "Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy."

Now that we are living in the transition period of the Gospel and Millennial ages, the Lord's people are especially having peculiar and fiery trials. Satan does not give up easily. It was foreknown (Gen. 3:15) that Satan would bruise the heel members of the body of Christ. Satan is trying to stop the completion of the bride of Christ -- the body members of the promised seed. Of course, he will not succeed. These fiery trials are a means of testing the saints and preparing them for a place in the spiritual phase of the kingdom. Thus we are assured by Paul in Romans 8:28 that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

In II Corinthians 6:1 we are exhorted to receive not the grace of God in vain. One approaching toward full consecration has a measure of peace and grace of the Lord. If one does not go on to full consecration he has received in vain however much of God's grace he has received. This, however, does not mean that this one has died the second death.

If one after fully consecrating receives God's grace in vain, he will die the second death. This one actually allows pride to enter into his heart. This is a gradual thing. One who sins against the holy spirit and denies our Lord and Saviour receives God's grace in vain. He will go into the second death. Please read Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26-31.

The fourth point of our text (I Peter 5:5, 6) reminds us that we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. The Lord's people are to submit to the providences of the Lord. We are to walk humbly with God. (Micah 6:8) We are to put on humbleness of mind (Colossians 3:12-14).

To enable us to be prepared for a place in the spiritual phase of the kingdom, the saints in this transition period have been served with meat in due season. (Luke 12:37, 42, 43) It takes humility to recognize and accept this arrangement of the Lord. It is necessary to maintain this humility. There is a tendency for pride to enter in after one has recognized the source of the truth. One who retains his humility will continue to recognize that the Lord has served us meat in due season through that faithful and wise servant.

A notable example of humility is that of our Lord. This is in marked contrast with the pride of Satan. In Philippians 2:5-9 we read: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."

Our Lord did not meditate a usurpation to be like the Most High as did Satan. Rather, he humbled himself. Because of his desire to do his Father's will, he humbled himself and was made in the likeness of men.

He further humbled himself by dying as a man. He had not sinned; he had done nothing wrong. He died for Adam and the dying race. In I Timothy 2:6 we are told that the man Christ Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time."

Our Lord's humility is further shown in his death on the cross. Why was this necessary? This was necessary because the Jews were under a double condemnation. By dying on the cross our Lord redeemed not only the Gentiles but also the Jews. The economy in God's plan is thus shown in our Lord dying on the cross giving his human life as a ransom for all to be testified in due time.

Because of our Lord's faithfulness unto death, Paul assures us that he has been highly exalted. Our fifth point in the text we are considering is that we too, if faithful, will be exalted in due time. In Revelation 2:10 we are told to be faithful unto death and we will be given a crown of life. This means that the more than over-comers will receive the highest form of life.

Now that we are in the dawning of the resurrection age, the body members of Christ are being exalted. The saints who slept prior to the resurrection age no longer sleep. The dead in Christ have been raised. (I Thes. 4:16) The feet members upon finishing their earthly course faithfully unto death do not have to sleep but are changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye. (I Cor. 15:51,52) Soon the full number (144, 000 body members) will be highly exalted. Then will begin the work of blessing individually all the families of the earth.

In closing may we read I Peter 5:1-10: "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief

Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world, But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you."

May we also read the Manna for August 9. "If the light that is in thee be (come) darkness, how great is that darkness! (Matthew 6:23) The harvest is a time for winnowing the 'wheat' -- a sifting, a separating time, and it is for each of us to prove our characters: 'Having done all, stand!' The tests of this 'harvest' must be like those of the Jewish or typical 'harvest. ' One of them is the cross, another is the presence of Christ, another is humility, another is love. The Jews were reprov'd because they 'knew not the time of their visitation. ' The matter is doubly distressing for those who have once seen the light of Present Truth, and afterward go into the 'outer darkness. ' It implies unfaithfulness."

(This discourse was given to the Bellingham, Washington Ecclesia, Thursday forenoon, June 14, 1973 by George B. Wilmott, 2721 N. W. Loraine, Fort Worth, Texas, 76106.)