

## **Partakers of the Heavenly Calling**

### **Part 2 of You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God**

**By George Davis and Michael Clark**

Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus. . . for this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. (Hebrews 3:1-3, NKJV).

We hear a lot of talk in Christendom today about the will of God. Volumes have been written on the subject. Do we really understand what Jesus meant when He said, "[Lo, I come to do Your will, O God](#)"? Or do we understand what the author of Hebrews meant when he specified, "[He takes away the first to establish the second](#)"? (See [Hebrews 10:7-9](#)). One look at Christianity today reveals that the answer is NO. What we see is a paradox, praying, "Your will be done," while it rebuilds the things that Christ came to remove. We are like Peter who boldly cried out, "Not so, Lord!" as soon as God asked something of him that went against the traditions of the Jewish fathers. We see a practical denial of Christ's finished work, and like the Hebrews in the wilderness, we fail to enter into the finished work of the Father by choosing the works of our own hands. If we rebuild the things that Christ destroyed, we make ourselves transgressors (See [Galatians 2:18](#)) because our thoughts and actions are at variance with the truth. The book of Hebrews is a call for believers to live a higher reality--a reality that calls us up above the temporal realm of earthly sacraments into the heavenly reality and substance, of which these earthly things are mere shadows.

The author of Hebrews exhorts us to leave behind those religious things of past dispensations that have waxed old, and answer the heavenly calling, the ever-increasing upward call of the Spirit in Christ Jesus. This is the theme throughout the book.

Jesus came to do God's will, first in taking away and then in establishing. He did not come to take away the first religious system so that a better religious system could be established in its place. No, this new order tears at the very fabric of carnal man's need for a religious order and calls everyone who wants to know the risen Christ to pass into His presence beyond the torn veil of all religion. As Jesus died on the cross He cried out, "It is finished." It was then that God ripped the temple veil in two from top to

bottom. Christ, the perfect sacrifice, finished the old order, fulfilling its types and shadows. He Himself is the reality and substance that they foretold. This does not only apply to the Lamb of sacrifice, but also to every other facet of temple worship. All things have become new and heavenly. We must go beyond mere symbolism and reach out for the true spiritual substance of God's kingdom. In spite of this glorious truth, we see Christians today who are as intrigued as any orthodox Jew by a one ton cornerstone paraded around the temple mount and the search for a perfect red heifer. All God's children need to understand these three simple words, "It is finished!" He has taken away the first and established the second! God's will has nothing to do with sacrifices and offerings of the old religious order that hinted of better things to come.

This was without doubt a highly revolutionary thought to the recipients of the Letter to the Hebrews. In the minds of the Jews, who had been taught that the religion of their fathers was perfect and unchangeable, the thought that Judaism had outlived its usefulness and was ready to vanish away was more than radical--it was heretical. The idea that God did not intend to use the old wineskin of Judaism but cast it away was difficult if not impossible for them to accept. The same thing is happening today in the minds of most Christians who are being challenged to look beyond the teachings of their denominations for a more perfect manifestation of God's own Son.

This letter to the Hebrews was written to help Jewish Christians who were struggling with the extremes of this new order that Christ established and to help them to go on unto perfection. They had settled into a compromise, choosing a more moderate approach, keeping what they felt were the essentials of the old order and mixing them in with the new. They had created a sort of designer-Christianity that did not offend anyone. They put themselves in the position of determining what is good and evil. They were determined to maintain the things that had given them power in the old Levitical system while claiming Jesus Christ as their Messiah. In today's religious thinking, they were moderates and considered balanced.

The word moderation means, "Avoiding extremes." Religious man prides himself in his moderation, and does all that he can to avoid the radical, and yes, even the extreme ramifications of Christ's finished work. This is especially true regarding the taking away of the old religious order. To avoid offending his heightened sense of moderation, religious man sets his hand to take those things of the old religious order which he has determined to be good and mixes them with the new order.

T. A. Sparks wrote,

This letter to the Hebrews sets forth the all-inclusive revolution or reconstitution which God made when He brought His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world - that is, the religious revolution. This revolution, which was rejected by Judaism, has been almost entirely overlooked or lost sight of by Christendom since Apostolic times. The entire present system of Christianity as generally accepted would be impossible if the meaning of this letter were received as a heavenly revelation in the power of the Holy Spirit. . . . In the light of such a spiritual eye-opening a whole lot of things would go: but being a "heavenly vision," there would be no tears, no sense of loss, and no fond farewells. The gain and joy would rather put all such things into the category of a worn-out and no-longer-to-be-desired suit of clothes. . . . In the previous dispensations everything was outward and tangible -- sacrifices, altars, meeting places, priests, vestments, feasts, rewards, etc; but in this age all these things are gathered into the all-inclusive "In Christ," and are essentially spiritual aspects of the One Heavenly Man; to be known, enjoyed, and comprehended only by faith. The long generations of sentient gratification in religious things were in the very blood of these Hebrews, and they craved for the seen, the felt, the heard, the physical and emotional system of the past.

We must grasp this essential truth. Although the ekklesia of Christ meets on the earth, it is not an earthly institution. It is a heavenly organism, seated in heavenly places in Christ. The words heaven, heavens and heavenly are used sixteen times in the epistle to the Hebrews in connection with the true Church, which is heavenly and spiritual, in comparison with Judaism, which is earthly and concerned with physical ceremonies, temples, hierarchy and all things that appeal to the five senses.

Now, 2000 years later, Christianity has come full-circle. Having adapted its priesthood after the old Levitical order and re-instituted the rituals of the old religious system, Christianity, for the most part, has become another Judaism and has largely lost its heavenly salt and savor. Tragically, the better things that the author of Hebrews wrote about are as unrealized and unseen in today's worldly Church as they were in first-century Judaism. A church that still clings to things that tantalize the carnal senses cannot know the power of the age to come. The mystique of beautiful buildings, tapestries, stained glass windows, imagery, incense and music all add to the optimal religious experience, allowing the earth-bound worshipper to feel touched. Only a heavenly-minded ekklesia, called out of this sensationalism and seeking those things

that are not seen, that city whose builder and maker is God, can answer the heavenly call.

The call to God's children today is the same as it was in the first century. It is a heavenly calling. It is an invitation to smell the sweet savor of Christ, to hear His voice, to taste of the heavenly gift, and seek with spiritual eyes a heavenly country. We are called to "mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." We dare not be like Israel that did not enter God's rest beyond the veil, but instead focused on outer and inner court ministry, requiring the Gentile believers to do the same. We too can miss, by their same example of unbelief, the heavenly sanctuary that God pitched and not man. Paul accused such as these of minding earthly things and exhorted all believers to remember that ["our conversation \[our life\] is in heaven"](#) (See [Philippians 3:19-20](#)).

This is the choice before us today. Will we set our affections on high, denying the cravings of our carnal nature, or on things upon the earth? Will our love for the rudimentary things of the religious kosmos make us the adversary of Him who was sent to take away the first and establish the second? Will we mind the earthly things of religion or answer the heavenly call? No man can serve two masters. He will hate the one and cling to the other.

In Revelation chapter two, verse five, Jesus exhorts the assembly at Ephesus, ["Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent."](#) The Greek word for fallen in this passage is [1601] *ekpipto*--"to fall from a thing, to lose it, to fall from a place, to fall from a position, to fall to the ground, to be without effect" (Strong).

The church has fallen from its heavenly position by clinging to earthly shadows, saying to itself, "I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing." Jesus' called the church of Laodicea to repent of the fallen, earthly institution that they had become. Jesus called each individual to open the door and allow Him to bring the fellowship of heaven once again. It was a call to again be a part of the heavenly organism that He intended them to be. He directed them to the open door in the heavens. He exhorted them, ["He who overcomes, I will give to him to sit down with me on my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father on his throne"](#) (Revelation 3:21).

When John turned his eyes from the earthbound churches of Asia Minor, he saw a door opened in heaven, and a voice like a trumpet issued the invitation, ["Come up here and](#)

I will show you the things, which must happen after this." What did John see? What happened next? Immediately John was in the Spirit and saw "a throne set in heaven" (See Revelation 3:19-4:2).

Jesus invites those who overcome to join Him in His victory and sit in His throne, but first the bonds of the world, both religious and secular, must be broken. Jesus said to His disciples, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). The Spirit is still calling the church to overcome and return to our heavenly position, to set our affections on things above and not on things on the earth (See Colossians 3:2). We must enter into His rest. The exalted Christ is still inviting us to overcome and sit down (labor to enter His rest) with Him in His throne.

Paul wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ . . . And has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Ephesians 1:3, 2:6). This is the rest our Hebrews writer speaks of in chapter four.

We cannot answer the call to "come up here" unless we overcome the weight of religion that tethers us to this present evil world. We cannot keep the things of the old religious order and soar to heaven's heights! We cannot sit down with Christ in His throne while we are bound to the earth by the rudimentary principles of the world. We cannot have it both ways! If we attempt to do so, God forbid, we will sacrifice the better things for the old things!

"However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual. The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man" (1 Corinthians 15:46-49, NKJV).

"Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes;

there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

"Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.'

"Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God. Her light was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone, clear as crystal." (Revelation 21:1-11, NKJV).