

"My brethren, count it all joy."

Sunday, September 10, 2006

"James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting. My brethren, count* it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

James 1:1-4.

***("Count" – Here's what "count" means, according to Strong:)**

2233. ἡγέομαι hēgēōmai, hayg-eh'-om-ah-ee; mid. of a (presumed) strengthened form of ἡγώ; to lead, i.e. command (with official authority); fig. to deem, i.e. consider:—account, (be) chief, count, esteem, governor, judge, have the rule over, suppose, think.

The sense appears to be that the matter of enduring severe trials as cause for abounding joy is of transcendent importance, and so it has been commanded by the final, supreme, and official authority of Heaven. The trial itself is much more precious than of gold. To wit: "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. 1:6-7.

Nothing better brings eternal praise, honor and glory to God than his wisdom and power demonstrated in delivering his saints from fiery trials. To wit: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Pet. 2:9. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to (the godly) man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." 1 Cor. 10:13. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." James 1:12.

"Behold, we count them happy which endure."

It is the language of exclusivity. No others are truly and lastingly happy, in this world, and most especially – and certainly – in the world to come. "Fading is the worldling's pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show. Solid joys and lasting treasure, none but Zion's children know." "Take, my

brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”
Jas 5:10-11.

“Ye have heard of the patience of Job.” (What to do when God appears to be angry at you)

Is God ever angry at his chosen people? Does he punish them in wrath and vengeance? Ever? A RESOUNDING “NO!” However things may appear to the little lambs suffering in the midst of fiery trials. See our own predicaments in Job’s: “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him; On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him; But he knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined.” Job. 23:8-11.

When it is written that God is wroth with his elect sheep, the meaning is that from the suffering sheep’s perspective, it appears so. As at Isa. 57:15-19: “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. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.” Read to verse 19.

“God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” 1 Cor. 10:13. Otherwise, “the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made (would fail, fall, apostatize).” Isa. 57:16. “Feed me with food convenient for me; Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? Or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” Prov. 30:8-9. “For the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous; lest the righteous put forth their hands unto iniquity.” Psa. 125:3. “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God. Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow.” Isa. 50:10-11. “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you.” 1 Pet. 4:12.