

# Rise Up And Build

---

*"So They said, 'Let us rise up and build,' Then they set their hands to do this good work," Neh. 2:18*

---

Decembers 20,2020

## **"Make Your Calling And Election Sure"**

*"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Peter 1:10).*

The epistle of 2nd Peter was written by the inspired apostle Peter, and it was addressed to those who had "*obtained like precious faith with*" the apostles (v. 1). The recipients of this epistle had been "*called by glory and virtue*" (v. 3); they had been given "*exceeding great and precious promises*" (4), and they were "*brethren*" in the Lord (v.10).

However, notwithstanding the fact that God had "*called*" them "*by glory and virtue*" (v. 3), they were not to assume that their eternal salvation was a sure thing or that they could never fall from the grace of God. In fact, to the contrary, in chapter two (verses 19-22) of this same epistle Peter warned the recipients of this epistle of the danger of their again being "*brought into*" the "*bondage*" of sin, of again becoming "*entangled*" in the "*pollutions of the world,*" and of their "*latter end*" being "*worse for them than the beginning,*" and therefore of their being likened to a dog returning to "*its own vomit,*" and that of "*a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire!*" Yes, notwithstanding the Calvinistic teachings of so many, it **is** possible for a child of God to so sin as to be eternally condemned! Peter, being an inspired apostle, recognized this solemn fact, and sought to warn his brethren accordingly.

Hence, in order to prevent such a tragedy from occurring, he exhorted his "*brethren*" (v. 10) to give "*all diligence*" to "*add*" to "*faith*" those character qualities set forth in 2 Pet. 1:5-7, namely these: virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and brotherly love, and he then stated that "*if these things be in you and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,*" (v.8). However, he then warned, saying that "*he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins*" (v. 9).

Hence, in view of the dire danger of spiritual apostasy as set forth in verse nine, he began verse 10 by saying "*wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure,*" and he then said "*if you do these things you will never stumble.*" A point necessarily inferred by such language is the fact that "*if*" they did not "*do these things*" they would surely "*stumble!*" That being the case, this verse deserves closer scrutiny.

The verse begins by saying “*wherefore, brethren...*” “Wherefore” or “therefore” (NKJV), is a term which means that Peter was drawing an inference from what had previously been stated in the immediately preceding verses, namely the danger of being “barren” and “unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ,” the danger of being **blind** even to the point of forgetting that “*he was purged from his sins*” (v. 8,9)! That being the case, they were to “*give diligence...*” “Diligence” means that they were to make “every effort,” to leave no stone unturned in their effort to make their “*calling and election sure.*”

“Give diligence” for what? “To make your calling and election sure.” Their “**calling**” refers to the call of the gospel. Interestingly, “church” is from *ekklesia* (Greek), which is combination of two Greek words — “*ek*” (meaning out of) and *klesia* (meaning to call). That being the case, the church Jesus built consists of those who have called out of the world and into Christ. Hence, the “church” (the called out at Thessalonica (I Thess. 1:1), consisted of those whom God had “called” by the “gospel” (2 Thess. 2:14). Every Christian has been “called” by God — “called,” not in some mystical, miraculous, better-felt-than-told sense, but by the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore, to refuse to give heed to the gospel invitation is to turn a deaf ear to the call of God!

“Your election...” “Election” is from *ekloge* (Greek) which “denotes a picking out, selection” or “that which is chosen” (**Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words**, by W.E. Vine). The “brethren” whom Peter addressed were “called” — called by the gospel, and chosen; they were the “elect” (cf. I Pet. 1:2) of God. They became the “elect” or the chosen of God when they obeyed the call of the gospel! Hence, being the “elect” of God involved the “two sides” of salvation — **God’s** side and **man’s** side! God provided the gospel, and the gospel is for all (Rom. 1:16), but man has to hear and obey. God longs for the salvation of everyone (2 Peter 3:9), but salvation is limited to those who obey the gospel! In that last day those who refused to obey the gospel will be “*punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power*” (2 Thess. 2:9)!

Give “**diligence**” for what? “Give diligence to make your calling and election sure!” Such language implies that it is possible for one to think he is saved when in reality he is not! In fact, Jesus warned of that very situation on Matt. 7:22-23, saying, “*Many will say to be in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name, And then I will declare to them, I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.*” Yes, there will be a lot of judgment day surprises, and judgment day let downs — to be everlastingly experienced by so many being eternally lost, even though they lived their lives thinking they were saved! How sad! How terribly sad!

Most of us have taken chances before and were let down. Perhaps we purchased a new automobile, thinking we were getting a “good deal,” only to learn that we paid good money for a “lemon!” We were disappointed, but we can “get over” that kind of a let down. But we cannot afford to take chances with our **soul**; it will “spend eternity” somewhere — eternity in heaven, along with the redeemed of all ages, or in that place of “*everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*” (Matt. 25:41). In view of these contrasting alternatives, we cannot afford to take chances with our soul; we must “give **diligence**” to make our “*calling and election sure!*”

This “diligence,” properly understood, should be taken in a before and after sense. “Before and after what,” you may ask. Let me explain further. God calls us through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). The “gospel” contains facts to be believed and commandments to be obeyed. We must **believe** in Jesus Christ (John 8:24); we must believe in God (Heb. 11:6); we must believe the gospel (Mark 16:15-16). If we truly believe the gospel, we will believe in His death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-4). We must obey the command to **repent** of our sins (Acts

17:30), to **confess** our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10), and to be **baptized** “*for the remission of sins*” (Acts 2:38). However, more is involved than just being baptized. It involves the proper **mode** (immersion, Rom. 6:3-4), the right **purpose** (“*for the remission of sins*,” Acts 2:38), and the right **subjects** — accountable persons (not infants), who have met the aforementioned conditions. Sadly, many people have been sprinkled, thinking they were baptized, and others have been immersed, but for the wrong purpose (having been taught that baptism is “an outward sign of an inward grace,” having been led to believe that they were already saved **before** being baptized!

But giving “*diligence*” does not end at the waters of baptism! Peter was addressing “*brethren*” (2 Pet. 1:10), members of the Lord’s family, and he exhorted them to the “*give diligence*” to make their “*calling and election sure*.” We are called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14), but those thus “*called*” elsewhere are exhorted to “*walk worthy of the calling with which you were called*” (Eph. 4:1), and in our text (2 Pet. 1:10), Peter said “*if ye do these things ye shall never fall*,” and that for those who “*do these things*,” “*an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet. 1:11). Properly understood, Peter herein let his readers know that **keeping** saved is as important as **being** saved in the first place.! Too many have been taught and baptized, but neglect to “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pet. 3:18), who forsake their “*first love*” (Rev. 2:4), and return to the filthy muck and mire of sin!

Friend, are **you** “*giving all diligence to make **your** calling and election sure?*” Before answering that question, let me ask some other questions: Were you baptized in the right way and for the right reason? Are you regular in attendance for Bible study and worship? Do you read and study your Bible each day? Are you living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world? Do you spend time in prayer? Are you seeking to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world? Do you spend more time satisfying the desires of the Body than the well-being of the soul? More such questions could be asked, but you get the message. Are **you** making **your** “*calling and election sure?*”

—B. Witherington

\*\*\*