

"Cast Not Away Thy Boldness"

This appeal is made in light of the writer's reminding Hebrews how they had acted in the former days immediately after their obedience to the gospel. Then they endured a great conflict of suffering, partly they were made gazingstock by both reproaches and afflictions; partly they stood by the side of those who suffered similar reproaches. Further he reminded them they had had compassion for those in bonds, taking joyfully the spoiling of their possession for they believed they had a better, abiding one. It was at this point he injects these words, *"Cast not away your boldness which hath great recompense of reward"* (Heb. 10:35).

He reminds them that what they had once done, they must continue to do. *"For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise"* (Heb. 10:36). The word *"patience"* in the text means steadfastness. It, and similar words, are sprinkled through Paul's writings to urge his readers, God's children, to hold on, not turn loose for anything! He begged the Corinthians to *"Stand fast in the faith"* and to be *"steadfast, unmovable"* (1 Cor. 16:13; 15:58). The same word (patience) is named by Peter as one of the seven "graces" we must add; the possession of which will assure that we will never stumble (2 Pet. 1:5-11). To receive the promise, the prized possession; the better, abiding one as they had once regarded it; depended upon them holding steady to their course.

He reminded them, *"For yet a very little while, he that cometh shall come and shall not tarry, But my righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrink back, then hath my soul no pleasure in him"* (Heb. 10:37f). This passage is quoted in an abbreviated form in both Paul's letters to the Romans and Galatians, saying, *"The righteous shall live by faith"* (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11). The reference in all three instances is to Habakkuk 2:3f. Habakkuk was a pre-exile prophet who was warned of an impending invasion of the Babylonians, and their subsequent victory over Judah. The prophet had difficulty understanding why God would allow a much more wicked people than Judah to defeat her. He had to learn to live by faith that what God did was best, even though he could see no logical reason in it.

The promise was, *"Yet a very little while my righteous one shall come"* and with his coming deliverance would come to God's people. Our problem is that God's *"very little while"* could seem eternity to time-conscious men. The promise to the martyred saints was release from persecution and was conveyed in these words, *"rest a little while"* (Rev. 6:11). That *"little while"* of bitter persecution would stretch for more than two hundred plus years, reaching far beyond their lifetime. Some then (as well as now) give up on his

coming for Peter wrote of mockers who would come with mockery, saying *"Where is the promise of his coming?"* (2 Pet. 3:3f). Now, as then, we must not forget, that *"one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day"* (2 Pet. 3:8).

How tempting to *"shrink back"*! Thus we are urged to *"Remember Lot's wife"* and that *"No man, having put his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the kingdom of heaven"* (Luke 17:32; 9:62). We must not forget that *"if he shrink back then hath my soul no pleasure in him."* How sad to have nearly made it home but to stumble and refuse to run all the way! God's confidence in these was, *"But we are not of them that shrink back unto perdition, but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul"* (Heb. 10:39). Can our God have the same confidence in me? In you?

-- Jim McDonald