

The background of the cover is a dark brown gradient. Overlaid on this is intricate, golden scrollwork and floral patterns. The patterns are symmetrical and highly detailed, with swirling lines and leaf-like motifs. The text is centered and rendered in a bold, yellow, serif font with a dark drop shadow.

ONE
HOPE OF
OUR
CALLING

DALE
RUMBLE

One Hope of Our Calling

Introduction

God has a very important call and purpose for your life; do you know what it is? This is the question that I will seek to address in this tract.

Scripture reveals that just as there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God and Father, so also there is *one hope of our calling* (Ephesians 4:4-6).

As newborn children of God, our first experience of hope begins with the Lord's promise, that when we die, we will go to heaven and be with Him forever.

Over time, as we grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord, our hope expands to embrace His promise that all believers will experience a personal redemption of their bodies when Christ returns (1 Corinthians 15:50-54). We will be changed into His image; the body of our humble state will be transformed into conformity with the body of His glory (Philippians 3:20-21). This promised redemption makes it possible for us to inherit the kingdom.

As we grow further in our knowledge of Christ we discover that each believer was prepared, beginning in his mother's womb, to fulfill a call that the Lord had specifically prepared for him (2 Timothy 1:9). *This is the fullness of hope to which we are called.* Although we may not understand this at the time, our call begins at salvation. This is why we must seek Him above all else. How well we fulfill our call will determine our rewards when Jesus returns; perhaps even our future glory and place in His kingdom. Did we build our life and service upon the foundation of Christ, on the fellowship of His sufferings and the power of His resurrection; or did we build our own kingdom?

Paul's response to the call of God expresses it well:

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

All that we have spiritually accomplished during our salvation on earth will be "quality checked" according to the call that God has placed on our life. As His disciple, how well did we build on the foundation of Christ? This is where our hope will be realized.

. . . like a wise masterbuilder I (Paul) laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. (1 Corinthians 3:10-15)

The fact that there is only *one hope of our calling* suggests that it is centered in God's eternal purpose for us. Let us examine the words of God at the creation of man.

Then God said, "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them . . . rule over all the earth . . . God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, . . ." (Genesis 1:26-28)

Man was made from both the earth and from the spiritual life and likeness of God. He was made of earth because he was to rule over the earth; he was made from the life of God because he was responsible to God for how he ruled. This foreshadows the hope of our calling in God. We are called to reign over creation.

Man was created a living soul who possesses an interface with God through his spirit, and an interface to the world through five physical senses. The soul of man contains his will (the throne of man), his intellect, memory and emotions. His spirit and five senses are two "windows" of stimulus by which man makes all of his decisions!

The ultimate goal in our salvation is learning to walk in obedience to leadings of the Holy Spirit (gold, silver and precious stones) over the desires of one's intellect and his physical senses (wood, hay and straw). The glorified state of our being contains our hope.

For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? (Romans 8:24)

This tract has been written to explain the significance of the hope of our calling, how it flows out of the purpose of God to bring forth a large family of sons to rule over a redeemed earth in Christ. Since God has one primary purpose for man, He speaks of His call as, *the one hope of our calling*.

(Selected words in various scriptures have been highlighted for the purpose of emphasis.)

In the Beginning

The commissioning of Adam was not the beginning, for God foreknew that Adam would sin and fail in his mission. Before God laid the foundation of the earth, He looked down the corridor of time and prophetically saw those descendants of Adam who would not fail, but would choose to obey the call of God in their generation. These He has called.

God does not coerce anyone to change or nullify their will; He does seek to draw men to Himself by revealing His love for them, but the final decision lies with men; we are not robots.

Thus the very first truth in the *one hope of our calling*, is God's foreknowledge of all believers, who in their generation, will choose to obey Him. These believers are predestined to be conformed into the image of Jesus.

For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the first born among many brethren. (Romans 8:29)

When one has been born from above by the Spirit of God, he possesses the life of Christ; he is a child of God who will be conformed into the image of Christ. The *one hope of our calling* is anchored in the certainty of the will and purpose of God.

The Purpose of God

What is hope to us is a fact with God, for His purpose will surely be established.

. . . for I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, "My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure, . . . Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass. I have planned it, surely I will do it". (Isaiah 46:9-11)

God was not surprised at the fall of man into sin, and the consequential fall of the earth into the corruption of decay. He foreknew that this would take place even before He laid the foundation of the earth.

Because of His deep love for lost mankind, God made provision for the one and only sacrifice that could redeem man and restore him into divine righteousness and fellowship with Himself. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to become the sin-bearer for all men. This act was essential for man to have hope of any kind.

Being both God and man, Jesus became the mediator between God and man. He lived a perfect life, which He willingly gave up in death to atone for the sins of all men. He was God's sacrificial Lamb. The truth of His sacrifice is the gospel of His death, burial and resurrection.

The transition of man from spiritual death back into the life and righteousness of God is based on His love for us.

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

Our call in God is framed by the horrific beating and scourging of Jesus. His back was plowed by whips, His face was marred and disfigured, and nails were driven through His hands and feet. The life of the flesh is in the blood; the blood from His body was the blood of God, and is the *only* cleansing agent for sin that exists. Repentance and faith in Christ is the first step that man must take in response to the call of God.

God has purposed to bring forth an administration, a stewardship where all things in both heaven and earth will be summed up in Christ. He will have first place in everything. This stewardship also contains an inheritance for members of the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:9-11). This inheritance will be our reward for how well we fulfilled the *one hope of our calling*.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. (Ephesians 1:18)

We need revelation to understand our calling, and especially to understand how it relates to the authority and glory of Christ.

... when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the

church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.
(Ephesians 1:20-23)

As we personally yield to the call of God, the total gifting of all believers reflects the fullness of Christ. In total, all believers make up His body, just as we also are a large family of sons with each one made in His image.

But God . . . made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:4-6)

Our Father has called us to this future, completed state where we are integrated into the body of Christ. A church is much more than just an assembly of believers who are organized by leaders around certain doctrine; it is part of the body of Christ, members who are united under His headship and who express His will and purpose through their relationships, gifts and ministries of the Spirit. Our part is to understand His call, yield to His will, be equipped in the body of Christ to fulfill our call, and humbly serve in our place in the body of Christ.

The glory of Christ is a foundation truth to all of this taking place.

. . . what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Colossians 1:27)

Christ must be completely central to everything in our life and in our response to the call of God.

Equipped in the Body of Christ

The first call that every believer receives is the call to repentance, to believe the gospel and be justified. From then on all of the trials, prayers, persecutions, testings, etc., are part of our call to be glorified in Christ when He returns.

And these whom He predestined, He also called; and these He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified. (Romans 8:30)

Once we have been justified, we become part of the body of Christ. This is where we will be equipped to fulfill the *one hope of our calling*.

A vital principle in our calling is the virtue of unity. We are bonded in love to be one functioning body under the headship of Christ; there are no “lone rangers.”

The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity (John 17:22-23)

Another important principle in the body of Christ is God's desire for diversity. This is evident in His creation of flowers and of birds. Man is no exception; there is great diversity in the body of Christ, for each of us are unique, and we have been created for diverse tasks. While we can learn much from each other, our sense of destiny will not be fulfilled by copying other believers; we are to be uniquely like Jesus.

For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)

When we were being formed within our mother's womb, the Spirit of God created within us a specific structure of DNA that uniquely defined various personal and personality properties. When one is saved, and receives the Holy Spirit, He anoints these properties through spiritual gifts and ministries that will enable the believer to fulfill the call of God (Psalm 139:13-16).

This is the beginning of being equipped in the body of Christ. We have nothing to do with what God has placed within us before our birth; but we must seek, in Christ, the plan God has prepared for our life thereafter.

The prophet, Jeremiah, is a good example of such a call.

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations. (Jeremiah 1:5)

Believers are bonded together in unity, in a covenant union with Christ, to form a spiritual body with great diversity of expression.

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are varieties of ministries, but the same Lord. There are varieties of effects (manifestations), but the same God who works all things in all persons. (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

The key word to describe such diversity is "organism," not organization!

God has prepared a place in the body of Christ that only you can fill. This is His plan for your life.

But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He desired. (1 Corinthians 12:18)

The purpose of ministry is not to edify oneself, but to build up others in the local body. Giftings of the Holy Spirit are very diverse since they express the fullness of Christ.

Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each one of us are to exercise them accordingly . . . (Romans 12:6)

For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. (John 1:16)

Diversity exists in one's personality, maturity, spiritual gifts, and method of service; for example a prophet may speak from a scripture that has been quickened to him, or speak from visions that he supernaturally sees.

*For to one is given the **word of wisdom** through the Spirit, and to another the **word of knowledge** according to the same Spirit, to another **faith** by the same Spirit, and to another **gifts of healing** by the one Spirit, and to another the **effecting of miracles**, and to another **prophecy**, and to another the **distinguishing of spirits**, to another **various kinds of tongues**, and to another the **interpretation of tongues**. (1 Corinthians 12:8-10)*

There can arise situations and times of need in an assembly that require the input of a specific ministry.

*God has appointed in the church, **first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, various kinds of tongues**. (1 Corinthians 12:28)*

Effective ministry cannot be separated from growth in character. It is out of relationship with Christ that one can minister His life to others. One of the best descriptions of the early church is the statement, "Behold, how they love one another."

There are many other ministry callings; for example, hospitality, or a godly mother who is raising her children to know and love the Lord.

There are also five ministries who are specifically anointed to equip the saints for their work of service.

*And He (Jesus) gave some as **apostles**, and some as **prophets**, and some as **evangelists**, and some as **pastors and teachers**, for the **equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ**. (Ephesians 4:11-12)*

It is possible for one to equip others without being their overseer. However it is from men of godly character, who possess one of these five

ministries, that elders are chosen to oversee the local church (1 Titus 1:5-9; 1 Timothy 3:1-7).

It is good to remember that using our time and talents to build a religious structure, which does not recognize or edify the body of Christ, is a work of wood, hay and straw.

The first step in being equipped is developing a hunger to know the Lord; in seeking Him, one will begin to see his place of service in the body. As head of the church, Jesus initiates all callings and ministries.

Prophetic impartation is commonly used by the Lord to make known, or to confirm, the ministry calling of believers.

*Do not neglect **the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.** (1 Timothy 4:14)*

*For I long to see you so that **I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established.** (Romans 1:11)*

*For this reason I remind you to **kindle afresh the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.** (2 Timothy 1:6)*

The laying on of hands makes it very clear to whom the prophetic word is directed. Prophetic words carry the anointing

A key requirement in such ministry is the presence of faith and willingness in the heart of the one receiving the prophecy. I thank the Lord for the various times in over fifty years of my life that I have been edified by confirming or directive prophecy.

Ministry in the body of Christ is not a case of “performers” (clergy) and “spectators” (laity); it is the diverse input of the whole body that is assembled.

*What is the outcome then brethren? **When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation.** Let all things be done for edification. (1 Corinthians 14:26)*

The ideal environment for believers to be properly shepherded in, as they exercise their spiritual gifts, learn trust and accountability in ministry, is in small groups.

A vital factor in equipping others is to train them to see the hand of God in their trials, temptations, testing and persecution.

And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. (Romans 8:28)

What it means to be properly equipped in a local expression of the body of Christ, is well expressed in the following scripture:

. . . speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love. (Ephesians 4:15-16)

The growth process in building the body of Christ is likened to building with multiple sized and shaped stones, rather than with the uniform conformity of bricks. Man may build with bricks so that he can better control what is well defined, but God builds with stones to ensure diversity.

You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood . . . (1 Peter 2:5)

Conclusion

My text began with God's declared purpose to create man in His image with a commission to rule the earth for Him. The fulfillment of His purpose will be complete with the return of Christ to the earth. At this time believers will receive full adoption as sons of God by receiving glorified bodies like that of Jesus (Romans 8:23).

In one of the last epistles of the New Testament, the Lord reviews His plan for man.

For He did not subject to angels the world to come . . . But one has testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that You remember him? . . . You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, and have appointed him over the works of Your hands; You have put all things in subjection under his feet." (Hebrews 2:5-8)

The question is, "Are we fully prepared to reign in the place that our Father has prepared us for?" The answer is whether we have built with wood, hay and straw; or with gold, silver and precious stones.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

At the resurrection, there will be great rewards for all overcomers, but there will also be many who are ashamed and disappointed. Everything will be decided by the glory of our relationship with Christ while we were in His body on earth; did we fulfill the hope of our calling?

Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming. (1 John 2:28)

Scripture suggests that a believer's reward at the resurrection is measured by the glory he receives (Daniel 12:3). All believers will receive a body like that of Jesus, but there will be different glories.

There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for star differs from star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead . . . (1 Corinthians 15:41-42)

Even creation today seeks to be delivered from its bondage to decay and corruption that arose from the sin of Adam. All things will be made new; and creation is waiting for the coming oversight of redeemed sons.

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. (Romans 8:19)

Why is reigning on the earth so important? The answer is because that is where God is establishing His tabernacle!

. . . and I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them." (Revelation 21:3)

As we approach the close of this age, as the Lord restores His church to gather in the end-time harvest, it is of utmost importance to know the hope of our calling, and by God's grace, to fulfill it.



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