

GRACE & TRUTH **MAGAZINE**

- ***The Father's Love Displayed***
- ***Christ And The Christian***
- ***Confession And Repentance***

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So Much To Take In

We all likely have certain verses or passages that we hold dear. For me, I find many of those jewels in Philippians, giving me much encouragement. God, by the Holy Spirit, directed men to write His thoughts (1 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) with an application to us, even though the true interpretation of a particular passage may be about others, such as the nation of Israel. However, God never changes; His love for us is constant. Therefore, treasured words from Him are to be found in every book of the Bible.

Early in Philippians, a letter written to the believers in Philippi, we find Paul telling about his remembrance of and praying for the believers there. Can we not take this to a more personal level between God and us? I am thankful to God for *His* remembrance of me, and for you too (Phil. 1:3). What about the Lord's praying for His own – for us – as He did in John 17, like the apostle did for the saints in Philippi *with joy* (v.4)? Does that not encourage your heart? Will not “He who has begun a good work in you ... complete it” (v.6 NKJV)? We could

certainly go through Paul's letter verse by verse and find a great many other precious truths. In doing so, we would see that they all are centered on the Lord Himself. He loves us, cares for us and died for us. The Lord now lives exalted in heaven. Oh, the riches of God's grace toward us!

Philippians 4:8 gives us descriptions of things on which to meditate: things that “are true ... noble ... just ... pure ... lovely ... of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy.” These words describe our Lord Jesus Christ! Let us not simply think of Him from time to time, but let us actually pause for a time and consider Him. He is altogether lovely (Song 5:16), and through Him the “peace of God ... guards [our] hearts and minds” (Phil. 4:7) despite the turmoil of our world.

There is so much to enjoy in this short book – so much to take in. Slowly and carefully read the four chapters of Philippians for yourself and delight yourself in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul

The Father's Love, Displayed By Jesus

by Jacob Redekop

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life."

1 John 1:1 NKJV

The apostle John was amazed at the thought of the Father's love being so great, and he stopped to consider it carefully. To do so, his senses were involved: First, the ears for hearing; second, the eyes for seeing; and third, the hands for touching. John's conclusion was that truly this Man is unique!

As the apostle began this opening verse of 1 John, he first mentioned that "*which we have heard.*" The disciples actually heard the Man speaking and realized He was no ordinary Man. They listened intently and then passed on to us what they had heard. The multitude "marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth" (Lk. 4:22). "They were astonished

at His teaching, for His word was with authority" (v.32). On another occasion officers sent to take Jesus said, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" (Jn. 7:46). To the disciples, Jesus said, "The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life" (6:63). That is to say, His words produced a spiritual and life-giving effect in those who heard. This can be said of no one else.

The apostle then continued to speak of that "*which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon.*" Here the apostle would have us look and contemplate. This is not just a casual glance, but to take time and reflect on the One on whom our eyes are fixed, even Jesus. In Luke 5 we see the Man who can forgive sins, and

the large crowd witnessing this reasoned, “Who can forgive sins but God alone” (v.21). The multitude that heard Jesus speak and saw what He did were amazed and said, “We have seen strange things today!” (v.26).

The Samaritan woman after her encounter with Jesus at the well of Sychar went to the men of her city and said, “Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?” (Jn. 4:29). Jesus was more than a Jew, more than a prophet; He was indeed the Christ, the Son of the living God. He opened her heart and revealed to her the Father, who is seeking worshipers to worship in spirit and truth.

Is this not the voice for us today? We are wonderfully privileged to focus our eyes, our spiritual vision, on Jesus. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels ... crowned with glory and honor” (Heb. 2:9). “But we all, looking on the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18 JND). We know who He is, Son of God and Son of Man – the One who loves us and came down from heaven to save us and to reveal the Father’s love.

Back to our verse in 1 John, we then read “*our hands have han-*

dled, concerning the Word of life.” After His resurrection, the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, “Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see” (Lk. 24:39 NKJV). The word “handle” means to feel or touch, and the meaning is the same in this passage as in our verse.

In Luke 5:12-14 we see Jesus in a city where a man full of leprosy saw Him and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” Jesus responded. He put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed,” and “immediately the leprosy left him.” In Luke 8:43-48 we find a woman with a flow of blood for twelve years who came and touched the hem of Jesus’ garment. When Jesus said, “Who touched Me?”, the woman came forward, trembling, and declared that immediately upon touching Him, she was healed. Jesus’ answer to her is remarkably beautiful: “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

We have traced a little of the life of the Lord Jesus and found that He was available to all who were in distress. He was able and willing to reach out with acts of kindness and words of comfort. May all who read this find comfort and strength by “looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith” (Heb. 12:2). Praise His name! **GT**



PHILIPPIANS

by Alfred Bouter

This wonderful epistle, or letter, is linked to several people in Philippi, a city in Macedonia just north of Greece. These individuals had identified with the gospel of God’s grace, had accepted it and become true Christians.

The first was Lydia, a merchant of purple who had come from the city of Thyatira, in present day Turkey. Then a former Roman army officer, in charge of the local jail, believed. Both of them had a number of servants in their households who also became believers (Acts 16:13-15,23-34). Soon these new believers had others added to them, several of whom may have come to know the Lord through Paul’s coworker, Luke, who stayed in the area after Paul, Timothy and Silas traveled on to Thessalonica (16:10,40, 17:1).

It seems that Luke must have helped these believers to function as an assembly, with elders, or overseers, and deacons (Phil.

1:1). From then on, the believers in Philippi supported Paul with great zeal (Phil. 1:5-7, 4:15-16; 2 Cor. 8:1-6), and they continued to do so while he was in Rome as a “prisoner of Christ Jesus” and “the prisoner of the Lord” (Eph. 3:1, 4:1 NKJV). The financial support they had sent to Paul in Rome and the way it was sent, through the care of Epaphroditus¹ (Phil. 2:25-30, 4:18), was evidence that God not only had *begun* a work in them, but He *continued* it. Paul wrote: “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (1:6). The apostle was sure that God would continue the work He had started and would bring it to completion, as will be demonstrated in the day of Christ’s public appearance.

During the day of grace in which we live, we may apply the

A Few Ways To Summarize Philippians

	Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
How To Live	For Christ	Like Christ	To Christ	By Christ
Related To	Our Goal	Our Attitude	Our Objective	Our Enablement
Christ Is	Our Life	Our Model	Our Object	Our Strength
Our Mind	Single	Submissive	Spiritual	Energetic
Main Feature	Committed	Devoted	Focused	Satisfied
Key Activity	Go Out	Go Down	Go Up	Go On

same point to believers who have started to follow the Lord Jesus in this world where He is still despised and rejected. Also today, His disciples are subjected to all kinds of hardships, rejection and persecution, yet they faithfully follow Him.

The Message And The Author

Paul started many of his epistles by presenting himself as an *apostle* of God, sent by Christ Jesus who is in heaven. His title of apostle emphasized the authority God had given him with regard to the new revelations and doctrines that he was called to make known. The teachings were opposed and rejected by many – and even corrupted as far as man’s efforts may go. In Philippians, however, Paul introduced himself together with Timothy as *bondmen* (slaves) of Jesus Christ. This was in the first place, I believe, because this remarkable epistle presents the Lord Jesus Christ as God’s *Bondservant* (2:7).

The servant character Paul took when writing Philippians is contrasted by his authority, which he emphasized in other letters. For example, Paul used it to support the authenticity in Ephesians of the new revelations (Eph. 3:1-4:2) and in Galatians as to the gospel message. In Romans, God’s new message was fully expounded by His apostle, Paul, to whom He had given such authority. This authority that Paul received was given to no one else on earth, ever.

Several Themes

One of the themes in Philippians is that the believers “down here” are to represent the Lord Jesus in heaven, “up there.” In fact, our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20-21), and we may represent Him in this world, here and now. Soon we will reign with Him, but that time has not yet come.

Just as the city of Philippi was built as a miniature Rome to represent the Roman capital as close-

ly as possible, so the believers on earth are Christ's ambassadors to represent Him in heaven. What a privilege and challenge at the same time! Therefore Paul prayed for the progress of the new believers (1:9-11), a prayer that demands much attention for further practice and growth.

Another prominent topic in Philippians is the issue of the human mind, in this case our mind as Christians, meaning what we think and the way we do so as we follow Christ in true humility. The ten references about the mind² highlight our responsibility as Christians, since the number ten is associated to human duty and obedience. Even though we are not under the Mosaic law, we are under the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2), and we belong to a new order, to serve and represent Christ and to honor God in this world that dishonors both.

Sacrifices Of Joy

"Sacrifices Of Joy" is the title of Bible studies on this epistle in a book written by a former missionary to China, G. Christopher Willis. He worked there some-

time after Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) and partly during the days of Watchman Nee (1903-1972), a well-known Chinese evangelist and teacher who suffered much for the Master.

The concept of *sacrifices* highlights the tremendous price paid by faithful Christians, serving and representing Him with much joy despite trials. How important it is for Christians to be full of joy as the apostle himself was, even in very difficult circumstances. Paul explained that his captivity was used by God to further the cause of the gospel and promote the interests of his Master (Phil. 1:15-20). He had a great desire that Christ would be magnified (compare Jn. 3:30)

The concept of sacrifices highlights the tremendous price paid by faithful Christians, serving and representing Him with much joy despite trials.

– so others might see more of Him as through a magnifying glass. In other words, Paul wished that his Master would be seen greater and more wonderful through his own body in which he endured sufferings, to show more of Christ through the process of his sufferings, whether in this life or in death (Phil. 1:20). The Lord Jesus on earth is the great example for all believers (2:5), but He

is now in heaven and sustains us through His Spirit and Word to be His followers as well as followers of Paul (3:17; 1 Cor. 11:1).

God's purpose for every believer from the moment there is any evidence of a true conversion is that he or she may live with this joy. Not a man-made, forced, imitated, feel-good or hyped-up joy, but a true joy³ given by God's Spirit (Gal. 5:22) and in tune with the wisdom from above (Jas. 3:17). Paul is an example of a true overcomer who kept going against all odds. Even though living under tremendous burdens, he was not discouraged or depressed. Rather, he was riding as it were on top of the waves of the tempest, carried and directed by the Lord Himself. This servant had learned to be content and to rely on God in all things (Phil. 4:11-13) – a real example for all believers.

The Greatness Of Christ's Person

Philippians presents our Lord Jesus Christ as God's true Bondservant. Adam should have been God's servant, but he failed miserably, and consequently the whole human race failed (Rom. 5:12-21). However, in the fullness of time God sent His Son (Gal. 4:4), the Lord Jesus Christ, to earth and to His people to accomplish God's will (Jn. 4:34; Heb. 10:5-10). God

had prepared Him a body for His coming (Ps. 40:5-8), and in it He – the Creator and Sustainer of this vast universe – was trained by God to be the true Disciple (Isa. 50:3-5). Then, as the true Israelite Bondman (Ex. 21:6) He became obedient to death, the death of the cross (Phil. 2:6-8). We may discern seven steps in His humiliation (vv.6-8), followed by seven steps of His exaltation (vv.9-10).

Christians are identified with the Lord Jesus, the great Overcomer (Jn. 16:33) now at God's right hand, and thereby we are greatly privileged. The immensity of our privileges brings great responsibilities (read Phil. 1:27-30, 2:2-5). Without God's help we cannot do anything (2:12-13), but with it we may represent Christ here on earth! For this we need seven qualities (2:14-16): doing all things (1) without grumbling or (2) disputing, as (3) blameless and (4) innocent (5) children of God, (6) without blemish, (7) shining as lights in the world. All this is implied in Christ's magnificent example as our supreme Model.

Philippians 2 also shows three wonderful examples of Christians: Paul (vv.17-18), Timothy (vv.19-24) and Epaphroditus – the man who had brought the special gift from Philippi to Rome (vv.25-30). We can follow these examples with the help of our glorified Lord

and of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. It is not possible through human efforts, law-keeping, self-improvement or religion. On the contrary, “we are the circumcision” (3:3), meaning that we are here on earth before God in a position where the flesh, even the religious flesh, has been completely set aside. Only thus will we be able to worship in the power of the Holy Spirit and boast, or glory, in our Lord Jesus Christ, without any confidence in the flesh. Paul’s own example illustrated this in a marvelous way, and it is a challenge to all believers to “be thus minded” (v.15).

Sustained By God

The enemy is dead-set against the true Christian position just described, which is not a religious one according to man’s thinking. Instead it is truly spiritual, in total dependence on the Lord in glory and practiced with the help of the Holy Spirit. In the assembly in Philippi, the adversary was trying to use disagreements between two devoted sisters in Christ who had been close co-workers of Paul to sow discord among the believers (4:2-3). Thus, they were in great danger of losing the enjoyment of the beautiful relationship that characterized these young believers.

In this context the apostle gave godly counsel which is still

valid and useful for all believers. It tells us to rejoice in the Lord always, to be in His presence and to rely on Him in everything. The purpose of these instructions is that we can be a blessing for those around (4:4-7) as we allow Christ to fill us with His peace. Paul also indicated how to achieve and keep such a good relationship, namely by keeping our mind filled with the eight things⁴ mentioned in verse 8 and by following Paul’s example (v.9). May we be doing so today! **GT**

Endnotes:

1. Paul called him a “brother,” “fellow-worker” and “fellow-soldier,” and described the extraordinary commitment of this brother toward the apostle in Rome and the believers at Philippi, through serious illness and healing (Phil. 2:25-30, 4:18).
2. The Greek verb *phroneo* (“to think,” “to mind”) is found 10 times: Phil. 1:7; 2:2 (twice), 5, 3:15 (twice), 19; 4:2, 10 (twice).
3. The nouns “joy,” “thanksgiving” and “grace,” as well as the verbs “to rejoice,” “give thanks,” “grant,” “bestow” and “be glad” are all from the same Greek root: 23 references in Philippians: 1:2-4 (3 times), 7, 18 (twice), 25, 29; 2:2, 9, 17-18 (four times), 28-29 (twice); 3:1; 4:1, 4 (twice), 6, 10, 23.
4. The number eight represents a new order. The Lord desires us to be filled with the things linked with Him – true, noble, just, pure, amiable, good report, virtue, praise – while we are in an environment where He is still rejected.

Philippians: Christ For The Christian

by David Anderson

The Lord Jesus Christ totally filled Paul's life to the exclusion of everything else (Phil. 1:21). The *Epistle to the Philippians*, shows he was occupied with Christ and "the things which are of Christ Jesus" (2:21 NKJV). The apostle encouraged the church in Philippi: "Brethren, join in following my example, and ... so walk, as you have [me] for a pattern" (3:17). He desired that we believers be heavenly-minded because the Christian's citizenship is in heaven, and from there we eagerly wait for the Savior (vv.20-21). Paul wanted these believers and us to live the Christian life as he did.

The apostle wrote this letter as a bonds slave of Christ Jesus, addressing his letter "to all the saints ... in Philippi" (1:1) – none was excluded. Therefore any believer who adopts the same mature attitude as Paul (consider 3:15-17) can experience Christ in full throughout his or her life. With this in view, I will consider Philippians using the title "Christ For The Christian" in three ways.

1. The Christian And Christ

In each chapter Paul stated what "Christ for the Christian" means in practice:

- "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (1:21).
- "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (2:5).
- "I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me ... I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (3:12,14).
- "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (4:13).

Paul used one word, "Christ," to describe his reason for living, "For to me to live Christ" (literally, 1:21). He desired that Christ would be magnified in his body, whether it was by the way he lived or died for his Lord (1:20). He wanted that ultimate experience of Christ, which involved a complete denial of himself and a thorough knowledge of Him throughout his entire life, and

even through death and resurrection (3:7-12). Christ *magnified* was Paul's *motive* for living. Christ was his object and aim in all, whether in life or death. In Him he discovered the *model* of self-effacement – the perfect example of humility – and he desired to have that same *mind* (2:5). Christ was the *mark* toward which he constantly reached throughout his life on earth (3:14). He saw Christ to be his ultimate prize in heaven. But Christ was also the secret of his inner strength for serving Him (4:13), the *might* for every step he took on his journey heavenward.

2. The Christian And Christian Fellowship

Paul experienced real Christian fellowship with the Philippian church. He called them “my beloved” (2:12, 4:1). The apostle held them in his heart (1:3,7), for he was fully aware that God was at work in their lives (1:6, 2:13). They were his “joy and crown” (4:1) in the coming “day of Christ” (1:10, 2:16). Therefore he prayed that they would abound in love, which increased by spiritual knowledge and discernment – so they would appreciate and approve the excellent things of Christianity (1:9-10). He was confident that his God would supply all their “need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (4:19).

3. The Christian And The Gospel *The Person Of The Gospel*

Philippians 1:12-18 shows how important the gospel¹ and its propagation, or spreading from person to person, were to Paul. Proclaiming Christ was central to Paul's life as a Christian. In essence the gospel is *the person* who is preached – it is “the gospel of Christ” (1:27). The gospel continues to be the primary means by which the Lord Jesus is made known throughout the world (2:9-10; consider Ps. 135:13). Whenever anyone accepts Him as Savior and Lord, Christ is exalted and God the Father receives glory (Phil. 2:11).

The Word Of The Gospel

As “lights in the world” believers must “hold forth the word of life” (2:16 JND) and boldly and courageously speak “the word of God” (1:14). The word of the gospel is God's message to “a crooked and perverse generation” (2:15 NKJV). It has both content and substance (1 Cor. 15:1-4), and it is elsewhere described as “the message [word, ESV] of the cross” about “Christ crucified” (1:18,23). The word of the gospel is used by God to convert people to Christ (1 Pet. 1:23,25).

The Beginning Of The Gospel

The message of salvation through Christ alone was preached by the apostles in the initial days of Christianity, which Paul called

“the beginning of the gospel” (Phil. 4:15). In Acts there is a full record of those early days,² including those before Paul’s missionary activities. Some of the means by which we present the gospel today may have changed, but it is essential for us to remain faithful and continue to present the plain facts of the message from the Word of God. Just as in the beginning, today’s Christians are sent by God to preach the word of Christ, so people will hear about Him and by faith obey the word (Rom. 10:14-17).

The Faith Of The Gospel

In Philippians 1:27 the substance of the gospel is called “the faith of the gospel,” that is the whole truth of the gospel as revealed in the doctrines of the New Testament letters, such as Romans. Nowadays we would describe the complete truth of Christianity as “the faith,” of which “the faith of the gospel” is an essential and foundational part.

The Furtherance Of The Gospel

The work of God has advanced since those first days (see Acts 1:8, 6:7, 12:24, 19:20), the Lord

Jesus having commissioned “the furtherance of the gospel” (Phil. 1:12). Starting at Jerusalem, there was a striking forward into Judea and Samaria before the gospel spread throughout the whole habitable world to the farthest away place (Acts 1:8; Col. 1:6,23).

Fellowship In The Gospel

Paul especially appreciated the Philippians’ “fellowship in the gospel” (1:5) – their partnership in his evangelistic work. They were joint-workers with him by prayer (vv.5,19) and practical support in sending financial help and gifts (4:14-18). In Philippians 1:7, Paul stated three ways in which they had joint participation

Like Paul, who always stood for and fought for the gospel, they remained loyal defenders of the faith despite opposition and persecution.

with him in the gospel:

- *In his imprisonment for the gospel.* They had not abandoned him to his incarceration in Rome but remained true to their Lord and continued to pray for Paul (1:19). It was as though they were there in prison with him (consider Phil. 1:13; Heb. 13:3).
- *In the defense of the gospel.* Like Paul, who always stood for and fought for the gospel,

they remained loyal defenders of the faith despite opposition and persecution. Perhaps they had learned how to defend the faith from Paul's conduct when he first brought the gospel to them (Acts 16).

• *In the confirmation of the gospel.* He particularly remembered those who had physically stood alongside him and actually strove with him in his labors. One of them is addressed as "true companion" (4:3) or "true yokefellow" (KJV), that is, "loyal *Synzygus*; Greek the yoke-fellow" (ESV footnote). W. E. Vine stated that this was most probably his name,³ and therefore so aptly described their joint effort in gospel work. Paul

knew the reality of Christ in his own life, but he remembered that all these Philippians also gave confirmation and testimony to the saving power of Christ. He urged the Philippians to continue to stand firm with singleness of mind because this too was a powerful witness to the continuing effectiveness of the gospel (1:27).

The Service And Servants Of The Gospel

Paul especially valued the fellowship of his son in the faith, Timothy, who was an apprentice to him from the middle of his second missionary journey (Acts 16:3). By the time Paul wrote to the Philippians, Timothy was of proven worth, "he served with [Paul] in the gospel" (Phil. 2:22

ESV). He and the others named in Philippians 4:2-3 not only had been Paul's trusted co-workers, they also had personally enslaved (Greek for "served") themselves to the work of the gospel. This suggests that they were subject to their Master's will and that they applied themselves to the task of spreading the gospel.

We can join in fellowship in the gospel with like-minded believers and work together with them in the task of spreading it either by prayer or by giving practical support and help.

Our Lives And The Gospel

Paul's exhortation, "Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (1:27), is very challenging! Philippi was a Roman colony and thus these believers would readily understand Paul's exhortation that they should live as citizens of heaven. Also, "worthy" means that the totality of my life

must “balance” with the gospel! This is the practical meaning of “the defense and confirmation of the gospel” (1:7). First we need to know the person of the gospel – the Lord Jesus Christ – and understand the faith of the gospel. Currently much is made of training in evangelism, but we can study the beginning and furtherance of the gospel in our Bibles and thereby be equipped servants of the gospel. We can join in fellowship in the gospel with like-minded believers and work together with them in the task of spreading it either by

prayer or by giving practical support and help. “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Lk. 10:2 NKJV). **GT**

Endnotes:

1. “Gospel” occurs in 1:5,7,12,14,17,27, 2:22, 4:3,15.
2. However, it also includes the Gospels – see Heb. 2:3; Acts 10:36.
3. Greek name *Synzygus*, *Yoke-Fellow*, W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*.

.....

*Let our hearts be always joyful, always filled with thankfulness,
For our Father up in heaven, claims us as His own dear children.*

Chorus:

*Always joyful, always joyful, Jesus is our shining light.
Full of beauty is our pathway, let us always joyful be.*

*If we turn away from Him, darkness will be all around.
Our path will not steadfast be – empty hearts we then will have.*

*With a Father’s hand God leads us, keeps us in all troubled times
Through His mercy we are given power and strength for every day.*

—Unknown, translated from German

Philippians

by Leslie M. Grant



“Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” —Philippians 3:8 NKJV

Philippians, meaning “lovers of horses” or “of the race,” is a pastoral epistle which is encouraging and refreshing. The assembly, devoted in affection for Paul since being converted through his labors 11 years before, was afflicted by poverty.

The letter presents true Christian experience as a racecourse leading on to the glory of God. Paul is the example of this experience; and though he was in prison, the vibrant yet peaceful joy of the apostle permeates the whole book. The secret is simply that Christ was everything to him:

- In chapter 1, Christ was his Motivation in life;
- In chapter 2, Christ was his Example;
- In chapter 3, Christ was his Object;

- In chapter 4, Christ was his Strength.

Chapter 2 contains a magnificent declaration of the greatness of the willing humiliation of the Lord Jesus, from the place of highest glory to that of deepest suffering and the death of the cross. This is then followed by God’s blessed answer in exalting Him as Man to the place of highest preeminence (vv.5-11). Such a person engaged the affections and admiration of the apostle Paul. Therefore Paul not only bore patiently with every unpleasant adversity, but he also rejoiced in seeing in each of these an occasion of fuller blessing and greater glory to the Lord Jesus.

This grand triumph of faith makes the book of sweetest value in encouraging similar faith in our own souls. **GT**

This column is adapted from the book “The Bible, Its 66 Books In Brief.” It is available for purchase from: Believer’s Bookshelf USA (www.bbusa.org) and Believers Bookshelf Canada (www.bbcan.org).

DEPENDENCE AND THE FATHER'S BUSINESS

by Klaas Rot

“And He withdrew
Himself, and was
about in the desert
places and praying.”

—Luke 5:16 JND

Prayer in the life of the Lord Jesus here on earth shows us His perfect dependence on the One who had sent Him to accomplish the work of salvation. Right from His childhood it was His desire to be occupied with His Father's business. The Lord Jesus demonstrated what true dependence is throughout His whole life. He willingly emptied Himself and took a bondman's form. Yes, the Lord Jesus appeared in this world which is full of corruption and selfishness as the Girded One (Jn. 13:4); He came to serve.

Sometimes people in need sought His service, as we read in Luke 5:12: “And it came to pass as He was in one of the cities, that behold, there was a man full of leprosy, and seeing Jesus, falling upon his face, he besought Him saying, Lord, if Thou wilt,

Thou art able to cleanse me.” The man full of leprosy sought out the Lord to cleanse him from this terrible disease. In grace, the Lord exercised His authority over sin and said, “I will; be thou cleansed” (v.13). Of course our blessed Lord was God manifested in flesh (1 Tim. 3:16), yet how beautiful it is to see this same One as a servant exercising His divine power *by being dependent on the Father*.

Immediately after this incident the Lord withdrew and was in the desert alone to pray. He felt the need after service to be alone with His Father in communion. Often we are fervent in prayer prior to a particular service we are called to perform for the Lord, but true dependence commits our service into the hands of God after it is done as well.

Soon after this the Lord Jesus was occupied with teaching, and the Lord's power was there to heal them. This is a practical lesson for us. All our service must flow from hearts dependent on Him. Without Him we can do nothing. Let us take an example from the prayer life of the Lord Jesus as He lived and served on earth. **GT**

Meditations On The Son's Prayer In John 17

Part 4: The Son Asked For All Christian Believers (Verses 20-26)

by *David Anderson*

In this final part of His prayer, the Son included everyone who believes the gospel in our dispensation. In John 17:20 (ESV), “these” are the apostles and “those” means all who have responded by faith to their preaching or teaching of the New Testament message of salvation. In the beginning of verse 21, the Son prayed for believers, “that they may all be one, just as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You.” This spiritual unity of believers is fundamental and essential for

the life of God’s children within His family. It is “in Us” (v.21), in the Father and the Son, derived from the oneness of the Father and the Son in their eternal relationship to each other within the Godhead. In Ephesians 4:3 it is called “the unity of the Spirit,” which was formed at Pentecost. The Son had already referred to it, “... that they may be one, even as We are one” (Jn. 17:11).

This unity was actually manifested, or shown, to the world by the Church in the early days of Christianity: “Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common” (Acts 4:32). By reading through Acts we get the sense of what the Son meant when He asked in His prayer that a witness of unity would cause the world to believe that the Father sent the Son (see 1 Jn. 4:14). To achieve this objective, the Son stated that He has given believers the very glory bestowed on Him by the Father (v.22). This is His glory as the Son of Man, who is now glo-

rified at God's right hand as we wrote about in the second article of this series.

His prayer for their unity continued in verse 23, "I in them and You in Me, that they may become perfectly one." He recognized the ongoing need for the spiritual maturity of His people throughout the church age to continue this unity. Oneness would be necessary to convince the world that the Father had indeed sent the Son, and it would make the world understand that the Father loves believers as He loves His Son (v.23).

It was given to the apostle Paul to know and teach that such unity would ultimately only come about when "we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). That will be when the Church is complete and by His side (1:22-23). When the perfect unity of John 17:21-23 is arrived at and achieved in the coming day of glory, the Son's fullness will be displayed in and through the complete body of the saints. It is then that the whole world will recognize that the Father loves believers as He loves His Son. Additionally, it is then that unbelievers will have to openly acknowledge that the Father did indeed send His Son into the world.

The Son began to express His own personal desire at verse 24, "Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am; to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world." "I desire," or "will" (KJV), is a strong expression meaning "I demand by my own right." In that sense it contrasts with His requests made in verses 9, 15 and 20.

As Son, He can demand or require that the Father grant His desire. It is that His own be "with Me where I am." However, this demand was made on the basis of His appreciation of the Father's love for Him from "before the foundation of the world."¹ Reading John 14:2-3 we understand "with Me where I am" means "within the Father's house" – which is heaven itself! "With Me where I am" is the reward for all faithful service to Him (Jn. 12:26). There in the saints' eternal home believers will behold, or look at, His glory. His displayed excellences will fill the new heavens and the new earth throughout eternity.

The Lord Jesus specifically demanded that His own be privileged to contemplate His pre-eminent glory as the Son of the Father. It will include that glory which the apostles beheld while with Him on earth (2:11). This

glory is described as the glory of the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father (Jn. 1:14,18). For believers heaven will be the full realization of eternal life and the everlasting enjoyment of that family, or home, life of God into which we have been brought by the Son.

In John 17:25-26 the Son concluded His prayer by summarizing His ministry to His own, which He said continues throughout the Christian era – even today – and into eternity. He addressed the Father as “righteous Father” (ESV) when He thought of the fact that the world is willfully ignorant of the true God. The world proved itself to be unrighteous when it rejected Him, God’s Sent One (see Jn. 16:8-11). By contrast, believers know the Father because they have been given divine insight to appreciate the unique glory of the Son of His love: He came *from His Father’s side*.

In coming into the world the Son’s special work was to make the Father’s name known to His own. He said to the Father, “I have manifested Your name to the people whom You gave Me” (v.6, see v.26). The Son displayed the Father’s name by word and by deed. He also committed Himself to continue, from heaven, to make the Father’s name known (v.26). He declares it; He tells it forth.

For us this is the basis of our true worship, “I will declare Thy name unto My brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee” (Heb. 2:12 KJV). This worship arises from our ongoing experience and appreciation of the Father’s love. We are overwhelmed to know that it is the very same love that He has for His Son! Yes, there is no greater spiritual experience than to actively participate in the family life of God. This is the essence of Christianity – eternal life, known and enjoyed even now on earth!

Summary Of John 17

Let me summarize the main points of this *Series* on the Son’s prayer in John 17.

He asked for His own glorification:

- In risen, ascended Manhood so He could glorify the Father by giving eternal life to believers (vv.1-3), and
- As Son, in the Father’s presence (v.5).

He asked for His own:

- Safety, security and unity by being kept in the good of the Father’s name (vv.7-12),
- Present satisfaction so they may be completely full in His joy while in this world (v.13),
- Protection from all of the world’s evil and the Evil One (vv.14-15),

- Sanctification so that they could be sent into out the world (vv.16-18),
- Spiritual unity of all of His own so the world would believe and know the testimony (vv.20-23), and
- Present enjoyment of eternal life and for their eventual translation to heaven (vv.24-26).

Conclusion

I finish my meditations by pointing out that the Son always did the Father's will and obeyed all of the Father's commands.² Unlike us (consider 1 Jn. 5:14), He never asked/prayed for anything which was not in keeping with and in absolute conformity to

His Father's will. He knew that the Father always heard Him (Jn. 11:42), and He did not need to finish His prayer with "Amen [let it be so]." Therefore we are guaranteed that all He has asked in this prayer, both for Himself and for His own, has been, continues to be, and will be completely and fully answered by the Father! **GT**

*This concludes the "Meditations
On The Son's Prayer."*

Endnotes:

1. "Before the foundation of the world" means from eternity, and it has to do with eternal issues. See Ephesians 1:4, 1 Peter 1:20 and Revelation 13:8.
2. See John 4:34, 5:30, 6:38, 8:29, 10:17-18, 12:49-50, 14:31, 15:10.

Christ Jesus in love divested Himself of His divine glory, emptying Himself to become man, then humbled Himself such that He could go no lower, even to the death of the cross. The form of a man, the condition of a slave, the dishonorable death of a criminal, such were the steps of this wonderful pathway.

Yes, God in complete righteousness had to raise Him to the very height of heaven, to honor Him with a name above all others. It is by this name of Jesus, so glorious and gentle, which He took in order to obey, to serve, to suffer and to die, that He will be acknowledged as Lord and will receive universal homage.

Dear friend, what is the value of this name to your heart?

—Jean Koechlin (*Day By Day*, adapted)

Q&A

If Christ is co-equal with God the Father, why should He hand over the kingdom to God as stated in 1 Corinthians 15:24?

We speak of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit together as God, recognizing that these three persons are one God. The three persons of the Godhead together are referred to as the “Trinity.” While we cannot understand such a relationship by our human reasoning, we recognize from Scripture that each of the Three is fully God and that the Three, while distinct, are absolutely co-equal in every way. Scripture tells us too that God is a Spirit (Jn. 4:24) and that, as God, He has no material body.

Fulfilling the counsels of the Godhead, God the Son humbled Himself and came to earth as Man, sent by God the Father, conceived by God the Holy Spirit, born in Bethlehem to the young virgin Mary. While still being true God, He is now also true Man, yet holy as man could never be – entirely without sin in nature, thought, word or deed. In fulfillment of the

promises of God in the Old Testament, He came to glorify God and to be the Savior mankind needed. “Messiah” is the Hebrew word for which “Christ” is the Greek equivalent, meaning “Anointed One.”

The promises of God included not only the suffering and death of the Savior, but also the fact that God would reward Him by raising Him from among the dead and exalting Him to sit at His own right hand (Ps. 110:1). God has also appointed Him to rule over the entire world as King of Kings and Lord of Lords (1 Tim. 6:15).

It is wonderfully true that the Lord Jesus was raised from among the dead as a real Man. He ascended into heaven *as Man* and sits at God’s right hand *as Man*. He remains God and Man in one person forever. Revelation 19 shows us that at the close of the tribulation He will return to this earth, followed by His glorified saints, and will annihilate the armies of the world, cast the

Antichrist and the beast alive into the lake of fire, and set up His kingdom in righteousness.

Revelation 20 goes on to tell us that He will then rule in righteousness for 1,000 years. He will do so as the Christ – the Man Christ Jesus. Other Scripture passages show us that this will be a glorious time. Satan will be bound, the desert will blossom as a rose, swords will be turned into plowshares, and evil will be dealt with righteously every morning. Additionally, the environment will be fully cleaned up, there will be peace on earth and lives will be extremely long since death will only come as the wages of overt, or public, sin. No kingdom on earth has ever been so glorious or lasted so long under the same ruler.

God has tested mankind in various ways since He made the first human beings and placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden, including in innocence, under conscience, under government, under the law and under grace. The Lord's rule in righteousness will be the final test of mankind. Satan will be bound during this time so no one will be able to honestly say, "The Devil made me do it." After 1,000 years in the bottomless pit, Satan will be loosed. The Bible tells us that he will go to deceive the nations again and will gain a huge following, for many

will have been subject to the Lord only with a feigned obedience, rather than from the heart. The ingrained wickedness of the human heart will become evident as vast crowds from the ends of the earth will follow Satan to march toward the camp of the saints, Jerusalem, the holy city, the world's capital (Rev. 20:7-8).

What God has always known about man will become fully manifest: The human "heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked" (Jer. 17:9)! Man will have demonstrated that his heart is incurable. The judgment of God – fire from heaven – will fall and devour this vast company. The heavens are going to "pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). The time of rule will be over. Christ will not have been deposed, but He will have reigned until He has put all enemies under His feet. He will raise the wicked dead, and they will appear before the great white throne to be judged according to their works. There will follow a new heaven and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

The wicked dead will be raised, judged and consigned to hell along with Satan and his demons; the lake of fire being their lot forever. Death, the last enemy,

is then destroyed. All things will have been put under Christ's feet. His bride will be with Him in perfect bliss forever. Of the new earth we read, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself shall be with them and be their God" (Rev. 21:3). Evil will have been rightly dealt with forever, so there will be no more need for rule, authority or power. Christ's work of salvation and of annulling the

work of the Devil will have been completed to the glory of God. Hence, He can then turn over the responsibility He has exercised in perfection to God the Father, who had entrusted Him with it. He, the Son, "will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:27). God will dwell with man. Individual work for each person of the Godhead will no longer be needed. God will be all in all.

—Answered by Eugene P. Vedder, Jr.

Now In A Song Of Grateful Praise

Now in a song of grateful praise, to our dear Lord the voice we'll raise;
With all His saints we'll join to tell, that Jesus hath done all things well.

All worlds His glorious power confess; His wisdom all His works express;
But, oh His love! —what tongue can tell? For Jesus hath done all things well.

And since our souls have known His love, what mercies has He made us prove;
Mercies which all our praise excel, for Jesus hath done all things well.

And when on that bright day we rise, and join the anthems of the skies,
In ceaseless song this note shall swell, that Jesus hath done all things well.

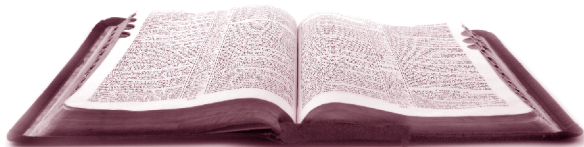
—Anonymous



The purpose of this column is to help you study the Bible on your own. Look up the Bible references and think about them before writing your answers. Do not send this study to us, as this is not a correspondence course.

The Bible – Its Writers

by Alan Groth



Our study this month is a review of the writers of the Bible: Agur, Amos, Asaph, Daniel, David, Ethan the Ezrathite, Ezekiel, Ezra, Gad, Habakkuk, Haggai, Heman the Ezrahite, Hosea, Isaiah, James, Jeremiah, Joel, John, Jonah, Joshua, Jude, Luke, Malachi, Mark, Matthew, Micah, Moses, Nahum, Nathan, Nehemiah, Obadiah, Samuel, Solomon, sons of Korah, Paul, Peter, Zechariah, and Zephaniah.

From the list of writers above answer the questions below.

1. Who was the first writer? _____
2. Who was the last writer? _____
3. Name a writer who was a major prophet. _____
4. Which New Testament writer was the brother of James? _____
5. Write the names of the Old Testament writers. _____

6. Write the names of the New Testament writers. _____

7. Who was swallowed by a great fish? _____
8. Which prophet was thrown into a den of lions? _____
9. Who wrote many of the Psalms? _____
10. Which writer wrote 13 books? _____

11. Match each writer with his occupation(s). Some occupations can apply to more than one writer.

Moses	Farmer
David	King
Samuel	Doctor
Daniel	Prophet
Amos	Shepherd
Luke	Pharisee
Nehemiah	Scribe
Paul	Tax Collector
Ezra	Priest
Solomon	Leader
Matthew	Warrior
Ezekiel	Cupbearer
Joshua	Fisherman
Peter	Captive in the courts of Nebuchadnezzar

12. Name a prophet that prophesied after the nation of Israel returned from Babylon. _____

13. Who wrote Proverbs 30? _____

14. Who wrote “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want” (Ps. 23)? _____

As we end these studies of the writers that God used to share His message with us, we can but adore Him for His wise instruction, counsel and direction. “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

In our next month’s *Discover Column* look for a new series of studies.



WAS THE APOSTLE PAUL A WOMAN HATER?

by Brian Reynolds

Those who think Paul hated women say there is plenty of evidence to support their theory. Their argument is that Paul's pre-conversion rabbinical training in the strictest school of the Pharisees and the culture in which he lived formed his thinking (Acts 26:5; Phil. 3:5). The first century sect of the Pharisees had very low, even disparaging, views of women. The fact that Paul was not married is hinted at as being suggestive of his alleged dislike for women. Proof of this, it is said, can be found in Paul's own statements: Women are to be silent in the churches; they are not to preach or teach; they cannot take the position of an elder, and they are to have their heads covered in the meetings. Beyond this he taught that the Christian wife is to be submissive to her husband. These facts, say the opponents of Paul, are indisputable and such views are not acceptable today.

Back To The Beginning

The best place to begin is in the beginning, which is where both the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul turned when discussing the man/woman relationship (Mt. 19:4; 1 Cor. 11:8-9). Man and woman are equal in creatorial standing – they were both created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). The fall of man has not changed this, although there was a disruption of the role and relationship because of sin. Man and woman are also equal in the redemptive work and purpose of God: They are “one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28 *KJV*) and “heirs together of the grace of life” (1 Pet. 3:7).

However, the roles of man and woman are different, whether in the natural or church relationships. It is evident that, even before the fall of man, the woman was to be man's helper, a complementary role (Gen. 2:20). This should not be hard to understand for there

are biological differences that are found in the very nature of things. But that does not mean that there is inequality, which is the crux of the issue. The critics of Paul and of the Bible think that equality means there must be sameness, and that equal means the same.

Sounds Like The Serpent To Me

Therefore there is a very strong effort today to blur or deny gender distinctions – a Satanic attack upon God’s prerogative. *He has made them male and female, and He has made them different.*

In Christianity, these distinctions are to be maintained as Paul insisted. Rather than the apostle, it was his critics who hated. They clearly hated him and what – even who – he represented. Paul was familiar with being attacked and persecuted for preaching the gospel of grace. In fact, his life was in jeopardy. So he would not be surprised today to be ridiculed on the subject we are now discussing.

Fairly Friendly Friends

There are those today who are not as unfriendly towards Paul, but they still try to undermine his teaching. They are fairly favorable to Paul when it comes to the doctrine of salvation by grace; they would agree with him that in Christ “there is neither male nor female” and that we “are all

one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). But they say some of Paul’s other teachings are the product of his culture and therefore have no authority upon Christians today. His teachings regarding, for example, “headship” (1 Cor. 11:1-16) or the place of women in public ministry (1 Tim. 2:8-15) are often viewed wrongly as local situations of Paul’s day, having no bearing on our modern world.

So What Did Paul Teach And What Exactly Did He Mean?

Let’s look at some Scriptures for which Paul is spoken evil of or that are often explained away as irrelevant. Rather than giving a detailed exposition, my thought is to show Paul’s teaching was connected with what was “in the beginning” and was through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

• 1 Corinthians 11:1-16

There have been many fanciful and twisted explanations of this passage, even among evangelical believers. It appears all the fancy footwork is an effort to explain away the obvious. The theory of some is that the Corinthian culture of that time period necessitated the woman’s head to be covered: Since temple prostitutes let their hair hang down in the open, the Christian women should cover their head or otherwise shave all their hair off. Others try to force

the passage into having to do with submission in the husband and wife marriage relationship: The wife has to give some evidence of submission. This theory goes on to say that since head covering is not typical of our society today, then other ways of a wife's submission can be practiced. Unfortunately the English Standard Version, which is generally a very reliable translation in all other respects, has given some credence to this by translating "woman" as "wife" in 1 Corinthians 11.

However, the passage is not dealing with either prostitutes or the marriage relationship as such. The subject is *headship in creation*. The head of the woman is the man, and the head of man is Christ, and the head of Christ is God. The man is the image and glory of God and the woman is the glory of the man. The covered head of the woman declares that the glory of man has no place in the meetings of the saints and the uncovered head of the man declares that the glory of Christ alone is to be seen. Only one Man is on display and His glory expressed: Christ.

What I want to stress is that instead of having to do with the culture, Paul removed this sub-

ject from that sphere altogether and took it back to the beginning in the original creation. He stated his point in the most definite way possible: "The man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man" (vv.8-9). Even though the believer is in Christ and a part of the new creation, the order of the first creation is to be acknowledged as long as we are in this world.

There is nothing at all of inequality here, but there is certainly a different role for the wife than for the husband, and likewise in relation to the Church and Christ.

• **Ephesians 5:22-33**

In this passage Paul dealt with the marriage relationship. The submission of the wife and the love and care for her by the husband is a picture of Christ and the Church. Paul

said that this is "a great mystery" (v.32). There is nothing at all of inequality here, but there is certainly a different role for the wife than for the husband, and likewise in relation to the Church and Christ. We are one with Him, yet He is the head.

Even within the Godhead itself there are different roles; They are one in essence, co-equal, yet distinct persons. As stated before, equality has nothing to do with being the same or usurping the

role of another. Again the apostle Paul did not base his teaching on anything found in his day. In fact his teaching would have been very shocking to some of that time period by giving the woman such an exalted place! Rather, he based it on the creation of man and woman, quoting Genesis 2:24 in Ephesians 5:31.

The apostle Peter was in agreement with Paul. Peter lifted the woman higher than anything seen in his day of Roman and Greek paganism. He taught that if husbands are not considerate or understanding of their wives, God will not hear the man's prayers. In other words, if you are nasty or impatient with your wife, God will not listen to you! He said that the husband and wife are "heirs together of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3:7). She is spiritually absolutely equal; and because she may be physically weaker, the man *must* be considerate, or he will not get far with God.

• 1 Timothy 2:8-15

This is one of the most contested passages, yet it could not be clearer in its bearing. "Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet" (vv.11-12 *ESV*). The subject has to do with ministry in the house

of God, which is restricted to men. The cry is immediately, "This is inequality!" But the woman's role is to learn in silence while the men are given an audible role – each has their part. The apostle, as always, went right back to the garden of Eden, "For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived" (vv.13-14) – and this is exactly what happened. You may protest the Genesis account or Paul's reasoning upon it, but you cannot say he took it from the culture of his day or that he hated women. There may be women in a congregation more gifted, more intelligent and more devoted than any man present, but God has established an order.

Consider what J. N. Darby wrote: "The part that women take in all this history is very instructive, especially to them. The activity of public service, that which may be called 'work,' belongs naturally to men (all that appertains to what is generally termed ministry), although women share a very precious activity in private. But there is another side of Christian life which is particularly theirs; and that is personal and loving devotedness to Christ. It was a woman, who anointed the Lord while the disciples murmured; women, who were at the cross, when all

except John had forsaken Him; women, who came to the sepulchre, and who were sent to announce the truth to the apostles who had gone after all to their own home; women, who ministered to the Lord's need. And indeed this goes farther. Devotedness in service is perhaps the part of man; but the instinct of affection, that which enters more intimately into Christ's position, and is thus more immediately in connection with His sentiments, in closer communion with the sufferings of His heart – this is the part of woman: assuredly a happy part" (*Synopsis Of The Bible, Matthew 27*).

Despite all of the devotion and spiritual intelligence shown by the women disciples, not one of them was chosen by the Lord to be of the Twelve. When He sent out the twelve disciples they were all men; and as if to confirm this, when the disciples sought a replacement for Judas after the ascension of Christ, a man was chosen. There were 120 disciples in that upper room and many of them would have been women, but Peter said they were to choose one from "these men" who had accompanied the Lord in His ministry (Acts 1:21 KJV). So if we are going to charge Paul with hating women, we must also charge Peter and the Lord Jesus Himself.

• 1 Timothy 3:1-2

The choosing of elders for the work of overseer is the same as we have seen already – it is confined to the men. Here Paul did not mention the order in creation, but clearly there is no inkling that he is copying the pattern of the culture. Just the opposite, for many of the pagan temples had women priests. One important thing to note is that Paul said that the overseer, among other qualifications, must be "the husband [a man] of one wife [a woman]" (v.2). The ordaining of women elders is in clear defiance of the God's order. The fact is that believers are being influenced by their own culture, the very thing with which they charge the apostle. There is not one iota of evidence that Paul's church order is based on cultural patterns. He told us himself where he got his doctrine: "The things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:37).

A Final Thought

It could seem to be self-serving for a man to be writing this, but I assure you that my heart's desire is to simply present the Lord's truth no matter what the subject. May we each, whether man or woman, find grace to live out the Lord's commands for His glory and our blessing! **GT**

Belshazzar's Worst Choice

by Curt Darling

Belshazzar, grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, was the third king of the kingdom of Babylon. We don't know much about his father. It has been said that he might have been still alive and out of the country commanding a battle on foreign soil. Unlike his grandfather who had humbled himself before "the Most High [God] and praised and honored Him" (Dan. 4:34 NKJV), Belshazzar "praised the gods of gold and silver, bronze and iron, wood and stone" (5:4).

It seems, according to tradition, the army of the Medes and Persians, under Cyrus the Great, diverted the river that flowed through Babylon. Through this method or another, as Belshazzar held a great feast with much drinking of wine, the army of the Medes and Persians was able to enter and capture the city, bringing the Babylonian Empire to an end according to the Word of God.

This was tied with the prophecy of Jeremiah, which said the

Jews would be in exile for 70 years (Dan. 9:2) – a period that would end a short time after the fall of Babylon. Cyrus, the king of Persia, according to a prophecy announced around 150 years before the king was born (see Isa. 45:1), would be the one used of God to open the way for the exiles to return to Jerusalem.

Belshazzar's Choice

The drinking party Belshazzar held was certainly a bad choice, but his command to get and drink from the gold and silver vessels plundered from the temple of God was worse. They had been acquired when God gave Judah over to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then king of Babylon. You see, when kings went to war and won they carried off the religious articles, often storing them, to show that the gods of the defeated country could not help them in the battle. Of course we know from the Bible that this was not the case with Judah, for

what took place was a work of God with His people rather than simply weakness on His part.

Belshazzar, although aware of what took place in his grandfather's life, lifted himself up in pride and defied the Most High God, for the cups and bowls had been set apart for His glory. Instead, Belshazzar sought to drink wine from them in the names of other gods (Dan. 5:22-23). This could bring nothing but disaster, like what happened when the ark of the covenant was taken into battle and captured by the Philistines (see 1 Sam. 4-5).

Because of Belshazzar's foolish choice, "the fingers of a man's hand appeared and wrote ... on the plaster of the wall ... and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote" (Dan. 5:5). Not one of the king's wise men could interpret it. Then the queen, either Belshazzar's mother or grandmother, thought of Daniel. Sadly, it seems Belshazzar did not know Daniel, a righteous man (Ezek. 14:14,20).

Daniel was brought in, and he scolded Belshazzar for not heeding the lessons he should have learned from his grandfather's life. He then interpreted the writing: "You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting" (v.27). That night King Belshazzar was killed and the kingdom – even the world rule – was given to the Medes and Persians.

What Is Our Choice?

The cups and bowls from the temple were "holy," separated to God. They were His – not something to be used for simply any purpose. If you think this is not significant, consider what Jesus said when He spoke about the temple in His day. At the age of 12, He called it "My Father's house" (Jn. 2:15-17). Later, as He cast out those buying and selling in the temple just days before He was crucified, the Lord Jesus called it "My house" (Mt. 21:12-13). How personal!

So where is the temple now? There are two forms in which it is expressed. One is collectively with all believers: "Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17). The second is individual: "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you ...?" (6:19). These two points are reiterated in Ephesians 2:19-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-9.

We Christians need to be careful. What are we indulging in? Remember, God destroyed Belshazzar for drinking out of the holy vessels from the temple, and Jesus took a whip and drove out those who desecrated it. Listen to the Word of God. Honor Him to whom honor is due! **GT**



Both Confession And Repentance Are Required For Restoration – Saul And David Contrasted

by Alan H. Crosby

Saul And David Were Not Alike

King Saul can be likened to a person who is religious and works for the Lord reluctantly – he hid himself among the baggage to avoid receiving his assignment (See 1 Sam. 10:20-24). Ultimately his life was so marred by serious sin that the Lord said, “I regret that I have made Saul king, for he ... has not performed My commandments” (15:11 *ESV*). In his example we see confession but no apparent repentance.

In contrast, the youth David volunteered by faith to go and fight the Philistine of whom “Saul and all Israel ... were dismayed and greatly afraid” (17:11). David prevailed over the enemy and “the men of Israel and Judah ... pursued the Philistines” in a great victory (vv.51-53). God spoke of David as “a man after My own heart, who

will do all My will” (Acts 13:22), and this even after his great sin in the Bathsheba matter (2 Sam. 11) and his other failures. In David’s case there was both confession and repentance with its accompanying restoration.

Let us consider Saul first and then David.

Saul

The history of Saul teaches us to do the Lord’s work at His time and in His way. Saul waited for a year before he finally began to exercise his kingship and then waited two more years before beginning the LORD’S work against the Philistines (1 Sam 13:1-6). After their initial defeat, the Philistines mustered a formidable force (v.5). Knowing this, out of fear Saul decided that he should go ahead and offer the burnt offering and the peace offerings in-

stead of waiting for God's prophet to arrive (vv.8-9).

In so doing he had "not kept the command of the LORD," and because of this, God "sought out a man after His own heart ... to be prince over His people" (vv.13-14) The lesson for us is this: We cannot expect God's blessing if we undertake His work using our wisdom instead of His!

Nevertheless, Saul remained king and therefore God's servant. He was commissioned to destroy Amalek because of what they had done to Israel when Israel was coming up from Egypt (15:1-3). However, instead of doing what he was instructed to do, Saul spared Agag, the Amalekite king, and the best of all the animals to "sacrifice to the LORD" (v.21). When confronted, Saul offered excuses (vv.20-22) before he finally confessed. He said, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice" (v.24). Notice that there was not even a hint of repentance!

Eventually Saul sunk so low that, when fearful of the Philistines, he inquired of the LORD and "the LORD did not answer him either by dreams or by Urim, or by prophets" (28:5-6). In desperation Saul went to a medium and said, "Divine up for me a spirit and bring

up for me whomever I shall name to you ... Bring up Samuel for me" (vv.8-11). When she divined for him, Samuel told Saul that he and his sons would die in the battle the next day. As Samuel had indicated, the Philistines struck down the sons of Saul and wounded their father so severely that he chose to kill himself (31:2-6).

David And His Anointing

Having rejected Saul, the LORD sent Samuel to anoint one of Jesse's eight sons as king. David was the LORD's first choice, not Samuel's: "The LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks upon the heart" (16:7). One application of this is that the responsible brothers of an assembly should depend on the leading of the Lord rather than their personal opinion when commending a person for a role in a work for Him.

God's Wisdom In Choosing David

We see this in the matter of the challenge of Israel by the giant Goliath, the champion of the Philistines. "All the men of Israel ... were much afraid" of him (17:24). However, by faith David could say to Goliath, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts ... This day the LORD will deliver

you into my hand, and I will strike you down, and cut off your head” (vv.45-46). “David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and struck the Philistine and killed him,” then he drew out Goliath’s sword and “cut off his head with it” (vv.50-51). Would to God we all had such faith – it would enable us to do great things for the Lord and His people!

Saul’s Jealousy

David did not occupy the throne immediately. Saul “set him over the men of war” (18:5) and “David was successful wherever Saul sent him” (v.5). Therefore Saul became jealous of him and became “David’s enemy continually” (v.29).

David’s Faith Wavers

From 1 Samuel 18 through chapter 24 we see Saul’s repeated attempts to kill David or to have him killed, and we see David’s efforts to escape by running away. Saul’s harassment of David finally led David to say “in his heart, ‘Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than I should escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will despair of seeking me within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand’” (27:1).

David had two opportunities to kill Saul during his time of running away from him, but he resist-

ed the temptation knowing that it was not the LORD’s will for him to kill Saul since he was the LORD’s anointed king. Saul was touched by David’s kindness and confessed his sin saying, “I have sinned ... Behold, I have acted foolishly, and have made a great mistake” (26:21). There was confession on Saul’s part, but no repentance!

David Repents

While David and his men were out raiding for the king of the Philistines, the Amalekites made a raid against Ziklag, the city the king had given to David. The Amalekites took material spoil along with captives – David’s two wives along with the wives, sons and daughters of David’s men. It is apparent that at this point David had confessed his sin in allying himself with the enemy and had repented of it, for we are told that he “strengthened himself in the LORD” and “inquired of the LORD” (30:6-7). This was quite a change from deciding in his heart that there was nothing better for him than serving Achish, the Philistine king!

David Anointed King Over All Israel

Following the LORD’s directions, David and his men “recovered all that the Amalekites had taken” (v.18). Meanwhile, the Israelites

were engaged in the battle with the Philistines, as Samuel had prophesied (28:19) when Saul and his sons were killed.

The throne was now empty, and after a “long war between the house of Saul and the house of David” (2 Sam. 3:1-3) won by David’s house, “all of the elders ... anointed David king over Israel” (5:3). He had previously “reigned over Judah seven years and six months” (v.5).

Satan Sets A Trap

“The LORD gave victory to David wherever he went” (8:1-14); then came a time of testing. Times of success can be dangerous for the man or woman of God as these are often when God allows Satan to test us.

We are especially vulnerable when we are not where we are supposed to be and are not doing what we ought to be doing. We see that with David, as he “sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel [to battle] but [he] remained at Jerusalem” (11:1). David was on the roof of his house when he saw “a woman bathing and the woman was very beautiful” (v.2). She was the wife of Uriah, one of the officers of the David’s army.

The Trap Springs

“David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her” (v.4). She became pregnant (v.5).

We see here a fulfillment of James’ description of how Satan’s temptations work: “Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin” (Jas. 1:14-15).

David was indeed lured by his own desire; he became an adulterer and then tried to cover it up. When his schemes did not work, he became a murderer by proxy, for he told Joab to “set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting ... that he may be struck

down, and die” (2 Sam. 11:15). It worked! Uriah died and “David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife” (v.27). Of course “the thing that David had done displeased the LORD” (v.27).

David’s Confession And Repentance

God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David. With an inspired parable, Nathan succeeded in getting David to see his sin, and David confessed it saying, “I have sinned against the LORD” (12:13). In Psalm

**God’s path
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51, which deals with this sin, David prayed, “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation” (v.12), and then he proposed to do works “in keeping with repentance” (see Lk. 3:8). David said that he would teach transgressors God’s ways, sing aloud of God’s righteousness, and offer to God a broken spirit and a contrite heart (Ps. 51:13-14,17).

God Provides Us A Path To Restoration

God knows that we do so easily

fall into transgression. He counsels us saying, “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy” (Prov. 28:13). Forsaking the transgressions implies repenting. David did this and was restored, but Saul did not. God’s path requires not only confession to obtain forgiveness, but also repentance!

May we learn from these two examples. **GT**



I have been tremendously blessed with every new issue of *Grace & Truth!* I love everything about the magazine as it has helped me to learn and understand God’s glorious Word. –Mississippi, USA

May the Almighty God bless you abundantly. The *Grace & Truth* is maintaining the flavor of godliness which has vanished from most of our churches during the past decade. It is food to my soul. – Kwara State, Nigeria

I wish to continue to receive *Grace & Truth Magazine* because it seems every month’s edition is written specifically for me. It has really edified my soul. – Lagos State, Nigeria

Your July / August 2017 issue was right on target with this current “last days” culture, especially your *You Asked* article. The deception seems to be like that of Matthew 7:13-28. However, your work is that of Romans 10:13-17, and our prayers are with you in this noble work of His love (1 Cor. 15:57-58). – Michigan, USA



to my senses, the police had arrived. They gave me a severe warning and sent me home.

In a later incident I drank a bottle of brandy, then I broke the bottle and tried to stab myself to death. I attempted suicide many times, but thank God I did not succeed.

Then My Life Was Transformed

A wonderful thing happened. My wife and children accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and constantly prayed for my salvation. Because of their prayers and tears, I finally repented of my sins and accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. He took me off the road to destruction and put me on the road to eternal life. What a transformation!

Like me, you too can be set free from all your bad habits and vices so that you can enjoy

the peace and joy of Jesus, the Savior of sinners. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and invite Him into your heart, then you too will be saved from the slavery of sin and eternal death. God's desire is for you to be saved from the penalty of sin and be accepted as one of His children.

The Lord Jesus Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1:4). "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23). "Arise, shine; for your light has come! And the glory of the LORD is risen upon you" (Isa. 60:1) **GT**

A version of this article is available in tract form from the publisher!

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A New Life – Is It Possible?

by M. John



So many people are living as slaves to evil vices and addictions like alcohol, drugs, sexual immorality and gambling. Because of this, many families are suffering.

Young people are often introduced to sinful habits as “fun,” and little by little they become addicted to these dreadful activities. They forget their moral values and bring shame to themselves, their families and loved ones. Some turn into ruthless criminals, ruining their own future prospects for a meaningful life. They become a menace to society!

These poor, unfortunate souls – victims of addiction, whether intentionally or by accident – do not know the way out. They cannot escape this slavery. They live in utter darkness. They often lose their health to incurable diseases until death overtakes them. The Bible says, “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23 NKJV).

Dear friends, only a few years ago I was traveling down that same dreadful road. I was an alcoholic, drug addict, adulterer and chain smoker. I made the lives of my wife and children a hell on earth.

One day I came home completely drunk. Not knowing what I was doing, I threw kerosene on my wife and children, intending to burn them alive. Instead, I headed to some railroad tracks nearby to end my life. I laid my head on the track and fell asleep.

A train was coming toward me, but a red signal caused it to stop. Railroad workers pulled me off the track. By the time I came

- continued on inside back cover

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