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## Josiah and Revival

*Robert Surgenor*

In the lives of men there invariably comes a time when a decision is made as to the way of life. Unfortunately, most mortals choose the way that leads to destruction. It would seem that this is what our Lord is referring to when He says, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13,14). I have often heard it preached that we, as sinners, are born on the broad road. Then I hear that if one dies on the broad road they go to hell. When I ask the question, "If a week old infant dies, who as you say, is born on the broad road, does it go to hell?" If one understands God's divine plan, they can see the folly of such an interpretation. In fact, there are no ROADS in the Lord's statement. What He is referring to is one's WAY. Many (not all) choose the broad way. Few choose the narrow. All make a choice as to their path in life. One must make a choice to seek Christ before He can trust Christ. It is unscriptural to tell a sinner to choose Christ for salvation. It is not a matter of one's choice at all, but a matter of one's trust and this trust cannot become a reality until one chooses (desires) the right way.

When we turn to the history of the kings of Israel and Judah, we find men choosing ways. Unfortunately, most of these kings discarded God's way and chose their own way to their own destruction, and to the destruction of those under their leader-ship. The history of most of these kings is very depressing. Following the death of Solomon we have nineteen kings of Israel, mostly all evil men. Consequently Israel was taken into captivity by Assyria. Running parallel to these kings we find nineteen kings of Judah, prior to the Babylonian captivity, out of which eleven did evil in the sight of the Lord. How refreshing it is then to read amidst such degenerate conditions certain kings that went against the tide and chose the right way and made a stand for God. Asa, Jehoshaphat,

Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, were kings of whom it could be said that they did right. Perhaps the most outstanding one in this category was young king Josiah, the last of the faithful kings of Judah. The kingdom was degenerated and hastily coming to an end. The testimony, once glorious, was about to close in utter disgrace. The Babylonian captivity was drawing near. One might say that the arising of Josiah on the scene was THE FINAL FLASH OF A DEPARTING GLORY. Let us draw near with holy awe and consider this most unique individual as he moves for his God and God's testimony. Considering that my headings consist of all A's, it will be fitting just to term our considerations - "Josiah's Straight 'A' Report Card."

## His Ancestry

I have heard it stated that one's environment molds their way of life. Not so with Josiah! His grandfather Manasseh was the vilest of all kings in Judah, yet he reigned the longest of all Judah's kings -55 years! Commencing at the age of twelve, he did evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the heathen. Whatever his godly father Hezekiah had accomplished in Judah to bring his subjects back to God, Manasseh effectively destroyed. Anyone that dared to oppose this godless individual was slain. It was said of him that, "he shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to the other." "He did wickedly above all that the Amorites did." Jewish history relates that he had Isaiah sawn asunder. He built again the high places his father had destroyed. He reared up altars for Baal, worshiped the host of heaven and built heathen altars in the house of the Lord. Not only this, he sacrificed his son in fire and dealt with them that had familiar spirits and with wizards. Bound in fetters, he was carried to Babylon where

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there he was converted to God. There is none too wicked, but what God cannot save. Returning to Jerusalem he “knew that the Lord He was God.” At his death, Josiah was a lad of six and perhaps his grandfather’s unique awakening and salvation had an impact on young Josiah’s soul. However, his 22-year-old father Amon took the throne and the six-year-old Josiah witnessed a father of whom it was said, he “trespassed more and more.” Amon’s reign was short. After two years he was murdered by his servants.

### **His Attitude**

It is to be observed that God told Moses to instruct His people that they were not to turn aside to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them. (Deuteronomy 5:32; 28:14). God also imposed this law upon future kings that were to arise in the nation. Kings were also told to write a copy of God’s law in a book and it was to be with him, and he was to read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them (Deuteronomy 17:18,19). The scriptures and the scepter were not to be divorced. Joshua was told, “Be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left” (Joshua 1:7). Years later, Joshua, as an old man, exhorts the nation before his departure, “Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left” (Joshua 23:6).

It was said of Josiah, “he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left” (2 Chronicles 34:2). Notice, the words, “to the right hand or to the left” are not recorded as exhortations, as in the former passages, but they are recorded as a reality in the life of this lad between the age of eight and sixteen. It is interesting that when Josiah was twelve, Daniel was born and Jeremiah commenced his tearful ministry in Jerusalem. Could it be that Jeremiah had some influence over this unique king? I remember William Warke saying that the left hand was the place of weakness and the right hand the place of power. A man turning to the left hand would be a person that was too weak to uphold the whole Word of God. While on the other hand, a person turning to the right hand would be a person going beyond the Word of God to promote his own ideas. Thus, the right hand would characterize legalism and the left hand looseness.

Let me relate two things that were actual experiences in my own life. As for turning to the right hand, years ago I was visiting an assembly where a young brother had applied for fellowship. He was told that he must shave off his mustache before they would receive him into the assembly. As far as I was concerned, his pencil-line mustache was

becoming to him. However, it was the choice of either wearing a mustache or being in the assembly according to the oversight. The young brother was to be commended, for he took the ultimatum well, even though it wasn’t scriptural. The following Lord’s Day, an afternoon ministry meeting was arranged. While sitting up front, five minutes before the meeting was to commence, one of the brethren hurriedly came up to me and whispered, “Brother Albert Ramsey just walked in the door and we were wondering if you would share your meeting with him?” Seizing an opportunity to prove a point, I seriously replied, “No.” The brother was taken back and asked me, “Why not?” I told him, “If you will not allow a young brother to come into this assembly because he has a mustache, then how can you allow a man to get up on the platform and preach to that assembly when he has a mustache?” The brother stuttered and said, “But he’s a Lord’s servant.” I replied, “Yes, but as a preacher, he is more responsible than the young brother, not to have a mustache, according to your judgment on mustaches.” The brother looked very dismayed and then I smiled and said, “I only wanted to prove a point to you.” Brother Ramsey and I shared the meeting. The assembly had turned to the right hand.

As pertaining to the left hand, I know of an assembly, that in the past, before receiving a saint for fellowship they would be questioned regarding various former things seen in their lives. Sisters were asked, “Do you intend to let your hair grow?” Applicants were asked, “Would you still feel free to occasionally participate in religious services in denominationalism?” Sad to say, that assembly never brings these issues up anymore. They are manifesting a left hand turn.

Josiah was a man that fully kept the word of God, yet, in his zeal, did not go beyond its divine precepts. He was what we would call a well balanced man, “he declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.” In spite of his ancestry, he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. His attitude was spiritual, “he declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.” We justly give Josiah an “A” on both counts. How does your report card measure up?

As we follow this unique king, we shall examine further his report card of straight “A’s”.

Entering the region of Judah (2 Chronicles 34) our eyes fell upon a lad of eight years of age, Josiah by name. We considered his ANCESTRY. There was nothing in his family tree for the past one hundred years that would encourage this young lad to godliness. Yet we noticed that in spite of his environment “he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD.” We concluded from this, that environment does not always mold the way of life in an individual. Josiah was a classic example of this. His ancestry had much to be desired, yet he turned out well.

Next we noticed his ATTITUDE. He had made up his mind to follow an undeviating course for his God - “he

declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left” (vs. 2). We noticed that a man turning to the right hand could well be termed “legal,” while one turning to the left hand would constitute looseness. Josiah was a well balanced man.

(To be continued)

**How precious the words of Romans 6:10, 11! —“In that He died, He died unto Sin once... Likewise reckon ye also yourselves.” “He liveth unto God.” We with Him live to God. He died to Sin by dying for Sin. It was once imputed to Him. He put it away by the sacrifice of Himself; and now, with the glory of His atonement, lives at the right hand of God. The poor and needy one, by faith in the Son of God, is in Christ as Christ in God’s sight. Is no Sin now imputed to Christ?—so none to the believer. Is Christ, with the glory of His atonement, accepted of God?—so the believer. The apprehending by faith these great things is the true way of mortifying Sin. “Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace” (v. 14).**

R. C. Chapman

## Ambition; Carnal and Spiritual

*Hector Alves*

**I**t is a remarkable thing that though the Greek word which would be translated into our language “ambition” occurs only three times in the New Testament, yet in none of these three instances has it been so done in the Authorized version. The true meaning of the word is “love of honor” and the translators may have sought to avoid the use of such a word and so in the three instances mentioned they render it by the use of three other words, as follows: in 2 Corinthians 5:9—laboring; in Romans 15:20—striving; and in 1 Thessalonians 4: 11—studying.

Ambition in itself is by no means sinful, but its being good or bad depends on the thing upon which the heart is set. In our everyday life this covers a wide field, and no fixed rule can be applied or set down, for ambition is a necessary aid to progress. Worldly ambition is altogether wrong for the child of God, but if the real reason behind ambition is to extend one’s usefulness for God, then such ambition is certainly commendable. This, no doubt, was true in the case of Jabez (1 Chroni-

cles 4:9). We read that this man was “more honorable than his brethren.” They may have been honorable men too, but Jabez was “more honorable.” His was a remarkable prayer, “Oh, that thou wouldest bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast, and that thine hand might be with me,” etc. This might appear to be a very selfish request, but was it not with a view to the glory of God? It is well for us who are the Lord’s people to have only those ambitions upon which the blessing of the Lord can rest. “Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith,” I Sam. 2:30, “them that honor Me I will honor,” and let it be remembered, Divine principles never change; they are the same in each dispensation.

Now, before looking at these three New Testament Scriptures that bring before us the word “ambition,” in a good sense, we might notice some cases of carnal ambition that we find in the Word of God. There were those who were ambitious, wanting to attain to something that God never intended for them. We find this at the very beginning of man’s history, and we find it again at the very end, and many times in between.

In Genesis 3:5 we read those words, “Ye shall be as Gods.” Ambition seems to have been one of the first temptations that assailed our first parents. Surely they had all they needed, and all that would be desired; but here was something to be grasped at, so by their carnal ambition they fell, being ambitious to attain to something that God never intended they should be. This is something we need to guard against in our own hearts. Then, in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, we read of a man “who exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped.” Here, near the end of man’s history, we find the very same thing. Ambition will be one of the outstanding features of “that Wicked One.” Here, again, we have carnal, yea Satanic ambition.

There is also a remarkable instance of carnal ambition in one of Judah’s kings—Uzziah. He was a good king, till “his heart was lifted up to his destruction,” 2 Chronicles 26:16. Then he transgressed against the Lord his God. He aspired to do that which God never intended he should do; he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense upon the altar of incense. That appertained to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and not to the royal line of Judah. For this carnal ambition God smote him with leprosy. Alas, how this very thing creeps into the assemblies of God’s people today; Men aspiring for a place and position for which they are not fitted and which God never intended them to fill.

This same thing is seen in the New Testament, and among the very last men in whom we would expect to find it. In Luke 9:46 we read “Then there arose a reasoning among them (the disciples), which of them should be the greatest.” I suppose this question, “Who shall be the greatest?” is one of the oldest questions in the world. It has been asked from the very beginning of man’s history; all down through the centuries it has been written, in every country, and in every walk of life. It did not begin with these twelve men, nor did it end

there. We find it in the field of sport, who can be champion, who can get the coveted cup or other prize. Then, in the realm of aviation, who can fly the highest or the farthest; and in politics, in the college; in commerce, ambition is rife; who shall be the greatest? But this should not be so among us who are called Christians. What a rebuke follows here—verse 47, “And Jesus perceiving the thought of their heart,” etc. said, “He that is the least among you, the same shall be great.” verse 48. One has well written

Woulds't thou go high? Go low!  
 Woulds't thou go up? Go down!  
 For go as low as e'er you will,  
 The Highest has been lower still.

God wants quality, not quantity, as someone has said, “One cup of water has as much of the quality of water, as has the whole of Lake Superior.” A great thing today is the idealizing of quantity, bulk rather than reality, not knowing froth from fodder; and one almost despairs of seeing it different.

But let us look at our Scriptures where we have spiritual or Christian ambition brought before us. In 2 Corinthians 5:9 we read “Wherefore we labor, that present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.” This is rendered in the Newberry Bible, “Wherefore we are ambitious” etc. In Dean Alford’s translation it reads, “Wherefore it is our ambition,” and the Revised Version (margin) gives it, “We are ambitious.” Then in our second Scripture, Romans 15:20, “Yea, so have I strived to preach the Gospel,” etc. Mr. Newberry gives this “Being ambitious to preach the Gospel,” Dean Alford has it, “Making it my ambition to preach the Gospel,” and in the R. V. (margin) it is, “Being ambitious to preach the Gospel.”

In the third Scripture we read, 1 Thessalonians 4: 11, “And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business,” etc. This is translated in the Newberry Bible, “Ambitiously endeavour to be quiet,” and by Dean Alford, “Make it your ambition to be quiet,” and in the R. V. (margin) “Be ambitious to be quiet.”

So we have these three portions the Christian’s threefold ambition as set forth in the Word of God. In the first we have what might be termed our “Ambition Godward,” in the second, our “Ambition Manward,” and in the third, our “Ambition Selfward.” Let us look at these three briefly.

2 Corinthians 5:9 “Wherefore we are ambitious that whether present or absent we may be well pleasing unto Him” Newberry. So our ambition “Godward” should be, that whether present in the body when the Lord comes, or absent from the body when He comes, we may be found well pleasing unto Him. God has not left us in the dark concerning that which is well pleasing to Him. Enoch had this testimony, that he pleased God. Hebrews 11:15, but from 1 Corinthians 10:5 we learn that with many of His

earthly people, God was not well pleased. Before we were saved we could not please God, “They that are in the flesh cannot please God;” but now, as His children it is our great privilege to live to please God. This, of course, will cost us something. We find in three instances that pleasing God is spoken of as a sacrifice. “That ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, (well pleasing) unto God.” Romans 12:1. “The things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well pleasing to God.” Philippians 4:18. “By Him therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His Name, but to do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.” Hebrews 13:15, 16. So we find that to “present our bodies a living sacrifice,” to give of our substance, and to offer praise, is well pleasing to God. May we, like the Apostle Paul, be ambitious to please God.

Romans 15:20. “Being ambitious to preach the Gospel” etc. This ought to be our ambition manward. In the previous verse of this chapter the apostle speaks of having fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem and around to Illyricum. What a testimony! Look up your map and see what a territory this takes in. Surely he attained his ambition. This is something sadly lacking among us today. It is recorded concerning William Carey, one of the first to go to the foreign field with the Gospel, that when a young man he taught school, and failing at that he took up shoe repairing. He had hung up in his cobbling shop, a map of the world. On it China was in black, and India and Africa, and much of Asia. While mending shoes he would look at the map, and pointing out those countries to his customers, he would say, “All those countries that are black have never heard the Gospel; I long to go there with the news of salvation.” What an ambition! We may not be able to go to places where Christ has not been named, or even to go beyond our home town or city, but we can all “Make it our ambition to preach the Gospel,” our little sphere, whether by word of mouth to the individual, or by gospel tract.

Then, in 1 Thessalonians 4:11, we have what ought to be our ambition selfward. “And that ye ambitiously endeavour to be quiet, and to do your own business,” etc. This has been paraphrased, “Be ambitious to be unambitious.” To live a quiet, godly life to provide things honest in the sight of God and man. We find the very opposite to this in the second epistle, there were some “Which walked disorderly, working not at all, but were busybodies.” 2 Thessalonians 3:11. These were not ambitious to be quiet. We are to be active, yet doing no one harm. This would be a great ambition. What sorrow we bring upon ourselves when this is not the case. “If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.” Jms 3: 2.

So let us have this threefold ambition, to live to please God, to spread the Gospel, and while doing these, to seek to keep self in the background.



## The First Gospel: Genesis 3:15

*Joel Portman*

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it (he) shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Genesis 3:15).

The promise that God gave to the guilty pair followed immediately upon the heels of their sin, the fall, and their exposure by the God against whom they had sinned. It was a glimmer of light in the darkness, the promise of hope amidst judgment, and the anticipation of a Victor given to the vanquished. It was an expression of the eternal purpose of God, and it clearly displayed His infinite grace toward those who were unworthy of it. This verse has long been considered to be the first promise of the coming of the Messiah, sometimes called the Proto-Evangelium, or first gospel of the Bible. There are aspects of this verse that give us the unfolding course of God’s dealings with men and the anticipated, ultimate defeat of His enemy, the devil. We rejoice to see how this truth has been and will be fulfilled to the ultimate exaltation and glory of the woman’s Seed, as seen here.

This article seeks to expand our appreciation for the possible different aspects of this prophecy, perhaps to an extent that not all will agree with. However, it is for our consideration, and for the purpose of enlarging our thoughts about how these few words were seen in the unfolding of God’s Word.

### Recipient of the Prophecy

It is notable that this prophecy wasn’t directed toward the guilty pair, though they were the interested listeners to what the Lord was saying. It was directed to the serpent, and to the evil spirit that lurked in the serpent. God’s physical judgment had been pronounced upon the serpent itself in the previous verse, and that position of the serpent in the physical sense has continued to this day. It will also continue into the millennium, as we read that “The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.” (Isaiah 65:25). This indicates that in that condition of a restored earth, the residual reminder of the curse that resulted from sin will be the sight of the serpent, still writhing upon the ground and unrestored to its creatorial state.

The verse also gives a clear prediction of the eventual condemnation and crushing of the enemy of God who was the motivator and who used the serpent for his approach. It leaves no uncertainty as to the eventual complete victory of God over Satan, a victory that will be accomplished through the woman’s seed, a literal man,

linked with and descended from the one who had succumbed to Satanic temptation. If Christ, as the Son of Man, will ultimately rule sovereignly over all creation, He also, as the Seed of the woman, will be the instrument who will accomplish the complete victory over every opposing power.

To the serpent, we find, on a natural level, the anticipation of the antipathy between women and their descendents and serpents. In general, there seems to be an inborn abhorrence that exists between the female sex and snakes. Many commentators go no farther than this, not seeing any symbolic implication than what one can observe in society from the beginning. However, it seems very clear that the prophetic utterance of the Lord against the serpent was directed at this point toward the spiritual being that was the evil instigator of the fall. This is what we would like to consider in the remainder of this article. And we can do it under a series of questions that will need to be considered from the Scripture.

### In What Consists the Enmity?

How was it expressed?

Who are the Persons involved?

“Enmity” is a word that indicates active hatred and hostility of one against another. It is derived from a root word that means “to hate.” Thus it indicates something more than mere abhorrence or aversion; it is a word that depicts an on-going opposing activity with attempts to destroy and ruin, and a determined antipathy that is unceasing. It is a word that is used to describe the unceasing hatred of the Philistines toward Israel that sought to destroy them (Ezekiel 25:15) and the attitude of continuing opposition toward Israel by Syria (Ezekiel 35:5).

We can trace an unending enmity expressed in repeated attempts to destroy and render God’s purposes impotent regarding Israel and the coming Seed in the Old Testament. We have only to note instances such as Cain murdering Abel in Genesis 4, and Exodus 1 when the midwives were commanded to kill all the males of the Israelite children. Amalek’s attack against Israel in Exodus 17 was another attempt of the serpent to counteract God’s purposes to bring His people to Himself; God’s pronouncement of perpetual warfare with Amalek from generation to generation until He has utterly put out their remembrance is indicative of the on-going warfare between God and the serpent. We see it in Balak’s and Balaam’s attempts to get God to curse Israel in Numbers 23-24, and then in Moab’s activity to corrupt and destroy Israel through ruined separation in Numbers 25. Athaliah’s attempt to destroy all the royal seed of the house of David continued that effort (2 Chronicles 22:10) and further manifested that enmity. That pattern of active enmity and hatred of the serpent against the nation of Israel and the promised Seed continued even to the coming of Christ, when Herod killed

all the male babies in the area of Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16).

These are only more obvious examples of the enmity that existed (and still continues). It is enmity on the serpent's part. But who is the woman? At first sight, it is obviously Eve, but we suggest that the woman is typical of the nation of Israel, and this is often the case symbolically in Scripture. The most clear indication of this is found in Revelation 12, where sound exposition shows that this woman is a type of the nation. Other references that refer to Israel as the woman include Jeremiah 6:2, Isaiah 54:6, Jeremiah 4:31, Ezekiel 16:30, Hosea 3:1, Micah 4:9-10, and others. The examples cited show that there has been a perpetual enmity between Satan and the nation of Israel that, in fact, continues to this day, as expressed by the hatred of surrounding nations for that little country. It will culminate in the future, when all the forces of the armies allied against Israel will be on the verge of its destruction, when the Lord will return gloriously to bring defeat to all those forces (Zechariah 14:1-5). So we see the reason for this unceasing enmity in the promise, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman."

### **Seed of the Serpent and of the Woman**

It was a remarkable statement that our Lord made in John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." These religious men, thinking that they were serving the Lord, were actually perpetuating the enmity that had existed between the serpent and the woman. In this incident we can see the enmity existing between the serpent's seed and the woman's Seed. We are certainly justified to see that the Woman's Seed suggests the virgin birth of our Lord, since normally, children are considered to be the seed of the man. However, this prophecy anticipates His incarnation, His life and His sufferings, all in view of being the Woman's Seed. Galatians 3:16 speaks of the singularity of the promise of the "Seed" made to Abraham, that it directly anticipated the One Person who would fulfill it.

Is it possible that ultimately the Seed of the Serpent goes beyond religious or irreligious men of rabid hatred against Christ, to single out the one man who is directly opposed to all that is of Christ? I am thinking of the Antichrist, who will epitomize the vain ambitions of men expressed in the lie of Satan in the garden, "ye shall be as gods (as Elohim, God), knowing good and evil." He will assume to himself the honor when he presents himself as if he is God (2 Thessalonians 2:4) and will demand the worship of men that should go to Christ. He will gather up and express in himself all the culmination of hatred and opposition to Christ, and as a result, he, as the head who represents all the ambitions that have been motivated by the

serpent, will be crushed by the victorious Seed of the woman. The bruising of the serpent's head is fundamentally directed at the source of man's fall, for it is Satan himself who will be ultimately crushed under the foot of Christ. A crushing of the heel wouldn't be a fatal blow, but that of the serpent's head would be final and complete. It would seem that, actually, the bruising of the heel of the woman's Seed took place at the cross, in view of which the Lord said, "this is your hour and the power of darkness," (Luke 22:53). It was a blow that was intended to completely destroy Him and eradicate His power, but instead, it was counteracted by His glorious resurrection. The fulfillment of the crushing of the serpent's head is based on the victory that the Lord accomplished at Calvary, but it will not be realized until He will "bruise Satan under your feet shortly," (Romans 16:20). God's purpose is to "put down all rule and authority and power," (1 Corinthians 15:24) and "put all things under his feet." (v. 25). The serpent will be completely, eternally vanquished, and then consigned to the lake of fire that has been prepared for him (Matthew 25:41). Then Christ will reign supreme, God's purpose will have been fulfilled, and saints who are eternally linked with Him in His glory, will reign with Him.

So that in this one verse, we have the anticipation of on-going enmity between Israel and other nations, as well as the enmity that also exists between men of the serpent's nature and those who have the divine nature. This is to be expected by all of us as well. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," (1 John 3:13). Again, the Lord said to His disciples, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19). Then we also see the bruising of the heel of the Seed of the woman at the cross, which will be followed by the final victory of Christ over that old serpent, the devil when He will crush his head. It should be a source of our joy and peace to know that this first promise of God will be ultimately and completely fulfilled. Additionally, it should help believers who are suffering from others for the sake of Christ to realize why this is taking place and to bear it with dignity and thanksgiving for His sake.

*Thus saith the Lord, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Let us only be clear of unbelief and a guilty conscience, and we shall hide ourselves in the rock and pavilion of the Lord, sheltered beneath the wings of everlasting love till all calamities be overpast.*

## The Five Thessalonian Notes of Thanksgiving

*W. Williams*

The Epistles to the Thessalonians are both preeminently occupied with the truth of the Lord's coming. It is quite evident that they believed and acted upon the Apostle's teaching that Christ might come at any moment. They were pre-millennialists in deed and truth; not vain janglers holding the Lord's second coming as a pet theory while busily engaged adding dollar to dollar and house to house.

Another thing about the Thessalonians, they were in their first love. Freshness of affection and quickness of understanding go together, so that there was little to correct in comparison to the churches in Corinth and Galatia. Paul has not well begun his letter to the Corinthians, when we find him saying: "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." There, strife and division had done their foul work. When Rehoboam got on the throne he was determined to rule by despotism. Jeroboam fresh fern Egypt is soon on the scene and between them they soon divide Israel. So it was in Corinth, there were those who wanted to Lord-over God's heritage and exclude God's servant Paul, and there were those Jeroboam like, with their worldly wisdom and carnality all looking for a place, and division was the outcome.

Then again in his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul only gets a few words written when he is compelled to refute doctrinal error of a most serious character. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

It is refreshing then to turn to the Thessalonians and to read note after note of thanksgiving sent up to God by the beloved Apostle Paul because of their faith, love, and works. While other churches gave him care and "travailing in birth" because of their condition; the Thessalonian Assembly cheered and refreshed that faithful servant of Christ; and if their godly walk and waiting awakened such notes of thanksgiving and praise in Paul's heart; what joy must they have given to Him "who tends with sweet unwearied care the flock for which He bled."

The first note we have in Chapter 1:2 "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." It is interesting to notice the little word "all." We give thanks to God for you all. In later chapters we see that there were the ubiquitous "busybodies" even in the young Thessalonian Assembly, some disorderly ones, and some weak and weary lambs of the flock, yet there was something in all of them that he could thank God for. What a lesson we have here! How often we allow the failings and

faults of our fellow-saints to so obscure our love's vision that we can see no mark of grace upon them, for which we can give God thanks. How very fair and honest was the Apostle. Ever ready to acknowledge what was of God—and there is something of God to be seen in every regenerate soul—even in the troublous busybody and in the failing weak one.

But there were positive causes for this first note of thanksgiving. There was a work of faith, that is a work that had the word of God for its guide and authority. All else is but presumption and shall be but "wood, hay and stubble" at the judgment seat of Christ. There was also a labor of love? This is the kind of labor that gladdens God's heart, when love is the motive power. When love is absent it becomes mere "labor" as in the message to the church at Ephesus, or as Peter said: "Lord we have toiled all night and caught nothing." There is a hymn we used to sing when newly saved, "Toiling on, toiling on," but since then we have learned a more excellent way: "The love of Christ constraineth us." When our service for the Lord becomes mere toil and drudgery it is time to turn aside and get into His presence; and after sin and failure are confessed and put away, we shall get fresh revelations of His dying love for us, that shall so fill and flood our little hearts that our service will become again a labor of love.

Then there was "patience of hope" in our Lord Jesus Christ. A living hope, like true faith, is always prepared for a delay—it may be a refusal. Haste and impatience are sure marks of unbelief, so that in waiting for His coming we need patience, and more patience. The setting of days and dates are indications of the lack of the "patience of hope" of the Thessalonians.

The second note of thanksgiving we find in Chap. 2. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." There were no "higher critics" among the Thessalonian saints. They received the Gospel as a direct message from God Himself; and the results justified their faith. We need to be on our guard in these days when that foul lie of Darwin is being propagated as not being incompatible with a belief of the fundamentals of Christianity. In these days when the so called "assured results" of false science are causing the masses of christendom to let go one by one the great fundamentals of the faith once for all delivered unto the saints.

Thank God, so far, we have heard of no assembly of Christians gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus that has been tainted by this earthly, sensual, devilish wisdom; but there is not a sect and scarcely a mission today but has given way more or less to that flood of black clothed, dog collared infidelity, and God alone can preserve us. Do not let us think that we are immune from contamination from



this loathsome pest. Only as we hold fast the Bible as the very spoken word of God can we stand. Personally we have rested our all for eternity on its being the very word of God. On the 20th of Oct. 1900 about twenty minutes past nine as we fell on our knees before a holy God, owning that He would be just and right in sending us to hell, the truth of Romans 5 and 6 came before us and we believed it, and sins forgiven, and new life, were the immediate result. We proved Romans 5 and 6 to be the very spoken word of God. For time we have given up our worldly ambitions and aspirations because we believe the Book to be God's very word; and to come nearer still, for there is nothing so practical and ever present to us as the daily bread and butter. Over thirteen years ago we landed in Venezuela strangers in a strange land, unknown and unnoticed with but God's bare Word as our salary and strength, and, blessed be His name, there has been no hitch, so that we can say with one who proved Him from the sheep cotes to the throne: "Oh taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." Let those ecclesiastical infidels deny its truth and inspiration, if they will; but those of us who have put it to the test in every department of life are convinced that it is God's very spoken word from Genesis to Revelation.

(to be continued)

***God's time is like the time of the tide: All the art and power of man can neither hasten nor retard its moment: it must be waited for; nothing can be done without it, and when it comes nothing can resist it. The only reason why the Lord seems to delay what He afterward grants is that the best hour is not yet come.***

## The Will of God

*Albert Joyce*

The most important factor in our lives is the Will of God. To this, all Christians would doubtless agree, at least in theory, but surely we have to confess that oftentimes this is not the guiding principle of our lives as it ought to be. When the Lord Jesus descended from heaven to earth as the perfect Servant, everything in His life was done according to the will of God.

From the throne of His glory to the lowly cattle shed in Bethlehem, came the Son of God in incarnation saying, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:7). When in public testimony before men He said, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will but the will of Him that sent Me" (John 6:38). In deepest anguish of spirit in Gethsemane, bowing His head in submission, He said, "Nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). Then because of the fullness and completeness of Christ's mighty

work at the cross on behalf of a sinful world, the Scripture assures us, "God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:3-4). Also, we who have believed have been born again because, "Of His own will begat He us by the Word of truth" (James 1:18).

Because of all this, the will of God should enter into every detail of our daily lives. God is interested in the very city or place where we live, and in every removal, from one place to another. Do we ever make a move without first endeavoring to get the mind of God? In James 4:13, the writer reproves those who "go into such a city" to get gain, without reference to the will of God and adds, "Ye ought to say, if the Lord will." Little wonder if we get out of the way and lose our usefulness for God, like Lot, when we step out of the "center of the circle of the love of God". The Apostle Paul wrote, "I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will", and to the Romans, he prayed God that He "might have a prosperous journey by the will of God" to come unto them.

### The Will of God in Salvation

We began our spiritual history by the will of God, when we believed on the Son, were born again and received everlasting life. "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, should (R. V.) have everlasting life" (John 6:40). That was the beginning of our journey with God, then, in the same portion The Lord promises, "I will raise him up at the last day". What an assurance at the end of the journey! And, meanwhile on the way, comes the assurance of preservation (v. 39) "This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." Thus we have regeneration, preservation and the prospect of resurrection.

### The Will of God in Separation

"Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:3-4). Here are two great reasons why separation from this present world system should follow salvation, (1) The sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross was for this very purpose. Similarly, in Chapter, 6 of this same epistle, we read, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The cross of Christ stands between us and the world. (2) This is the will of God our Father. To mix with the world is to turn our back upon the cross and to disregard the will of God our Father. This covers every phase of the present world system; socially, religiously, commercially, politically, or the world of sport and pleasure. In the coming season, when the world under a guise of religion, mixes with the professed remembrance of the



birth of Christ, riotous living, drunkenness etc., what an opportunity for the Christian to display the change that the grace of God has made, in the person, the life, the business and the home. Godly separation will bring worldly persecution, which takes us to our next thought.

### **The Will of God and Suffering**

The epistle of Peter is the epistle of the wilderness and the wilderness is the place of trial. In every chapter of the first epistle we have mention and emphasis made on suffering. How little we know of this! Peter, by the Spirit wrote, "Beloved think it not strange concerning the fiery trial...rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings...if ye are reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye", again "It is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing" and again, "For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men."

### **The Will of God and Service**

Every Christian has been saved to serve, but the only acceptable service to God is that which is according to His will. In Acts 18:36, the Word of God sums up the life of Israel's greatest king in a few brief words, yet what an enviable epitaph! "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep." But one might observe, "I am not a king like David, I am only a servant". In the Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 6, the servants, yea the bond servants are exhorted to serve, "Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." This exalts the Christians most menial service, when he realizes I am not serving men but the Lord Christ. So, whether it be the daily toil of men at work or the mother in the home, or whether it be the more direct service of the Lord, if it is done according to the will of the Lord and for His glory, it will receive a full reward by and by.

### **The Will of God and Sanctification**

"As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (I Thessalonians 4:1-3). Like salvation, no doubt we are all clear that this truth is viewed in a three-fold way. Positionally, every believer in Christ has been sanctified "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10). In the future, at Christ's coming again, we shall be perfectly and fully sanctified, body, soul and spirit and made exactly like Him. In between these two points, practically, we are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit of God and the Word of God. It is this sense that is before us now. Our God is a holy God and

He demands a holy life from His people. What a complete contrast we have here to some of the religious leaders today who talk of the "new morality". The Word of God would term it the filth and immorality of the flesh. What these false leaders would permit, God most strongly condemns as fornication. May the Lord help us to look at sin with abhorrence, as the Scriptures do.

Read Roman 12, "Present your bodies, a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." To be sanctified is just to be set apart for God.

Lack of space necessitates only a brief mention of some further thoughts relative to the will of God.

### **The Will of God and Supplications**

Roman 8:26-27, is a great encouragement in our prayer life. "The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Himself maketh intercession for us...He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." But in all our prayers and supplications, thanksgiving should always accompany them. "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God; in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). Well might the Psalmist cry, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever" (Psalm 107:1).

### **The Will of God and Sonship**

Among the "all spiritual blessings" of Ephesians 1, we are predestinated "unto the adoption as sons (R.V.) through Jesus Christ to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will...having made known unto us the mystery of His will...according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His will." Having been brought into the place of sonship with the Father, we may learn the mystery of His will and be brought into His counsels.

Surely there should be the surrendered will to the will of God, even as we began, like Saul of Tarsus, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" when the Lord was revealed to him on the road to Damascus. Subjection to the will of God can only bring blessings to our lives now and a great reward at His coming again, "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry." (Hebrews 10:35-37).

**Extraordinary afflictions are not always the punishment of extraordinary sins but sometimes, the trial of extraordinary graces.**

## That I May Know Him

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.” (Philippians 3:10)

Reading the sacred record that includes what Paul said about his own desires, we cannot help but recognize that he was a man who deeply longed to know Christ intimately, not satisfied with a superficial form of knowledge about Him, but rather to know Him as a person in his own life. It was a deep relationship that he was striving for, and in this passage we can note that there were some very important results that he would also know if he knew Christ in this manner.

He would know the “power of His resurrection.” That is to say, he was thinking of the victory that Christ accomplished over sin and death and which was demonstrated by His great power in rising from among the dead ones. The exact meaning of what Paul is saying may be open to discussion and different views, but it seems evident that he was not only thinking of the future resurrection of saints at the coming of Christ, though that was clearly a part of it. He was longing to know that power over sin in any form in his life, living as one who was “dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 6:11).

He also desired to know the “fellowship of His sufferings”, or it is to say that His desire to know Christ was so strong that he was willing even to suffer as Christ suffered, if this was necessary. He simply longed to get to Christ and would allow nothing to stand in his way. It is clear that Paul did indeed suffer in very many ways, as he records in 2 Corinthians 11:23-27 and in other places. “For even hereunto were ye called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps,” (1 Peter 2:21). “If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together,” (Romans 8:17).

Finally, he wanted to be made “conformable unto his death. He was willing to die as Christ died and certainly his wish was soon to be granted, as he gave his life for the cause of Christ. This also seems to go beyond that, to say that his desire was to be like Christ in his death and to voluntarily give that life of service for His sake. It would also result in him being completely free from sin in every form.

There was only one thing that would enable one like Paul to know Christ in this way, and that was by having a life completely centered on Him, pursuing that knowledge because of unreserved devotion to His person, and serving Him without any question as a slave in selfless humility, even as Christ had himself served God in a perfect manner. It is possible for every believer in every day.

All of us can make excuses, but our failure to have this same desire and to realize it is usually due to divided hearts, occupation with things of the world and those things that steal our affection and interest so that He is not receiving what is due to Him. Is it not simply a question of how much we really desire to have this knowledge and to know this experience.

Paul began his Christian life with two questions that seemed to dominate his entire thinking from that point on: Acts 9 tells us of that conversion, and his two questions were, 1. “Who art thou Lord,?” and 2. “What wilt thou have me to do?” A burning desire to know the Person, and a fervency in His devoted service as he obeyed his Lord in every way dominated and shaped his life for the glory and honor of His blessed Lord.

May the Lord stir each of our own hearts to be somewhat like Paul. “Be ye followers of me, even as I am also of Christ,” (1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1, Philippians 3:17).

**A. W. Tozer listed seven rules for self-discovery. He stated that we may be known by the following:**

1. What we most want
2. What we think about most
3. How we use our money
4. What we do with our leisure time
5. The company we enjoy
6. Whom and what we admire
7. What we laugh at

Quoted from Choice Gleanings Calendar, 2010

## Called out and Cast out

He called me out, the Man with garments dyed.  
I knew His voice -- my Lord the Crucified.  
He showed Himself, and oh, I could not stay;  
I had to follow Him, had to obey.

It cast me out -- this world, when once it found  
That I within my rebel heart had crowned  
The Man it had rejected, spurned and slain:  
Whom God in wondrous power had raised to reign.

And so we are "without the camp"-- my Lord and I.  
But oh, His presence sweeter is than any earthly tie,  
Which once I counted greater than His claim;  
I'm "out" not only from the world, but "to His Name".