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Jonah, pt. 1

Steve Walvatne

Of all Old Testament prophets, none is ridiculed or excoriated more than Jonah. His story is mocked, his character maligned; yet, who like Jonah has bared his soul and faced so frankly, the foul intrusion of insubordinate flesh? As the book's likely author, he "extenuates nothing. He unveils all his hardness of heart, all his Jewish exclusiveness, all his murmuring against the Lord" (Joseph Exell: *The Biblical Illustrator*). Nevertheless, for all his honesty, labels like "egotist," "bloodthirsty," and "coward" continue to dog him (G. Robinson: *The Twelve Minor Prophets* and J.H. Jowett: *The Eagle Life*). Jonah did rebel at divine purpose and he did at times behave badly, but are these harsh assessments from critics truly merited? Surely not!

In Jonah, we witness the author's shortcomings, not through the eye of a backslider, but through that of a Spirit-filled man, who now, by divine inspiration, renders an impartial account of his attitudes and actions. Everyone shines in Jonah, except Jonah. His aim is not to glorify self or sin, but the God of heaven who so graciously bore with him at this difficult time. "If we are unfaithful, He abides faithful" (2 Tim. 2:13, JND). The expositor, Matthew Henry, says it is "probable" that Jonah was a young man when the Lord directed him to Nineveh, and that the revival of his name as a prophet in 2 Kings 14:25, is "undoubted evidence" of his full recovery (*A Commentary of the Whole Bible*). Like David, Jonah could say of Jehovah: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10).

The purpose of these papers is practical. We acknowledge the prophetic tone of this book, but that is not our chief concern. Prophecy "walks" in Jonah, rather than "talks." It is prophecy in action more than in word. Our goal, however, is to trace Jonah's footprint, and seek with God's help, to learn timely lessons from the man and his experiences. To gain from what has been termed, "dearly bought experience." We'll begin by

noting. . .

The Messenger

"Now the word of the Lord came unto Jonah the son of Amittai, saying . . ." v.1

Jonah received a divine call, one that gave authority and capacity to his service. It came to him distinctly and he was not slow in recognizing its Source. The call not only proved Jonah's fitness for service, but that he knew something of intimate communion with God. It is foolish to wonder at God's will if we spend our days apart from God, never reading His Word – never growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18). "People would like a convenient and comfortable means of knowing God's will," wrote J.N. Darby, "...but there exists no means of ascertaining it without reference to the state of our own soul. . . If we are near enough to God, we shall not be at a loss to know His will" (*Collected Writings*: vol. 16).

Sadly, much activity "for" the Lord, is not really "of" the Lord. To leap into action without God's call is a huge mistake. Those that run unsent, run on their own energy, substituting the lack of divine power with natural charisma and logic. But it is wrong to twist and tempt God's will, for He is Lord and we must follow. Anything less brings confusion and possible chastening. Jonah's call was legitimate; his failure to obey, was not.

In 2 Kings 14:25, we learn that Jonah was a Jewish prophet from a village named Gath-hepher, near the Sea of Galilee. Many commentators believe he knew Elijah and Elisha, becoming in fact, their successor. "It is likely," writes A.M.

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Hodgkin, “that he was trained in the schools of the prophets and that he exercised his ministry during the reign of Jeroboam II, and perhaps before it” (*Christ in All the Scriptures*). His was a weighty ministry, for centuries later, the Lord Jesus contrasted His own ministry with Jonah’s by saying, “*A greater than Jonah is here*” (Matt. 12:41; Lk. 11:32).

Further clues to Jonah’s character derive from names associated with him. If we dismiss (as some do) the spiritual significance of these names, we lose much (Heb. 7:1-3). “Jonah” for example, means, “dove” – a telling name for a prophet. The dove expresses many character traits. Among them are the following:

1. Doves are **SMALL** creatures. This bespeaks the lowly nature of servants. Said Paul: “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of your vocation, wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness...*” (Eph. 4:1-2).

2. Doves are **SENSITIVE** creatures. This indicates the tender, harmless quality of a servant. “*I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*” (Matt. 10:16). “*And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient*” (2 Tim. 2:24).

3. Doves are **SCRUPULOUS** creatures. They refuse to feed on carrion (Gen. 8:7), seeking instead, pure grain. The servant Timothy was to “*shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness*” (2 Tim. 2:16). Dove-like servants dwell on “*whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report...*” (Php. 4:8). F.W. Krummacher relates how doves are “horrorified” even to pick up the feather of an unclean hawk or eagle (*Solomon and Shulamite*). They’re repulsed by the slightest contact with defilement. What about us? We should “*walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise*” (Eph. 5:15).

4. Doves are **SEEMLY** creatures. “*O my dove...thy countenance is comely*” (Song 2:14). A “suitability” or “beauty” marks God’s servants. Their words fitly spoken are like “*apples of gold in pictures of silver*” (Pr. 25:11). Their movements are graceful and swift: “*How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things*” (Rom. 10:15).

5. Doves are **SECRETIVE** creatures. They make their homes in the clefts of the rocks, away from the gaze of men (Song 2:14; Jer. 48:28; Ezek. 7:16). For thirty years, the Perfect Servant toiled in secret. And later, during His public

ministry, He still sought solitude in the hidden place (“a mountain apart”) that He might commune with His Father (Matt. 14:23). His example applies to all servants; they must know times of hiding, when they discover self and learn their God. What preservation it affords! “*He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty*” (Ps. 91:1).

6. Doves are **SWEET** and **SORROWFUL** creatures (Song of Sol. 2:14; Nah. 2:7; Isa. 38:14; 59:11; Ezek. 7:16). In like manner, God’s servants declare the sweet strains of the gospel, yet sorrow for those that rebel. They know the bliss of peace and bemoan the blight of spiritual darkness. They rejoice in righteousness, but mourn over sin. They exalt when saints find honor, and weep when saints despair (1 Cor. 12:26).

7. Doves are **SERVICEABLE** and **SACRIFICIAL** creatures (Gen. 8:8; Lev. 1:14; 5:11; 14:22; 15:14; Lk. 2:24). Noah sent a dove on a mission of *discovery*; our Lord sends servants on missions of *recovery*. And the greatest joy Paul knew as a servant, was that of being “*offered upon the sacrifice and service*” of other believer’s faith (Php. 2:16-17).

Is it any wonder, the Holy Spirit is illustrated by a dove? If Jonah’s character exemplified these dove-like features, then his was an honorable life indeed. His was a spirit well suited for the lonely life of a prophet.

But there is another name attached to Jonah’s. He was the son of “Amittai,” meaning, “truth.” The writer John testified of the Lord Jesus, that He was “*full of grace and truth*” (Jn. 1:14). Our Savior was holy and perfectly balanced. When we couple Jonah’s name, “dove,” with Amittai’s name, “truth,” we see the twin virtues of Christ borne out in Jonah’s character (though not, of course, to the same degree as Deity). The Jonah narrative conceals much of this, but crevices here and there, do let these virtues shine forth. How good when servants are balanced by these two things! If we lean too far towards “grace,” we tend to **compromise**, and if we lean too far towards “truth,” we tend to **criticize**. The more balanced we are, the more Christ-like we become.

We close this section with one other name linked to Jonah. He was an inhabitant of “Gath-hepher.” The name means “winepress,” referring to a place where grapes become juice through the process of crushing. Metaphorically, the winepress in Scripture describes God’s judgment against His foes (Isa. 63:3; Lam. 1:15; Rev. 14:19, 20; 19:15). In a coming day, He will tread all enemies under His feet. Sinners detest this message and spurn it. Preachers that preach it, frequently face hostility. The “world” likes

“smooth things” (Isa. 30:10) and so lashes out at judgment preaching. Nevertheless, God’s blow will fall, silencing objectors forever. In a day when “hell-fire” warnings are rare, let faithful servants continue to preach “*all the counsel of God*” (Acts 20:27). Jonah had a solemn obligation to warn sinners in Nineveh. For a time he resisted, inviting God’s censure. Peter comes to mind: “*And if the righteous scarcely [with difficulty] be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?*” (1 Pet. 4:18).

(to be continued)

A servant of God has but one Master. It ill becomes the servant to seek to be rich, and great, and honored in that world where his Lord was poor, and mean, and despised.

George Muller

Servant Song, Isa. 53 pt. 4

Robert Surgenor

STANZA FIVE (53:10-12). The Portion of the Servant

(1) “*Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.*”

Coming to the last stanza we are reminded of Deuteronomy where we have the summation of God’s ways with His people. The wilderness journey is over and they are about to enter into their inheritance. In this last stanza Messiah’s sojourn is over, and we see His entrance into the fair land above.

The song now comes to the final glory and triumph of the Messiah. The song has expressed the deepest sufferings of God’s faithful Servant, and now it proclaims His highest exaltation to honor.

“*It pleased the Lord to bruise Him.*” Is the Lord a sadist? Not at all! Then what does it mean that He found pleasure in bruising His only begotten Son? Simply this, it was His will. The offering of Christ is spoken of as “*an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour*” (Eph. 5:2).

What brought delight to the heart of God was the fact that His Son had voluntarily submitted Himself to the agonies of the Cross that He might satisfy God’s demands, and to save us from going down to the pit. In this sense, Christ’s sufferings pleased God. It was the design of God that He be bruised, meaning broken to pieces, to be crushed, indicating the most severe inward and outward sufferings possible. In accordance with the design of Jehovah, He was put to grief. His sorrow was immeasurably great.

Jehovah made His soul an offering for sin (a trespass offering). The trespass offering has in view the demands of God’s justice, and that is what is in view here. Paul states, “*For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him*” (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ did not die as a martyr, but as an offering to make expiation for sin – our sins! Martyrs may die for a cause, but they could never die to put away sin.

“*He shall see His seed*” (plural). That is, His descendants. This was regarded as the highest blessing among the Hebrews (Prov. 17:6; Ps. 127:5; 128:6). This song promises our Lord that He shall not only have a innumerable posterity, but that He will live to see them. “*He shall prolong His days.*” He was raised in the power of an endless life, and crowned with glory and honor. Blessed be His name! When He brings His many sons to glory, He will triumphantly proclaim, “*Behold I and the children which God hath given Me*” (Heb. 2:13).

“*The pleasure of the Lord,*” meaning the work Jehovah desires and appoints, “*shall prosper in His hand,*” under His government and direction. Multitudes will be saved, and that which His God had designed and desired, will without fail, prosper under Messiah’s administration.

(2) “*He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities.*”

The song mentions “*the travail of His soul*” and conveys the thought of “birth pangs.” “*A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world*” (Jn. 16:21). When His hour was come, there was much anguish, but the end result was the redemption of those who were to be His children eternally. This was part of the joy that was set before Him, accomplishing the Father’s will, and securing His bride, the Church. This joy enabled Him to endure the Cross (Heb. 12:2).

The next clause poses a problem. “*By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many.*” J. N. Darby renders it, “*By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant instruct many in righteousness.*” Others translate it, “*By the knowledge of Him shall My righteous Servant justify many.*” Now it is true that by knowing and trusting in Christ the sinner is justified. To know Him is life eternal (Jn. 17:3). That is a truth that cannot be denied. However, look at the context of the song. What is the Spirit focusing our hearts on? Is it not on the Lord alone? Thus attributing knowledge to Him links this statement with the first announcement which says, He “shall deal prudently”

(52:13). By His knowledge of the Divine counsels and purposes of God, He imparted to His disciples the true knowledge of God, and so did all that was possible to draw them to His Father. He turned men from sin to righteousness through teaching them the truth. In Isaiah 11:2 we read, “*And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD*” (Isaiah 11:2). One of the qualifications of a priest was that his lips should keep knowledge (Mal. 2:7). Christ declares, “*All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him*” (Matt. 11:27).

Thus we see, that because of His absolute knowledge as the Son of God, He would effect the justification of many. Of course, they could only be made righteous on the ground of His vicarious sacrifice on the Cross, thus the song continues, saying, “*for He shall bear their iniquities.*”

(3) “*Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong; because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*”

The conquests of Messiah would be among the great and the mighty. His most powerful enemies would be subdued. Their wealth and their power will be among the spoils of His conquests. There will be no power to resist the triumphs of His truth. In the past the Roman Empire was conqueror over all nations, but it has fallen and the gospel has prevailed. However, the day is coming when a full manifestation of His glorious power shall be seen, when nations will fall down before Him and acknowledge Him as King of kings, and Lord of lords. “*He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth*” (Psalms 72:8). In the day of His victory, “*He shall divide the spoil with the strong.*” The faithful of Israel shall partake the spoils of His enemies with Him. The general intent of God for Israel in the land was made known in Deuteronomy 28:13. “*And the LORD shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the LORD thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.*” However, through their disobedience, the promise was never realized, but in the day of our Lord’s coming earthly reign, this will be fulfilled. Israel will be reminded that all their blessings have their foundation in Him, “*because He hath poured out His soul unto death: and He was numbered with the transgressors; and He bare the sin of many.*” The obedient Servant died among the kind of people He died for –

Transgressors!

Not only that, He “*made intercession for the transgressors.*” As the soldiers drove the nails, He prayed, “*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*” (Lk.23:34). The word “made” is in the future tense, and could be translated, “He continueth to make intercession.” Thus we see One presently at the right hand of God ever living to make intercession for His own (Heb. 7:25). Intercession means to go all out on the behalf of another person. What grace, for that is His activity on our behalf.

We close with His soul. It is mentioned three times. In verse 10, “*When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin.*” Verse 11, “*He shall see of the travail of His soul.*” Verse 12, “*He hath poured out His soul unto death.*” The word “soul” in this case means “Himself, His whole being.” The first mention relates to His death, the second to His resurrection, and the third to the intensity of His suffering and sacrifice. Three times His soul is mentioned in the gospels in relation to His coming death. It was “exceeding sorrowful,” and “troubled” (Matt.26:38; Mk. 14:34; Jn. 12:27). Brethren, let us bow in reverence and intense gratitude, for God’s obedient Servant, the Man of Sorrows, who was wounded for our transgressions!

It was the imputation of our sins to Christ that hid from Him the face of God the Father. It is our unconfessed disobedience that brings a cloud between Christ and us.

Robert C. Chapman

Godliness in the Assembly, pt. 4

Brian Currie

Godliness and its Mystery (3:16).

We have seen already that the reason given for writing the epistle is to show our behavior in the assembly and such behavior can be summarized as godliness. In this verse we are given an example of One who displayed godliness consistently and for Him the result was “glory.” This ought to be an incentive for us to show, in our measure, godliness or piety.

While there are many mysteries in the New Testament, only two are designated great—Ephesians 5:32 and here. This verse deals with the great mystery of godliness, which was fully displayed here on earth by a Man. This Man is described in a series of three couplets composed of contrasts. The first speaks of flesh and spirit, the second of angels and men and the third of the world and glory.

There is a divided mind with regard to the A.V. reading “**God was manifest in the flesh.**” We cannot sensibly read God in all six clauses, e.g. we could not read “God was justified in the Spirit, or God was received up into glory.” (though “God was manifest in flesh, and He who was manifest in flesh” was justified in Spirit and received up in glory). This being so, it does not undermine in the slightest the Deity of our Lord Jesus. There would be little sense in saying that a man was manifested in flesh since this is the only course open to him. We must conclude that the Person who was manifested existed prior to this manifestation and our minds turn to Deity. Thus we learn that the godly behavior expected of men in the assembly was seen in a Man on earth who was Himself Divine.

This Man was “**justified in Spirit.**” Many take this to be a reference to His baptism and subsequent anointing by the Holy Spirit. However it would seem to keep the balance of the clause better if this was a reference to His Own Spirit, i.e. this clause then deals with His flesh and His Spirit. While here on earth the Lord Jesus was misjudged, slandered and misrepresented but He never sought to justify Himself to men, but there was the inward knowledge that He was right before God. Thus with calm assurance He could say “*Thou hearest me always*” (John 11:42). This is godliness.

He was “**seen of angels.**” Never before had angels seen a Man portraying godliness. What a sight for angelic beings! A Man moving on earth constantly and consistently for God’s pleasure. Angels today are deeply interested in godly behavior on earth—see 1 Cor. 11:10; Eph. 3:10; 1 Pet. 1:12.

“**Preached unto the Gentiles**” —The Person and Work of the Lord Jesus has “*broken down the middle wall of partition*” (Eph. 2:14). Christ Jesus overcame all divisions and was thus proclaimed, not to angels, but among nations.

“**Believed on in the world**”—This is the people who should display godliness, the believers, and the place where it ought to be displayed “the world.”

“**Received up into glory**”—This is not so much a reference to the place He has gone to, as the manner in which He went—“in glory.” The word “received” is also used of the Lord’s ascension in Mk. 16:19; Acts 1:2,11,22. In Acts 20:13,14, it is translated “to take in” and in Eph. 6:13,16, “take unto” and “taking,” and has the meaning to take up to oneself. Thus God took His Son up to Himself in the Shekinah cloud (Acts 1:2). Glory is the final portion of all those portraying godliness (2 Thess. 2:14).

Godliness and its Profitability (4:6-8).

In these verses we have the features of a man who will be a blessing to the saints of God (v.16). These features are

positive and negative in relation to our minds and then our exercise. Positively we are to be “*nourished in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine*” and negatively we are to “*refuse profane and old wives’ fables.*” This means we ought to search out the very words in which the Spirit of God has expressed Himself and thereby be nourished, (cp. Job 23:12, Ps. 119:103, Jer. 15:16, Ezek. 3:3). In contrast we are to refuse (as Tit. 3:10 “reject”) the myths and stories with which an old woman would amuse children— see 1.4.

Paul then turns to our exercise which ought to be unto godliness. That which was seen in the Lord Jesus should be seen in some measure in those who follow Him. Bodily exercise profits only for the present time and yet the unsaved will train with diligence and push their body to its limit for a present benefit, but the same diligent pursuit of godliness will reward us with peace and communion with God now and greater reward hereafter.

In our day when sport and leisure occupy the minds of the unsaved such a clear exhortation should regulate the lives of those who wish to triumph in their pursuit of godliness.

Godliness and its Simplicity (6:6).

To use a hypocritical display of godliness in order to advance in the world is the extreme of perversity (v.5). We are not to make riches our ambition since these bring a snare (v.9), can lead astray (v.10) and we cannot take all that we amass with us (v.7) (cp. Job 1.20-22).

The position of the Christian is stated simply in v.6. Note it is not that contentment is great gain. It is possible to find an unsaved person who is naturally of an easy going nature and appears to be content, but such contentment without godliness is a great tragedy. However when we find a Christian who is both godly and content that, says the apostle, is great gain (see Phil, 4:11,12).

Surely at a time of inflation, increasing discontent, many professing Christians pushing for more pay and position, the words of v. 6 are both timely and searching.

Ungodliness and its tragedy (1 Cor. 5).

Perhaps the saddest experience of an assembly is when there is a breakdown in the life and testimony of one who is in fellowship. Such cannot be covered up nor condoned but must be judged before the Lord and purged out (v.7). Only when this is done will the assembly be unleavened.

Excommunication is a tragedy but when the situation demands it, it is an absolute necessity. It is never carried out in a hard or callous way but ever with a view to repentance and recovery, but the scripture is clear “*Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.*” Just as with

reception, this putting away is an assembly act, not just the action of the responsible brethren. We all ought to fear lest we ever find ourselves on the receiving end of this tragedy, because there is enough in any one of us to bring dishonor on the Lord's name.

May the Lord help us to “*follow after . . . godliness.*” (1 Tim. 6.11.)

If we practice the true Confession of Sin, and so cease to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, we shall have the testimony of the Spirit that the ear, thumb, and toe are tipped with blood and oil.

What is His Name? Jehovah-nissi

Joel Portman

Like the Children of Israel in the wilderness, the new believer doesn't progress very far before he learns that the Christian life involves hardships. The bitter waters of his experience (Ex. 15:23), as well as the drying conditions of this world (Ex. 15:22, 17:1) soon fill his soul with dismay, and like Israel in unbelief, he may complain against God for bringing him into such straits. These conditions of the journey are normal, and are God-designed to turn the heart of His people to Himself to find a full supply in what He is and can give. They learned how God can make every bitter thing sweet, provide rest and refreshment to His own in the wilderness (Ex. 15:27), and supply a perfect food (manna) to nourish them the entire period of their testing (40 years) in the wilderness. How slow we are, like them, to learn to simply trust our God and learn from Him those lessons that are essential for our Christian life!

Simply trusting every day,
Trusting through a stormy way;
Even when my faith is small,
Trusting Jesus, that is all.

Their First Enemy

Coming to Rephidim, where the smitten rock poured out water to satisfy the people's thirst, they encountered their first enemy since leaving the Red Sea behind (Ex. 17:8). Amalek, a perpetual enemy of God's people against whom the LORD would have war from generation to generation (Ex. 17:16), came as the first of the nations to fight against God's people (Num. 24:20). For us he represents the first enemy we encounter, the one who never ceases his attack, and the last one to be defeated, indeed, a perpetual foe!

Amalek, though a distant relative of Israel (descendent of Esau, the brother of Jacob), proved to be no friend of theirs. Being what it was, Amalek seems to represent the active opposition of the flesh, motivated and empowered by the designs of Satan, and determined to ruin and hinder the progress of saints. We learn from this experience, that the only victory over this foe is that strength which we receive from dependence on God to strengthen us in this warfare. How weak we are in ourselves! Our only recourse is in relying on the power of God to give us the ability to resist and overcome that evil foe lurking within each of us and which is our greatest obstacle to spiritual progress.

Amalek was confederate or involved with four other nations in its warfare against Israel. With the Canaanites (Num. 14:25), it represents the will of the flesh to desire material gain; with the Midianites in Judges 6, we see the will of the flesh to cause strife; the link with Zidonians in Judges 10:12, suggests the will of the flesh desiring independence; and with the Geshurites and Gezrites in 1 Samuel 27, it is linked with other influences to hinder the believer from making spiritual progress for God.

We notice that Amalek came from behind and smote the “hindmost” of Israel (Deut. 25:17-18). Israel had doubted God's presence among them (Ex. 17:7), and this unbelief always opens the way for the enemy to attack the weaker, more “feeble” in faith, the “faint and weary.” Those who straggle behind, not keeping in step with the saints, moving on the fringes of the camp and acting in unbelief toward God are always subject to more problems and failure in their lives. How important it is to move actively forward, progressing in the things of God and growing in grace daily! Amalek will always take advantage of individual weakness among saints.

Response to Enemy

Moses' response was swift and decisive. There was no time for delay or uncertainty. Their defense would be two-fold: Joshua would take chosen men to fight against Amalek in the valley while Moses, with Aaron and Hur, would intercede before God on the top of the hill. These two actions represent the proper response to the fleshly attack that is essential for our victory as well. Active opposition under God's leadership and control is essential. Joshua in the battle represents the believer actively resisting the power of the flesh, and Moses on the mount shows us the aspect that expresses our dependence on God for victory. We read in James 4:7, “*Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.*” The latter part of the verse can't be separated from the first part. Submission to God and alignment under His command is essential to oppose the devil or overcome the flesh, whatever form it may take. Don't we read in Gal. 5:16,

“Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh,” and “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under (the) law,” (Gal. 5:18)? To combat and overcome the degrading influence and opposition of Satan working through the flesh (our sinful tendencies that continue from what we were prior to salvation), submitting ourselves to God’s control and obedience to His Word is vital. We remember the words of Luther’s hymn,

Did we in our own strength confide?
 Our striving would be losing;
 Were not the right Man on our side,
 The Man of God’s own choosing.
 Dost ask who that may be?
 Christ Jesus, it is He - -
 Lord Sabaoth His name,
 From age to age the same --
 And He must win the battle.

The Essential Element for Victory

It’s interesting to note where the weapons for this war were obtained. Israel had no prior experience fighting an enemy such as Amalek, nor did they normally possess such weapons. These weapons were obtained from God’s mighty victory over Egypt at the Red Sea, and based on that great prior victory that God accomplished for them, they had resources to combat subsequent foes. Their ability to fight (as well as subsequent abilities to construct the Tabernacle) were no doubt divinely given, even as our resources and abilities to resist and overcome the foe are those that come from God, who grants us all things necessary for our Christian life.

But Joshua wasn’t always winning the fight! What made the difference? It was Moses upon the mountain, lifting the rod of God in his hands. When it was lifted toward God, Israel prevailed in the battle; when his hands grew weary and hung down, Amalek prevailed. The uplifted rod of God reminded of God’s power expressed in Egypt to defeat all the gods of Egypt and the power of Pharaoh. It wasn’t man’s power that brought the plagues which ultimately gave them liberty from bondage; it was God’s power expressed in Moses’ use of the rod. That same rod had been instrumental to part the waters of the sea for them to cross even as it had brought those waves of judgment over the Egyptian army. It was the rod of God’s judgment against His enemies, whether Egypt or Amalek. That uplifted rod teaches us that our victory to overcome spiritual enemies resides in our dependence on God to work on our behalf. Paul could say, though in a different context, yet true, “*When I am weak, then I am strong,*” (2 Cor. 12:10). 2 Cor. 10:3-6 reminds us that our weapons of warfare are not fleshly; we derive them from the Lord. It is our weakness acknowledged that drives us to look expectantly in our need to God and makes possible His activity to deliver His weak people. This is essential, and

yet, like Moses, how often we find ourselves weak in supplication before the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16), and as a result, losing ground to our foe. The “rod” also was linked with the scepter of tribal authority, so that alignment of our souls in submission to His control brings victory.

Divine Side of Victory

Moses was strengthened in his intercession by two men, Aaron and Hur, one on either side of him. To aid him in this vital work, they held up his hands so that through his steady supplication to God, at the end of the day, Israel had “discomfited” Amalek. Note that they didn’t completely destroy Amalek; that remained for a future day, but they greatly weakened him and got the victory for that time. It would seem that Aaron’s work would represent the function of our Great High Priest as He upholds us through His intercession before God’s face, and Hur (who Jewish rabbins say was the husband of Miriam), whose name means ‘whiteness’ (Hitchcock), seems to suggest the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Both of these “paracletes,” or comforters, who draw alongside the believer to strengthen and sustain him, are essential to minister strength and power to the believer so that he might overcome the evil influences of the flesh and its working in his life. There isn’t one excuse for our failure to overcome and gain the victory over our enemies, since God is on our side and will enable us, as we depend on Him, to subdue and vanquish the flesh, overcoming its power through divine energy.

Jehovah-nissi . . Lord our Banner

Moses built an altar (representing worshipful thanksgiving), and called it “Jehovah-nissi,” or “Jehovah, our Banner.” This altar recognized that the victory they had won was due to God’s power and that He was worthy of all the praise and honor for what had been accomplished. “Nissi” is a word derived from a Hebrew word “nes” which is also translated “standard, signal, ensign, pole.” We find that God rallies His people to Himself as a standard, the only means by which they can be delivered from their enemies (Isa. 11:10, 49:22, 62:10, Jer. 50:2). It is interesting that the same word is used in Num. 21:8-9, where it was the pole, or standard, upon which the serpent of brass was lifted in the midst of the camp. There again, in the desperate need of the people, God proved Himself capable of meeting their extremity by His power. How essential it is that we understand and respond to this need to rely on God to minister strength to deliver us from the sins that so easily seek to overcome and hinder us in our spiritual lives. We are weak in ourselves, yet He has imparted spiritual power that is reinforced by conscious dependence on Him and obedience to His Word so that we can continue to grow spiritually and go on for His honor and our blessing. 2 Pet. 3:18 reminds us that we are to “*grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and*

Savior, Jesus Christ.” That command is preceded by “But” so that it indicates that in spite of the prevalent conditions of unbelief, lack of exercise, evil influences about which Peter warns his readers, we can and must yet make progress and go forward in our lives for God.

A Christian’s Highest Attainment

Albert Joyce

The highest attainment of the Christian life—to please God—is within the reach of the youngest and simplest believer in the Lord Jesus (1 Thess. 4:1). Whatever spiritual attainments any may reach, there is one thing we are assured of, we can never rise to any higher heights than to please God in trusting Him. Those, who have been saved only a few weeks can have the privilege; this good desire and one ambition—to please God. When Paul went away from Thessalonica, he left behind a number of sinners saved and gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus. He taught them that their first great business as babes in Christ, and children of God was to please Him. He reminded them, “*As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and please Him.*” The reason why there are so many of us living careless lives, and so much lawlessness in the assemblies of God is because we forget our responsibility to God. We are glad to avail ourselves of Christ as a Savior, and rejoice in the Cross, but at the same time do we acknowledge Christ as Lord? We are glad to be brought into the family of God, and call Him our Father, but are we recognizing the fact that we have been brought under the government of God. No longer are we under the old Master, for “*One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.*” We have been brought from the realm of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son. We can look back to the time when He laid aside His crown for us, but now we have one who is anointed as Lord over us, and whom we should acknowledge as King, and crown Him as such in our lives. The time will come when it will be easy to serve Him in the Millennium when He shall reign over us, but now is the only opportunity we have to live for God in the enemy’s land.

There is a tendency on the part of some to do something else than please God—and that is to please men. “*Not with eye-service as men-pleasers*” (Eph. 6:6). A lady once told me that when her boy was small, he liked to sit in the rocking chair and sing, “I like to do what I like to do!” One of the things which stands in the way of our pleasing God is trying to please men. Paul wrote to the Galatians (Ch. 1, v. 10), “*For do I now persuade men or God? or do I seek to please men, or God? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.*” Instead of having our eyes upon Him we have them on some one else, and the little service that we do is often under the eye of man instead of God. The

fear of man bringeth a snare. Sometimes we do it for the favor of man, and sometimes from the fear of man. We should neither court the smile, nor fear the frown of man.

Then again, there is something even worse than men-pleasing, and that is self-pleasing (Rom. 15:1). The fact that we need to walk before God will not make us independent of our brethren. When we look back over our past life, how pitifully we have failed most of the time. We are satisfied to receive all the benefits of the cross, and forget the path of obedience to the will of God. Christ was the perfect Servant, and is the example of how we ought to please God. Are we satisfied with getting on in the world, and being on the way to heaven? One of the chief reasons why we do not go in for pleasing God is because it will cost us something. We should obey the Master’s exhortation, “*Let him.. .take up his cross and follow Me,*” and like one of old, exclaim, “*Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?*” We have, the Lord Jesus for our perfect example, the living and written Word for our instruction, and the promised rewards at the judgment seat of Christ for our incentive. We can follow in the footsteps of the Lord, although our footsteps will be feeble and faltering. He was the only One who fully pleased God by His perfect submission to the will of God. He came to John on the banks of the Jordan and desired to be baptized. John said, “*I need to be baptized of thee.*” Christ did not need to go into the waters of baptism, but He did that in order to fulfill the will of the Father. Divine approval attested to His obedience at this time, when the voice of God was heard saying, “*This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased*” and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended on Him. God was well pleased by His Son’s submission.

When the children of Israel were about to go into the promised land, God brought before them the blessings that would follow them if they obeyed His Word, and the curses, if they disobeyed. One of the blessings was that the heavens would be opened over their heads, but the curse was that the heavens would be as brass over them.

Christ was the Divine example, as a Servant, of pleasing God. What a perfect Servant! “*In Him I am well pleased.*” God wanted Pharaoh to let His people go that they might serve Him. We each have a little niche to fill in service to Him until He comes. In Enoch we have the example of a man who pleased God. He did not have the light, or the Word of God as we enjoy, and he lived in a difficult age when the world was going wild in rebellion. He walked with God and had this testimony that he pleased God. To walk with God and to please God there must be agreement, for “*How can two walk together except they be agreed?*” If there is any practice of sin it is impossible. For the sake of a few dollars, some would sacrifice the blessedness of

being well pleasing to Him.

We can please Him by trusting Him. We began in faith, we go on in faith, and it will be the path. of faith unto the end. It will be a matter of, "Simply trusting every day," trusting Him for our daily bread. And we can praise Him every day like the Psalmist who said, "I will praise the Name of God with a song, and magnify Him with thanksgivings" (Psa. 69:30). Is He only getting the murmurings, tears and grumblings, and very little of our prayers and praises? Israel murmured and "With many of them God was not well-pleased and they were overthrown in the wilderness," (1 Cor. 10:5). All the praise that He gets is from the hearts of His own. "The living shall praise Him as I do this day."

We can please Him by our behavior in the world, in the church, and in our private lives. "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing" (Col. 1:10). God is looking down upon us and is reproached when we sin. Often the accuser of the brethren has something true about us to tell to God and gets there before we do in confession. If we want to please Him, we should seek not to entangle ourselves with the affairs of this world.

We may please Him by doing good. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach" (Heb. 13:13). Some tell us that if, one is gathered to the Name of the Lord Jesus, their service is restricted, but it is not so. We have our responsibilities to the household of faith and to the world around us. We are exhorted in Hebrews 13:16, "To do good and communicate, forget not for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." It will pay even here on earth. "When a man's ways please the Lord He makes even His enemies to be at peace with Him."

If we please God our prayers will be answered. A preacher once said, "Many a good prayer is waiting in heaven for a consistent life here on earth before God will answer it. Going in for pleasing God is not play--it is labor." In view of the judgment seat of Christ would we change places with the worldling in their most favored circumstances, if their whole life was one symphony of joy? At the end of their life they leave it all behind and hear the voice, "Depart from me, ye cursed into everlasting fire." On the other hand, take the child of God at his worst, robbed of health and strength, not a dollar to his name; like a lone tree on the hill, swept by all the winds of adversity, but at the end to hear that word, "Well done, good and faithful servant." "Come in thou blessed of the Lord." Why stand ye without? With just one glimpse of Him will the trials of life be paid.

All unconfessed sin has power over us; but all confessed sin God helps us to subdue: He will never blame us for sins confessed.

Adoption

Peter Simms

Eph 1:5; Rom. 8:15,23; Gal. 4:5; Rom. 9:4

"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; (and such we are). For this cause the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him even as he is." (1 John 3:1-2. ASV).

As we study the doctrine of adoption, we should ask ourselves the question; am I an honor to my heavenly Father or a disgrace? (Mal. 1:6).

Adoption: "Having predestinated us unto the adoption (from huiois, a son, and thesis, a placing, signifies the place and condition given one to whom it does not naturally belong, W.E.Vine) of sons by Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of Himself" Eph. 1:5

Children: "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children (teknon, signifying relationship) of God" 1 John 3:1; Luke 2:48

Childhood: "The child (paidion, signifies a child (or childish) Jesus" Luke 2:27.

Sons: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons (huiois, signifying maturity and dignity) of God" Rom. 8:14.

One of these words is "children" (teknon), which means to beget or bear, cp. John 1:12; 1 John 3:1-2, and signifies relationship. However, the word "son" (huiois) stresses the idea of maturity, responsibility, status and dignity (Rom. 8:14). Then we find the word child (paidion) which signifies a child or childish (Luke 2:27). The King James version does not make these distinctions clear, so we must use the R.V., J.N.D. version, or Strong's Concordance to see this. Rom. 8:14-21 brings into focus the distinction between son in v.14 and children in v.16-17. In v.16-17 "the Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children (teknon) of God." This is relationship, and as such we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ because of our relationship as children by means of regeneration. Then in v.14 we read "for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons (huiois) of God." Here their conduct gives evidence of the dignity of their relationship and their likeness to His character. We see then how that by the new birth we become children of God, and at the same time are placed into God's family as sons. No human mind can

plumb the ramifications of these statements. It takes our minds soaring high into the realm of what we have and are in Christ, as seen in Eph. 1:3; Col.3:3. It does help us, though, to understand something of the ecstasy of John's spirit in 1 John 3:1. The word child (paidion) has to do with infancy or children under the age of puberty. In the case of Luke 2:27 we see an eight day old male (paidion), and in v.48 it is a twelve year old boy (teknon). Cp. Phil. 3:5; then Matt. 2:11; Matt. 11:16; Luke 2:40; John 6:9.

Concept of Adoption

However the concept of adoption is different from the child-parent relationship. It is a word used only by the apostle Paul only five times. It comes from two words--"huios" meaning 'a son,' and "tithemi" meaning 'a placing.' So we get the word "son placing or adoption." It implies the place and condition of a son applied to one to whom it does not naturally belong (Col. 1:12-13). It is unlike human adoption, where one who is not a member of the family, through a legal process, is made a son to a father who is not his natural father. In the human experience legitimate birth and adoption never apply to the same person. Obviously, there is never an occasion for a father to adopt his own child. But in the realm of the spiritual, every child of God is, at the moment of conversion, adopted also as God's son. All childhood and infant years are normal in human experience; however they are excluded in spiritual son-ship or adoption. At the moment of our conversion we became a child of God (regeneration), and also given the status of a son (adoption). The same walk is expected from all, for all have the indwelling Spirit. Experience on the road will make us more skilled and responsible in our walk. But that can add nothing to our resource, which is the Holy Spirit, whom we obtained at our conversion. So if you are a child, you are also a son and an heir, for one automatically follows the other.

Eph. 1:1-5 The chosen Sons.

... "Having marked us out beforehand for adoption . . ." JND. In His eternal councils He has known, and chosen believers in Christ to the honored and responsible place as sons.. Cp Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 2:7.

Rom. 8:15 The cry of Sons.

The Holy Spirit, who is the first-fruit of all that is to be ours, produces in us the realization of son-ship and the attitude belonging to sons. thus we cry "Abba": The word Abba was allowed to be used only by the parents' offspring, and not a slave. (Mk 14:36; Rom. 8:15). Father: (1 Cor. 4:15). A slave in Roman times could call his master Father, but never Abba. The word 'father' has a wide range of usage in the scripture, such as "Father of lies" in John 8:44; "Father of all them that believe" in Gal. 4:11; "the Father of lights" in Jam. 1:17 etc; however, this is not true of the word Abba.

Gal. 4:5-7 The freedom of Sons.

We have been redeemed (purchased out of). Those of the nation of Israel have been purchased out from under the law, the Gentiles out from under the bondage of paganism. And we have received the adoption of sons, a position in Christ where neither law nor paganism exists. The Spirit of His Son is in our hearts, making our son-ship real experimentally, issuing in the cry "Abba, Father." As sons we no longer live under a legal system of laws. But we are now responsible sons, and live as such in the power of the indwelling Spirit. This shuts out all legalistic incursions into our lives or our testimony for the Lord.

Rom. 8:23 The expectation of Sons:

"... *Waiting for the adoption.* . . ." This is the redemption of the body from earth. When we shall enter into the full experience of our son-ship. We are sons now, but then we will be manifested openly to the world as such. We will enter into it fully, eternally, and experimentally. Only our spirits are redeemed presently, but we wait for the rapture when our bodies also will be redeemed. This is what the Apostle calls "*the redemption of the purchased possession*" (Eph. 1:14). It is the revelation of the sons of God (Rom. 8:19) and "*the glorious freedom of the children of God*" (Rom. 8:21). It will occur at the rapture of the church when believers will be raised from the dead and given glorious bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-54; 2 Cor. 5:1-5; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Paul called this "*the day of redemption*" (Eph. 4:30).

Hosea 11:1: Rom. 9:4 National Sonship.

The nation of Israel is typically seen in Ex. 4:22, a passage Rom. 9:4 refers to that indicates that Israel as a nation collectively was recognized by God as being in a position of peculiar relationship with Himself which was not enjoyed by any other nation. They were a son nation, responsible to function among the nations as His witness (Isa. 43:10-12) and to behave as such, but alas they failed miserably (Mal. 1:6). However, God's purposes are established and will be fulfilled in the day of their restoration, then to the praise of His glory as well.

All of God's children belong to another world—a world with its own Heavenly precepts and practices. Christians are but pilgrims and strangers here, they are fellow-citizens with God's great family above. See Phil. 2:15; Heb. 10:34; 11:13-14; 13:14; 1 Pet. 2:11. This truly indicates a "narrow path," but it yields rich blessing to those who will walk in it.