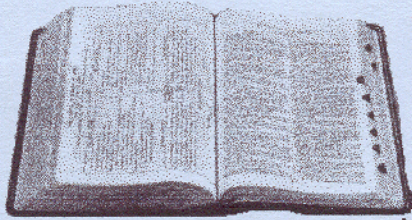


**West Jefferson Church of Christ  
4th Annual Lectureship**



**"Great Men Of The Bible"**

**September 23 - 28, 2001**



**2001**  
**West Jefferson church of Christ**  
**Lectureship**

**“Great Men Of The Bible”**

**Elders:**  
**Mark Miller - David Turnmire**

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# **THE APOSTLE "JOHN"**

by Tom Harrelson

**Text: I John 4:7-12**

## **Introduction:**

*What was it about this simple fisherman, a son of Zebedee, that causes us to classify him among "the great men of the Bible," if not his great love? And yet the evidence of Scripture reveals that it was not always so.*

*Our study of John, then, would be incomplete without seeing the great change wrought by God in his character--a change that transformed him into "the apostle of love".*

*And the good news is that God continues his transforming work in all of his sons and daughters.*

## **I. A Brief Background**

- A. Family.
- B. Trade.

## **II. The Transforming Power of a Loving Savior**

- A. John's early character.
  - 1. Energetic (Mark 3:17).
  - 2. Intolerant (Mark 9:38).
  - 3. Vindictive (Luke 9:54).
  - 4. Ambitious (Mark 10:35-37).
- B. John's later character.
  - 1. Sympathetic and compassionate (John 19:26, 27).
  - 2. Loving (I John 2:9; 4:7-21).
  - 3. A servant of God and men.

### **III. The Application**

#### **A. Transformation in us today.**

1. Purposed by God/Christ (John 17:20-23; Romans 8:29).
2. The work of God in us (John 14:17; Galatians 5:22-23; II Cor. 3:18).
3. Our need (Luke 9:23-24; Phil. 3:12; Gal. 2:20; Heb. 12:2; II Cor. 4:18; Col. 3:1-4; II Cor.5:9).

#### **B. The end result.**

1. Christ formed in us (Gal. 4:19; Col. 1:27).
2. Confidence at Christ's return (I John 4:16-17)

#### **Conclusion:**

What God worked in the transformation of John is the same transformation he seeks to work in Christians today (I John 4:12).

# **"DAVID"**

by Harold Morefield

## **Introduction:**

1. We could write a good book on David entitled: "From the Shepherd's Tent to the King's Palace."
2. David is one of our favorite Bible characters.
3. What makes him an interesting man in Bible history?
4. We want to look at some of the things that cause us to remember David.

## **I. A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART.**

1. (Acts 13:22) *"And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."*
2. Men look on the outward appearance: (1 Sam 16:7) *"But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart."*
3. Our heart must be right with God: (Prov 4:23) *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."* (Prov 23:7) *"For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."*
4. We must obey God from the heart: (Rom 6:17) *"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you."*
5. (Mat 5:8) *"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."*
6. In view of the sin that David found himself in, how could it be said that David was a man after God's heart?
7. He was a man who was always willing to repent of all of his sins.

## **II. A MAN AFTER ANOTHER MAN'S WIFE**

1. (Mat 5:28) *"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."*
2. Though David was a man after God's heart, there were times when he had heart problems.
3. It has been said, "Idleness is the devil's workshop."
4. David should have led his men in war, but he stayed at home: (2 Sam 11:1) *"And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem."*
5. David saw Bath-sheba bathing and he sent for her. She was another man's wife (2 Sam. 11:2-3). David committed adultery with her, and she was found to be with child (2 Sam. 11:4-5).
6. David sends for Uriah. He tries to get Uriah to go home to be with Bathsheba, but Uriah will not go to his house (2 Sam. 11:6-13). David wines and dines him, but he still will not go to his house. So David has Uriah killed (2 Sam. 14-17).
7. Nathan tells David the story of the little ewe lamb. David condemns himself and repents: *"And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die"* (2 Sam 12:13).
8. David was a man after God's heart because he could and would repent. Psalm 51 seems to be addressing this sin.

## **III. A MAN WHO WAS FAITHFUL AFTER MANY FAMILY PROBLEMS.**

1. Saul gave David's first wife to another man: (1 Sam 25:44) *"But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish, which was of Gallim."*
2. Since David had destroyed Uriah's home, God said his house would be divided: (2 Sam 12:11) *"Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and*

*he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun."*

3. David's son dies: (2 Sam 12:19) *"But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead."*
4. David had many other family problems. However, he remained faithful to God in all of these problems.
5. Some today try to use their family as a reason why they cannot serve God. Jesus said, in Mat 10:37, *"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me."*
6. We all have our crosses to bear.

#### **IV. DAVID THE SECOND KING OF ISRAEL.**

1. David became king of Judah at Hebron and after seven years and six months became king over all Israel (2 Sam. 2:4; 5:5).
2. He conquered Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:7), made it his capital, subdued many surrounding nations, and ruled over all the land God had promised His people from the River of Egypt to the River Euphrates.
3. David reigned over Israel forty years, (1 Chr 29:26-28) *"Thus David the son of Jesse reigned over all Israel. {27} And the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years; seven years reigned he in Hebron, and thirty and three years reigned he in Jerusalem. {28} And he died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour: and Solomon his son reigned in his stead."*

#### **Conclusion**

1. There were giants in David's life with which he had great trouble:
  1. Lust
  2. Family
  3. Wives
  4. Self control
2. He fought all his shortcomings with a penitent heart and a desire to love and please God.
3. May God help us to do the same.



# **"Peter"**

by Milton Mathers

## **Introduction:**

1. Peter was a fisherman (Matt. 4:18). He continued in this trade for a while after he was led to Christ.
2. He was led to know Christ by his brother Andrew (Jn. 1:40-42).
3. His home-town was Bethsaida (Jn. 1:44). The location of this city is somewhat in doubt, but it was not far from Capernaum. (Compare Matt. 8:5 with Matt. 8:14 and Mk. 1:21 with Mk. 1:29.) Bethsaida means "house of fishing" or "fishery."<sup>1</sup> Most geographers locate the city on the north end of the Sea of Galilee and just to the east of the Jordan.
4. Peter was married and evidently had a family. Matt. 8:14 speaks of his wife's mother or mother-in-law being ill. The Catholics will have to admit it is rather difficult to have a mother-in-law without having a wife. Nor did he break his matrimonial ties when he was laboring so industriously as an apostle, for he is specifically cited by Paul in I Cor. 9:5 as having a Christian wife. Furthermore, it is required of an elder that he be married (I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6), and Peter was an elder at the time he wrote the first epistle (I Pet. 5:1). "Marriage is honorable among ALL . . ." (Heb. 13:4). It is the false teacher who is "forbidding to marry" (I Tim. 4:3).
5. His father, whose name is literally rendered *ionas* (Jonas), has had his name variously translated as Jonas, John, Jonah, and Jona. However, all are translations of the same Greek word.
6. Being brought up in his father's occupation, he and Andrew "were fishers" (Matt. 4:18). Luke 5:1-10 reveals that Peter (and evidently Andrew) became partners (*koinonos*) with the sons of Zebedee in the fishing business. This seems, however, to be a later development, for in Matt. 4:18-22 Peter and Andrew are working together with their

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<sup>1</sup> On the location of this city, and the possibility of two cities on the shores of Galilee with the same name, see the very informative discussion in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: On the whole, it seems best to locate it on the west side of Galilee, as a "fishing village suburb" of Capernaum. This, I think, beyond a doubt, to be the home of Peter. Whether there was another Bethsaida in the same area is another question. Some would explain the above Scriptures by saying that Peter later moved to Capernaum from Bethsaida. "Peter and Andrew had dwelt at Bethsaida (Jn. 1:44). They may have removed to Capernaum, or Bethsaida, being near by, may be here counted as a part, or suburb, of Capernaum."-McGarvey on Mark 1:29.

father, and James and John are working together with theirs. After the Resurrection, Peter returned to his chosen trade with the words, "...I go a fishing..." (Jn. 21:3).

7. If Peter had any formal education, other than that which was standard for a Jew of his day, we are not told of it in the Scriptures. In fact, the opposite seems to be true according to Acts 4:13. The Sanhedrin, before whom Peter and John were arraigned for preaching of a resurrected Jesus, perceived that they were "unlearned" men.
  - a. The Sanhedrin also perceived Peter and John were "ignorant" men.
  - b. Today if a man is termed "ignorant" he is usually thought of as a dull-witted or stupid individual.
  - c. It properly means "one lacking knowledge or information" (The New Century Dictionary).
  - d. What an illustration we have here of God taking a humble, common, ordinary person, who was willing to be used of Him, and turning his life into a energetic, zealous, Christ-like servant!
  - e. And, oh, how far-reaching was his influence!
  - f. There was Paul--learned, educated, and in many ways refined. God used him!
  - g. There was Peter--rough, uneducated, unlettered. God used him!
  - i. Peter could say to those who needed help "What I have, that give I thee."
  - j. Are you giving what you have to God? Only the Lord himself knows what he can do with your life if all is laid on the altar for him!
8. Peter was among the "inner circle" apostles--a title given to Peter, James, and John because of their intimacy with Christ during his ministry. It was these three apostles who witnessed:
  - a. The raising of Jairus' daughter, Mk. 5:22, 23, 35-43.
  - b. The Transfiguration, Matt. 17:1ff.

- c. The Lord's agony in Gethsemane, Matt. 26:37.
  - d. These, along with Andrew, were the recipients of private instruction on the destruction of Jerusalem and Christ's second coming, Mk. 13:3 ff.
9. His character and nature was enthusiastic and energetic, though sometimes impulsive and adventurous, wild, overconfident, bold, foolhardy, etc.
- a. When Jesus walked on the water, Matt. 14:22-33.
  - b. His denial of Christ., Lk. 22:31-34, 54-62, or Matt. 26:31-35, 69-75.
  - c. His bold entrance into the empty tomb, in contrast to John's hesitation. Jn. 20:1-8.
  - d. He was the first of the apostles to witness the Resurrection, I Cor. 15:5; Lk. 24:33-34.
10. He was a leader among the apostles and in the early church.
11. Even before Pentecost, his leadership ability is shown in that he was usually the one to first speak out: Matt. 16:13-16; 18:21; Jn. 21:3; etc.
12. In the Book of Acts, he is by far the most prominent character next to the apostle Paul. This is especially seen in the early chapters.
- a. He was the first to preach the Gospel to the Jews along with the other apostles (Chap. 2), and, in his mission to Cornelius (Chapters 10 and 11), the first to formally and officially preach the Gospel to the Gentiles.
  - b. In this way he opened the doors of the Lord's church with the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 16:19).
  - c. With the exception of the "dissimulation" at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14 ASV), where Peter "drew back and separated himself" from the Gentiles for fear of the Jews, the remainder of his life is commendable as far as the Scriptures describe it.
13. Time and again he was mistreated, threatened, imprisoned and beaten, but never again did he deny his Lord.

14. His zeal and fidelity is nowhere better evidenced than Acts 4:13-20. With John, the Sanhedrin forbade him to speak at all in the name of Jesus. He replied, *"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard"* (vs. 19,20).
- a. Later, after being thrown into prison and miraculously delivered, they were again brought before the council. The high priest said, *"We strictly charged you not to teach in this name: and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."* But Peter and the apostles answered, *"We must obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:28-29, ASV).
15. The late and honorable brother Guy N. Woods, penned this of Peter's death, *"Of the time and place of his death, we have no reliable information. Clement of Rome, a hundred years following the last scriptural reference to Peter, says that he 'through zeal undertook not one or two but numerous labors, and so having borne witness went to the place that was due him.'* (Eph. 1:4,5.) *There is a tradition that he was crucified head downward; and the prophecy regarding him in John 21:18 implies a violent death. The claim of the Romanists, that the last years of his life were spent in Rome in a papal seat, are fanciful and false. There is no reliable evidence that Peter was ever in Rome."* (Gospel Advocate Commentary on Peter, John and Jude, by Guy N. Woods)

## **I. Peter Had A Problem Of Staying True; He Backslid.**

- A. In 2 Pet. 2:20-22, we read from the inspired word of God, that there is the possibility and serious consequences of backsliding.
1. To backslide simply means "to fall back in one's moral or religious course; to fall back into error or sin." (New Century Dictionary, pg. 97)
- B. It is interesting that we find this passage coming from the inspired pen of Peter.
1. If anyone knew "firsthand" the reality and dangers of backsliding, it was Peter.
2. He discovered this night that he himself denied Jesus.
- C. The process of backsliding is a gradual one, often overtaking a

person by surprise; and lest we fall from our own steadfastness (2 Pet. 3:17)...

1. We shall carefully examine the process that led to Peter's denial of Christ.
  2. Following this we will notice how Peter's own words in his epistles are designed to prevent the same from happening to us.
- D. God is so good. He through his words, by his servant Peter, gives us all the information that we need to prevent us from doing what Peter did.
1. As Peter says from God in 2 Peter 1:3, *"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."*

## II. Analysis Of A Backslider.

- A. Let us notice the word - **"boastful pride"**. Mark 14:27-31.
1. In a boastful/explosive manner, Peter claims he will not fall away or deny Christ.
  2. In doing so, Peter takes the first step in backsliding because of "pride". Prov. 16:18 says, *"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall."*
  3. Why would this be the **first** step?
    - a. Because the first step in entering the kingdom is **humility**. Mt 18:3-4.
    - b. So if we lose **humility**, could it be the case that we would take that first step backward? That's when **pride** steps in and overrules.
  4. Paul's advice to the Corinthians is informative in this regard, in 1 Cor. 10:11-12.
- B. The next word, for Peter's sake is **"tiredness"**. For the rest of us it would be **"laziness"**. Mark 14:32-42.



1. Jesus told them to keep watch; Peter kept falling asleep.
2. It was therefore lack of diligent preparation which then caused him to be caught off guard for what was to follow.
3. The same thing can happen to us or has happened.
  - a. Without diligence/effort, we too can be found unprepared.
  - b. More often than not, it is a **"gradual drifting"** that catches us off guard - Heb. 2:1-3.
  - c. But when we are proud, we become lazy, concerning what the Lord wants us to do, and that easily leads to the next step...

C. Being a **"coward"**. Mark 14:53-54.

1. Note that it says "...Peter followed Him afar off or from a distance".
2. Now that Jesus had become unpopular...
  - a. Peter stays far enough away so as not to be identified with him.
  - b. Peter was unprepared for the challenge of facing ridicule and persecution.
3. Without diligent preparation, we too can become guilty of being a coward.
  - a. Ashamed to be seen carrying a Bible.
  - b. Ashamed to be seen praying.
  - c. Perhaps even ashamed to let others know that we are truly Christians.
4. And yet, Jesus has made it clear what He thinks of "cowards". Mark 8:38; Rev. 21:8.
5. When we are ashamed of Christ, it is natural for us to fall into the next step of backsliding...

D. And that is "**worldliness**". Mark 14:54.

1. We now find Peter sitting with the servants of the high priest and warming himself by the fire.
2. Ashamed to be seen with Christ, it becomes easy to mingle with those of the world and enjoy their comforts.
3. But one cannot be "comforted by the fire" of the world, and not be burned by it.
  - a. Close contact with that which can harm has its effects.
  - b. One cannot **flirt with the world** and walk away untouched. 1 Cor. 15:33.
4. By the time we become **friends with the world**, it is only a short time before we take the next and final step of sliding backwards....

E. And that is "**denial**". Mark 14:66-72.

1. Away from Christ, at comfort with those in the world, Peter finds himself denying his Lord and Savior.
2. In so doing, he has put himself in grave danger according to Jesus, as recorded in Matt. 10:32-33.
3. Though we may never actually deny Jesus in **words**, we can easily backslide to the point of denying Him in **action**. That is:
  - a. we are called to worship him--but make excuses why we cannot.
  - b. we are called to serve him--but render little or no service.
  - c. we are called to stand by his side and suffer for his name--but stand afar off in the safety of the world's comfort.

F. When we deny the Lord, our sliding backwards is complete; unless we repent, the only thing left is to one day come face to face with the Lord, where we will fully realize the error of our ways.

1. For Peter, he fully realized his sin when the Lord turned and

looked at him there in the courtyard (Lk 22:60-62).

2. Can you imagine the feeling in Peter's heart as those eyes of his Savior pierced his soul?
  3. Can you see Jesus looking at you today because of what you have done or are not doing?
  4. Like Judas, Peter wept bitterly over his sin.
    - a. Unlike Judas, Peter had **"godly sorrow"** that results in true repentance (2 Cor. 7:10-11).
- G. Years later, we find Peter writing the sort of things that would prevent us from making the same mistakes he did.
- H. Let us now notice some good, godly, inspired.....

### **III. Advice From One Who Truly Learned The Hard Way. We Then Should Learn.....**

- A. To guard against **"pridefulness"**. I Peter 5:5-7.
1. Peter had learned **"humility"** and passes it on to you and me.
    - a. Will we then be humble and not proud?
  2. Indeed, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."  
I Pet. 5:5.
- B. To guard against **"laziness"**. I Peter 5:8-9.
1. Peter commands "alertness" not "laziness".
  2. Note especially his words in his second epistle, 2 Pet. 1:10,  
*"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling  
and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:"*
- C. To guard against being a **"coward"**. I Peter 4:15-16, *"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf."*

1. Peter charges us to **"glorify God"**. I Pet. 5:11.
  2. Think not of what it means to you, but what it means to God!
- D. We learn to guard against **"worldliness"**. I Peter 2:11-12, *"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."*
1. Peter tells us to "abstain from fleshly lusts".
  2. Remember that we are "sojourners and pilgrims" destined for a better place than the things of this world have to offer.
- E. We learn to guard against **"denial"**. I Peter 3:15, *"But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to **give an answer** to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"*
1. Peter exhorts us to ever be ready to "give an answer/defense".
  2. By being prepared, we will **defend** Christ, and not deny Him!

### **Conclusion:**

1. From one who learned by the hard road of experience and hard knocks, let's heed his advice lest we one day backslide ourselves, and in so doing, deny the Lord! - 2 Peter 3:17-18., *Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen."*
2. Remember too, that when Peter saw the eyes of his Lord, he realized the error of his way. Fortunately for him, there was still time to repent. But for us, when we see Jesus "face to face", the time to repent will be gone--it will be the time for judgment, for eternity to begin!
3. If you realize that you, as a New Testament Christian, are guilty of sliding backwards, repent right now; do not wait until you stand before Jesus. Let your "face to face" encounter with Jesus be terrific, joyful and not terrifying, hearing his voice and looking into his eyes,

and hearing him say, "depart from me, ye cursed into a everlasting fire"! Matt. 25:41.

4. How grateful we are to God, for His servant "Peter".



# "Noah"

by Wesley Simons

## Introduction:

1. Much could be said about the man Noah.
2. We are going to look at one verse for the most part--Hebrews 11:7.
3. Hebrews 11:7 *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."*
4. We can cover all the points that need to be covered from this verse.

## I. Noah was a man who believed in God in an ungodly world.

1. "By faith Noah, being warned of **God**..." Heb. 11:7
2. Genesis 6:5 *"And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."*
3. 2 Peter 2:5 *"And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."*
4. Genesis 6:8 *"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD."*
5. Genesis 6:9 *"These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."*
6. Genesis 6:13 *"And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth."*

## II. Noah was a man of faith.

- A. "By **faith** Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet,..." Heb. 11:7.
  1. By the eye of faith, one will be able to see things that normally

he could not see.

2. It had never rained up to this point.
  3. Noah was called upon to believe that it would rain and that the world would be covered by water.
  4. Genesis 7:4 *"For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth."*
- B. Through the eye of faith, we see things.
1. God. Daniel 2:28 *"But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets..."*
  2. Heaven. 1 Peter 1:4 *"To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you."*
  3. Hell. Psalm 9:17 *"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."*
  4. Matthew 16:26 *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

### **III. Noah was a man who could be warned.**

1. *"By faith Noah, **being warned of God...**"* Heb. 11:6.
2. People all through the ages have refused the warnings of God.
3. Genesis 2:17 *"But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."*
4. Matthew 10:28 *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."*
5. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9 *"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; 7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on*

*them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."*

6. Matthew 25:46 *"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."*

#### **IV. Noah was a man who was moved by godly fear.**

1. *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, **moved with fear...**"*
2. Job 1:9 *"Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought?"*
3. Job 28:28 *"And unto man he said, Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding."*
4. Proverbs 1:7 *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."*
5. Proverbs 3:7 *"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil."*
6. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."*
7. Bible fear means one moves when God speaks.

#### **V. Noah was a man who did what God asked him to do.**

1. *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, **prepared an ark...**" Heb. 11:7.*
2. Genesis 6:22 *"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."*
3. Genesis 7:5 *"And Noah did according unto all that the LORD commanded him."*
4. Genesis 7:9 *"There went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah."*

5. Genesis 7:16 *"And they that went in, went in male and female of all flesh, as God had commanded him: and the LORD shut him in."*
6. Noah believed in pattern theology.
  - a. Genesis 6:15 *"And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits."*
  - b. We have some brethren who do not believe in a pattern.
7. We must do what God asks us to do.
  - a. 1 John 2:3-4 *"And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."*

## **VI. Noah was a man who knew where he could find safety.**

1. *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared **an ark** to the saving of his house..."* Heb. 11:7.
2. Noah entered the ark in order to be saved.
3. Genesis 7:13 *"In the selfsame day entered Noah, and Shem, and Ham, and Japheth, the sons of Noah, and Noah's wife, and the three wives of his sons with them, into the ark;"*
4. We must be in Christ in order to be saved.
  - a. Ephesians 1:3 *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."*
  - b. Ephesians 1:7 *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."*
  - c. Ephesians 1:11 *"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance..."*
  - d. 2 Timothy 2:1 *"Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."*

- e. 2 Timothy 2:10 *"Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."*
- f. 1 John 5:10-11 *"He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son."*
- g. Galatians 3:27-29 *"For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."*

## VII. Noah was a man who saved his family.

- 1. *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark **to the saving of his house**..."* Heb. 11:7.
- 2. If every man worked hard to save his own family, then all people would be saved.
- 3. Proverbs 22:6 *"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."*
- 4. Ephesians 6:4 *"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."*

## VIII. Noah was a man who condemned the world.

- 1. *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he **condemned the world**, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith."* Heb. 11:7.
- 2. How did he condemn the world?
  - a. HIS LIFE: Genesis 6:9 *"These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God."*
  - b. HIS PREACHING: 2 Peter 2:5 *"And spared not the old world, but*



*saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly."*

- c. 1 Corinthians 6:3 *"Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"*

## **IX. Noah was a man who became heir of righteousness.**

1. *"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, **and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.**"* Heb. 11:7.
2. Noah became an heir of righteousness by doing what God asked him to do.
3. We must be saved the way God says and not try to be saved our way.
4. 1 Peter 3:18-20 *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water."*
5. Noah was saved by many things.
  - a. God.
  - b. Grace.
  - c. Faith.
  - d. Ark.
  - e. God's word.
  - f. Obedience.
  - g. Water.
6. We are saved by many things.
  - a. God.
  - b. Christ.
  - c. Holy Spirit.
  - d. Grace.
  - e. Blood of Christ.
  - f. Hope.
  - g. Gospel.
  - h. Faith.
  - i. Works.
  - j. Self (we must respond).
  - k. Baptism.
  - l. Preaching.

**Conclusion:**

1. There are many great lessons that can be learned from the men and women of the Old Testament.
2. Romans 15:4 "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."
3. May God help us to imitate Noah's faith.

# **THE WISDOM OF "SOLOMON"**

by Don Blackwell

## **INTRODUCTION.**

1. Solomon is mentioned by name 281 times in the Bible in 253 verses.
  - A. He was the author of 3000 proverbs and 1005 songs (I Kings 4:32).
  - B. He was the third king of Israel and the last king of the united kingdom.
  - C. Solomon was born in Jerusalem to David and Bathsheba.
  - D. Solomon had 18 brothers who are mentioned by name in the scriptures, not counting the sons of David's concubines.
2. The name "Solomon" in Hebrew means "the peaceful."
  - A. This is somewhat ironic since it was his sin that led to the split in kingdom.
3. Solomon is most remembered for these things:
  - A. The building of the temple.
  - B. His love of women, strange women (700 wives / 300 concubines).
  - C. His unparalleled wealth.
  - D. His great wisdom.
4. The focus of this study will be "The Wisdom of Solomon."
5. The text will be I Kings 3.

## **I. VERSE 5.**

- A. Verse 5, *"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. 6 And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne,*

*as it is this day. 7 And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in."*

1. Solomon now holds the position of king, but he recognizes his lack of wisdom to properly fulfill his duties..
- B. *Verse 8, "And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. 9 Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? 10 And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing."*
1. Observe that at this point in time Solomon is a righteous man.
  2. Verse 3 says, *"And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places."*
  3. But the fact that a man is righteous at one point in his life does not mean that he will always be righteous.
    - a. In I Kings 3, Solomon is described in glowing terms, but later in life Solomon turned away his heart from God.
    - b. I Kings 11:6, *"And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father."*
    - c. I Kings 11:9, *"And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel..."*
  4. Solomon's life eventually became one of self-indulgence.
    - a. Ecclesiastes 2:1 *"I said in mine heart.....therefore enjoy pleasure...."*
    - b. Ecclesiastes 2:10, *"And whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy...."*
    - c. He was self indulgent, and whatever he wanted he got.
- C. The point is because a man is once righteous, he may not always be righteous.

1. Many gospel preachers, elders, and member's of the Lord's church who were righteous at some point in the past are not presently righteous.
2. There are men who years ago stood firm in the faith, and were very effective and capable preachers of truth.
  - a. They taught the truth and defended it.
  - b. But, today, they are teaching the opposite of what they once taught.
- D. Some congregations have been led down the path of liberalism because they have put their faith in the **elders** (who were once faithful men) rather than in the Word of the Lord.
  1. The problem is men sometimes depart from the truth.
  2. Acts 20:29.
- E. Many congregations have been led into Anti-ism and erroneous teachings on marriage and divorce because they have followed men rather the Word.
- F. The response that is often times heard is, "Well, I just can't believe that **HE** would do that."
  1. Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, was faithful when he was young, but this same man left the Lord later in life.
- G. Our standard must ALWAYS be the Word of God and not any man.
  1. Acts 17:11.

## **II. VERSE 11.**

- A. Verses 11-12, *"And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words..."*
- B. Observe first that Solomon's request was not a selfish one, and, as a result, the Lord was well pleased and granted it.



1. If we want our prayers answered, we need to pray in this same unselfish manner.
  2. James 4:3.
- C. Solomon didn't ask for:
1. **Long Life.**
    - a. Not important.
    - b. Even if you have a long life, James says it's still just a vapor - James 4:14.
    - c. Some people spend their entire lives trying to prolong their lives.
      - 1) Eating right, exercising.
      - 2) These things are good; we should do them.
      - 3) I Tim. 4:8, "*bodily exercise profiteth little....*"
  2. **Riches.**
    - a. When you die, you can't take it with you.
    - b. Ecclesiastes 2:18.
    - c. The rich fool - Luke 12:20.
    - d. The rich man of Luke 16.

D. Instead, he asked for wisdom, discernment, and judgment.

### **III. VERSE 12.**

- A. Verse 12, "*Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee.*"
1. Solomon was made the wisest man who had lived up to that point OR that would ever live after him.

- a. Certainly Christ was the exception here, but he is more than a man, he is God.
  - b. I Kings 10:4-7, *"And when the queen of Sheba had seen all of Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built.....she said to the king, It was a true report that I had heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and behold the half was not told...."*
- B. Verse 13, *"And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days. 14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days."*
- 1. The Lord told Solomon, **IF** you will continue to be faithful, he would give him a long life.
  - 2. It's interesting however to note that Solomon died at a relatively young age.
    - a. Consider the fact that he was a youth (18-20 yrs.) when he was anointed king, and that he reigned 40 years before his death. (I Kings 11:42).
    - b. Solomon was likely 58-60 when he died.

#### **IV. VERSE 15.**

- A. Verse 15, *"And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream."*
  - 1. This is not to say that it didn't really happen, rather this is how the Lord came to him.
- B. *"And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants."*
- C. Verse 16-28 – Example of Solomon's wisdom.

#### **V. EVIL COMPANIONS.**

- A. All of the people feared the king for his great wisdom.

B. Still today, we stand in awe at the wisdom of Solomon.

C. So we ask, "What is it that could turn the heart of the wisest man who ever lived?"

D. The answer is found in I Kings 11:1-10.

1. The text there says, *"But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; 2 Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: S o l o m o n clave unto these in love. 3 And he had seven hundred wives princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. 4 For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father. 5 For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites."*

a. Most identify this god Milcom as Molech of the Ammonites.

b. This is the idol god to whom children were offered in sacrifice.

1) There is no record of Solomon ever having offered such a sacrifice.

2) But, if this is accurate, in financing the temple, he was guilty of this abomination.

c. It's no different from members of the church today who want to embrace and fellowship denominations.

1) They might argue, "Well, we don't teach those things they're teaching." But, in supporting them, they are supporting their evil.

2) II John 10-11.

d. The temple to Molech was costing little children their lives.

e. Denominations are costing men their eternal souls.

1) Which is the greater evil?

2. *"And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father. 7 Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. 8 And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. 9 And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, 10 And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the Lord commanded."*

E. Learn this lesson....*"What was it that turned away the heart of Solomon from God?"*

1. It was his wives.

2. It was those with whom he surrounded himself.

a. This is why we stress the importance of marrying a Christian.

b. Those close to you have a POWERFUL influence on you.

F. I Corinthians 15:33, *"evil companionships corrupt good morals."*

G. Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, but it happened to him. Why do I think it won't happen to me?

1. I Kings 11:4, *"For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God...."*

H. Romans 15:4, *"For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning....."*

## **CONCLUSION.**

1. There's been a lot of debate as to whether Solomon repented at the end of his life and whether he'll be in heaven one day.

- A. Some think that Solomon never repented.
  - 1. They say nothing is recorded about him showing signs of genuine repentance.
  - 2. He allowed the shrines he built to remain standing.
    - a. If he had truly repented, he would have torn them down.
    - b. He probably died in spiritual darkness.
- B. Others believe that he did repent and that we will see him in heaven one day. They base this on the end of the book of Ecclesiastes.
  - 1. Eccles. 12:13

# **"JOB"**

## **"A Man WITH WHOM SATAN COULD NOT SUCCEED"**

by Charles A. Huff

### **Introduction:**

1. God bestowed upon Job one of the greatest compliments ever given to a man.

*"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" (Job 1:8).*

*"And the Lord said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause" (Job 2:3).*

2. Have you considered...?" The word "considered" literally means "set your heart on" or "wanted." God is saying to Satan: **"Have you not wanted Job?" "You can't make any headway with Job, can you?"**
3. God calls Job-- **"...My servant Job..."** God is not ashamed to call Job His servant. Even though we may wonder why He is not ashamed to call us His children. *"....he is not ashamed to call them brethren..."* (Heb. 2:11).

*"...Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city" (Heb. 11:16).*

4. *"There is none like him in all the earth"* (Job 1:8; 2:3). Not only was Job blessed with many physical blessings, Job was a spiritual giant. Job was a man whom God could display to his generation as a pattern of good works. Job was indeed a man with whom Satan could not succeed.
5. Let us consider in our study four (4) traits which made Job a man whom Satan could not defeat.

### **I. JOB WAS PERFECT AND UPRIGHT.**

- A. Job was not sinlessly perfect.

1. Only Jesus lived a life without any sin (Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:21, 22).
  2. It is said of Zacharias and Elizabeth: *"And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless"* (Luke 1:6).
- B. Job always intended to do God's will. *"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him..."* (Job 13:15).
1. God requires of us that we always intend to obey Him.

*"Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect"* (Matt. 5:48). *"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world"* (Phil. 2:15).

- C. God requires of us constant growth. *"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith toward God"* (Heb. 6:1).

*"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Pet. 2:2).

*"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ..."* (2 Pet. 3:18).

- D. God has provided forgiveness for our sins. He also knows our intentions of mind to always do what is right in His sight.

*"If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"* (1 John 1:6-10).

## **II. JOB WAS A MAN WHO FEARED GOD.**

- A. Job showed reverence and awe toward God (Job. 1:5; 2:10; Heb.

12:28).

*"Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him" (Psa. 33:8).*

- B. Job questions God and is questioned by God (Job 30:15-23; 38:1-12).
- C. When Job came to realize the power of Jehovah, he humbled himself.

*"Then Job answered the Lord, and said, I know that Thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from Thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak: I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me. I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:1-6).*

### **III. JOB WAS ONE WHO ESCHEWED (TURNED AWAY FROM) EVIL.**

- A. Joseph is a sterling example of turning away from evil. (Gen. 38).
  - 1. Far away from home, he had been sold into slavery by his own brothers.
  - 2. A handsome young man, he was pursued by a beautiful, powerful woman.
  - 3. Who would ever know? *"...How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 38:9).*
- B. We, too, are to shun even the appearance of evil. (I Thess. 5:22).

*"Flee fornication ...!" (I Cor. 6:18); "Flee youthful lusts: but follow after righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (2 Tim. 2:22).*

*"I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think (look intently or gaze) upon a maid (virgin or young woman)?" (Job 31:1).*

*"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time. 'Thou shall not*



*commit adultery.' But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh upon a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28).*

- C. Christians must not be conformed to this world (I John 2:15-17).

*"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11).*

*"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2).*

#### **IV. JOB HELD FAST HIS INTEGRITY. (Job 1:9, 10)**

- A. Job held on to his moral principles.

*"If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hast hasted to deceit; Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God may know mine integrity" (Job 31:5-6).*

- B. Job held to his faith and trusted in his Redeemer.

*"Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me" (Job 19:23-27).*

- C. We, too, are admonished by the Holy Spirit to hold fast.

*"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58).*

*"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised:)" (Heb. 10: 23).*

*"Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13).*

## **Conclusion:**

1. The Holy Spirit by the pen of James gives the life of Job as an example to us.

*“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy” (James 5:10-11).*

2. God restored to Job more than he had before his suffering (Job 42:10-17).

10 *“And the LORD turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends: also the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before.*

11 *Then came there unto him all his brethren, and all his sisters, and all they that had been of his acquaintance before, and did eat bread with him in his house: and they bemoaned him, and comforted him over all the evil that the LORD had brought upon him: every man also gave him a piece of money, and every one an earring of gold.*

12 *So the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses.*

13 *He had also seven sons and three daughters.*

14 *And he called the name of the first, Jemima; and the name of the second, Kezia; and the name of the third, Kerenhappuch.*

15 *And in all the land were no women found so fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren.*

16 *After this lived Job an hundred and forty years, and saw his sons, and his sons’ sons, even four generations.*

17 *So Job died, being old and full of days.”*

# **"ABRAHAM: THE FRIEND OF GOD"**

by Dan Bailey

## **Introduction:**

1. There is no doubt but that Abraham was one of the greatest men to have ever walked upon the face of the earth. He still lives in a better place beyond the sorrows and sighs of this wicked world. God told Moses in Exodus 3:6: *"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."* Jesus quoted this verse to the Sadducees to prove that the spirit never dies and therefore their materialistic views of the finality of death and of no resurrection were false. Jesus said, *"God is not the God of the dead, but of the living"* (Matthew 22:32). Abraham is alive today!
2. Of all the people that we read about in the Bible, Abraham is the only one who is specifically called "the friend of God."
  - a. II Chronicles 20:7, *"Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?"*
  - b. Isaiah 41:8, *"But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend."*
  - c. James 2:23, *"And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God."*
3. Every Christian should long to be "God's friend." Surely, it is possible for each of us today to be a friend of God. Jesus told his apostles, *"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you"* (John 15:14-15).
4. But the question arises: why did God call Abraham his friend? We shall try to demonstrate with the scriptures just why God was so close to Abraham, and why Abraham was so close to God.

## **I. Abraham was God's friend because he was a man of faith. Hebrews 11:8.**

- A. Genesis 12:1-3, *"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house,*

*unto a land that I will shew thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."*

- B. As a man of faith, Abraham did not question the instructions of God.
  - 1. He was called by God while in the Ur of Chaldees.
    - a. Stephen refers to this call in Acts 7:2-4.
    - b. Why is it that so many today claim to have a saving faith but nevertheless do not obey as Abraham? (Matthew 7:21; Luke 6:46; John 14:15).
  - 2. Hebrews 11:8-10, *"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, **obeyed**; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."*
- C. It is still true that *"the faith that saves is the faith that obeys."* Hebrews 5:8-9.
- D. Solomon said, *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil. It shall be health to thy navel, and marrow to thy bones. Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine"* (Proverbs 3:5-10).

## **II. Abraham was God's friend even though he did not fully understand just how God would fulfill all his promises to him. (Job 13:15)**

- A. Genesis 15:1-6, "After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord God, what

wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of **thine own bowels** shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness."

- B. *"Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children"* (Genesis 16:1).
- C. How was it that God would fulfill his word to him when his wife was barren?

### **III. Abraham was God's friend because he was strong in faith giving glory to God.**

- A. Genesis 17:1-5.
  - 1. The LORD appeared to Abram to clarify just how God was going to fulfill his plan in reference to Abraham and his seed.
  - 2. God would not utilize one of Abraham's servants.
  - 3. God would not utilize Ishmael in his great plan to bless all families through the seed of Abraham.
  - 4. But the blessing would be from Abraham's own son from his wife, Sarah, and the son would be called Isaac.
- B. Genesis 17:13-22, *"He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant. And God said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall her name be. And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? and shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear? And Abraham said unto God, O*

*that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant will I establish with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee at this set time in the next year. And he left off talking with him, and God went up from Abraham."*

- C. Romans 4:18-25, *"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was **strong in faith**, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."*
- D. Brethren, we believe in the same God of Abraham! We believe that God raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. We read in Romans 10:9-10: *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."*
- E. When we are strong in faith, we give glory to God and surely we shall also be his friends!

#### **IV. Abraham was God's friend because he had a living faith!**

- A. Genesis 22:1-12, *"And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and*

*saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering: so they went both of them together. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham build an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of the LORD called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me."*

- B. James tells us that, when Abraham offered his son Isaac, his faith was perfected.
- C. James 2:20-24, *"But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."*
- D. Abraham had so much faith in God and in his promises that he believed that after slaying his son, that God could and would raise him up from the dead.
- E. Hebrews 11:17-19, *"By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure."*

## Conclusion:

1. Let us have **faith** like Abraham!
2. Let us have an **obedient faith** like Abraham!
3. Let us have a **strong faith** like Abraham!
4. Let us have a **living faith** like Abraham!
5. Let us have a faith that believes that our God can and will raise the dead! Matthew 22:29.
6. I Corinthians 15:50-58, *"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."*
7. Amen and amen!



# **"Elijah"—A Man Of Like Passion**

by Clifford Newell, Jr.

## **I. Introduction.**

1. Elijah is one of the most interesting characters of the Old Testament.
2. The record of the Kings designates this man as "*Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead*" (1 Kin. 17:1).
3. Elijah's character was: "*As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand*" (1 Kin. 17:1).
4. He suddenly appeared on the scene of action and he suddenly disappeared from the scene.

## **II. Discussion.**

### **A. Elijah—The Man Of God.**

1. Who were his parents? When and under what circumstances he was called to the prophetic office, and what his prior preparations for the office were, have remained a mystery.
2. Elijah was a hairy man, and he wore a leathern girdle about his loins, and he also at times wore a mantle or cape of sheep-skin (2 Kin. 1:8).
3. He was, no doubt, gaunt and of great physical stamina, else he could never have run before Ahab's chariot all the distance from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel (about 14 miles, 1 Kin. 18:46).
4. In reference to the himself, Elijah said, "*before whom I stand*" or "*whose I am and whom I serve.*"
5. His character and commitment to God are unquestionable.
6. Elijah came to be known by the distinguishing title, "*Man of God*" (1 Kin. 17:18, 24).

### **B. Elijah—His Influence.**

1. No prophet so excited the people of both Israel and Judah as

did Elijah and no prophet's influence has been more dramatic and lasted longer than that of Elijah.

- a) Even today, when the Jews observe the Passover, a small child is instructed to open the door so that Elijah can enter.
  - b) The worshippers rise and face the door for his entrance.
2. Elijah appeared along with Moses on the mount of Transfiguration, and together they talked with Christ (Mat. 17:1-5).
  3. When John the Baptist appeared on the scene of action, he was thought to be Elijah (Luke 9:7-9; John 1:21).
  4. Later, when Christ asked: "*Whom do men say that I the son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets*" (Mat. 16:13-14).
  5. Malachi prophesied, "*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD*" (Mal. 4:5).
  6. Elijah was a Type of John the Baptist.
    - a) They both wore the same kind of clothes.
    - b) They both were schooled in the desert.
    - c) They both were sons of solitude.
    - d) They both proclaimed messages of judgment.
    - e) They both proclaimed messages against wicked people in high places (Elijah against Ahab and Jezebel and John against Herod and Herodias).
    - f) They both were under the wrath of two powerful women, Jezebel and Herodias.
    - g) They both had a temporary eclipse of faith.
    - h) They both are immortal in influence.

### C. Elijah—His Temporary Eclipse Of Faith.

1. Elijah had announced to Ahab that there would be no rain for three and one-half years.
2. At the end of the period of drought, he appeared and called for a contest of power, a showdown, between himself and the prophets of Baal. The test was to be made on Mt. Carmel.
3. The ratio was unbelievable—Elijah against 450 prophets of Baal.
4. The contest was centered on the power to call down fire from heaven. The question was who was in reality God: Baal or Jehovah.
5. Sacrifices were prepared.
6. The prophets of Baal worked themselves into a state of frenzy. They jumped back and forth across their sacrifices and slashed their bodies in their efforts to call down fire from heaven.
7. Elijah chided them (1 Kin. 18:27).
8. Then Elijah prepared his sacrifice, prayed, and fire like lightning consumed his sacrifice.
9. When the people who had gone limping between the two sides saw the fire, and said, "*The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God*" (1 Kin. 18:39).
10. Elijah slew the 450 prophets, prayed for rain, and then ran all the way before Ahab's chariot from Mt. Carmel to Jezreel.
11. On arriving in Jezreel, he received a message from Jezebel which read: "*So let the gods do to me, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time*" (1 Kin. 19:2).
12. Elijah sat down under a juniper tree and prayed earnestly for the Lord to put him to death. What was wrong with Elijah? How may one account for his temporary eclipse of faith?
  - a) In the first place, Elijah was tired. Often Christians become

too tired to really worship and serve God.

- b) In the second place, Elijah had lost his sense of divine fellowship.
- c) In the third place, Elijah had seen no visible results from his preaching.
- d) In the fourth place, Elijah had lost faith in others.
- e) In the fifth place, Elijah had lost faith in himself.
- f) In the sixth and final place, Elijah was a man of like passions (Jam. 5:17-18). He was human and thus subject to all the fears and temptations of the flesh. What a remarkable person was the prophet Elijah!

### **III. Conclusion.**

- 1. God had a remedy for Elijah.
  - a. He first allowed Elijah to sleep...to rest.
  - b. He then caused an angel to feed Elijah...to strengthen him.
  - c. He then showed Elijah his fault...his mistake.
- 2. The need of the hour is more who would be like Elijah!

# **"Moses"-The Man Who Spoke With God Face To Face**

by Darrell Broking

God spoke with Moses face to face. That distinction is not made of any prophet since Moses' day. *"And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face"* (Deut. 34:10). God came into closer fellowship with Moses than with any other prophet under the Mosaic economy. To tell the story of Moses is a genuine privilege. To tell the story of Moses is to tell of the divine scheme of redemption, of God's grand and glorious redeeming purpose. To tell the story of Moses is to tell of the history of a race which blossomed under Moses' watch. A whole nation with a great past exists as a monument to Moses, who is distinguished as a type of Christ.

## **Moses And The Providence Of God**

One of the impressive things about Moses is the place that he occupied in the plan and purpose of God. Contrary to the opinion of some, men are never mighty in and of themselves. Great men are those men who are willing to hide behind God's plan and purpose as the agents of his purpose. The work of the Lord has no place for the arrogance and pride of men. Christianity is about the Lord and his redemption in the church. Great men and women of our day are those people who are crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20). They are the men and women who work only as agents of God's purpose to God's glory in the church (Eph. 3:21). Regardless of the cost, great men and women in Christianity are willing to be spent for the Lord's cause (II Cor. 12:15). This is the kind of example Moses set for our learning, patience, and comfort (Rom. 15:4).

In the great chain of events controlled by God for the redemption of the world, a chain which stretches from Adam to Christ, from the mother prophecy of all the Bible (Gen. 3:15) to the death of Christ on the Cross, Moses is a key link. The providence of God in the life of Moses is glaringly evident in the incidents attending his birth and infancy. Herod, in order to kill Jesus, issued his decree for the slaughter of the children of two years and under. Herod thought to stop the plan of God. But Herod did not out-do the Pharaoh of Moses' youth, who in his cruelty issued a decree that all male children of the Jews should be executed at birth. Great are these words, *"[t]he midwives feared God and did not as the king of Egypt commanded them, but saved the men children alive"* (Exod. 1:17). The Almighty God, through the willing heart of a midwife, frustrated the might and wrath of the pompous king who assumed to be something great and mighty in and of himself. Good people, when grappling with God, the Herods and Pharaohs always lose!

Pharaoh then ordered that every male child should be cast into the river Nile and drowned. Pharaoh's plan was to circumvent the loyal and God-

fearing conduct of the nurses. But after a goodly child was born in the home of Amram and Jochebed, his mother hid him for three months. Then, when it was no longer possible to conceal him in the home, he was put in an ark of bulrushes and laid in the flags by the river's brink, while his sister, Miriam, lingered near by to see what should be done.

The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe in the Nile and saw the child in his cradle in the bulrushes floating in the river. Josephus, the Jewish historian, adds that this daughter of Pharaoh was married, but childless and that she greatly desired children. This apparently by chance meeting between the daughter of the Egyptian king, whose decree had gone forth for the death of this child, was God's working whereby Moses was saved from destruction and adopted into the family of Pharaoh's daughter. Interesting it is that a river, which Pharaoh had decreed was to destroy the child, was the means of the child's preservation. Not only that, but a river became the means of another proud Pharaoh's destruction (Exod. 14:28; 15:19). There is an Almighty God in heaven whose providence is ever at work, shaping kingdoms and men. The acknowledgment of this sublime truth in light of the cross gives the Christian an anchor amid the storms and turbulence of life.

### **Moses And The Shaping Of His Heart**

Moses was educated as a son of Pharaoh's daughter. Stephen said in his great sermon, that Moses was "*learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*" (Acts 7:22). However, Egyptian philosophy and life as Pharaoh's heir did not spoil Moses. The grounding of godly parents served as a firewall of protection against the forces of Egyptian higher education. The problem with many of today's youth and the seemingly wider generation gap in some congregations may not lie in the hands of higher education and worldly temptations. Godly parents are to exercise diligence when rearing their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

When Moses was full forty years old, Stephen says that "*it came into the heart of Moses to visit his brethren*" (Acts 7:23). Moses made a visit to Goshen and, when he saw an Egyptian abusing an Hebrew, Moses smote the Egyptian, killing him. Moses risked everything for the sake of his own people. One wonders how hard it would be for Christian people to bite and devour one another, tearing down the beautiful bride of Christ, while at the same time standing ready to risk it all for his own people, the people of God? Would to God that all having the mind of Christ would muster together behind the example of Moses, a great man of God.

This tremendous quality, serving as the woof and warp of Moses' moral fabric, admits Moses into the New Testament's Hall of Faith. "*By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ*

*greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward"* (Heb. 11:24-26). Moses was one who had the vision of the after-a-while; therefore, he had the will to deny this present world. All of the fruits and luxuries of Pharaoh's house were nothing to Moses when compared with the fruit of suffering afflictions with the people of God. The church of Christ will go forward only through the leadership of godly men, who are willing to make the choice of Moses. Godly elderships endure, and cause others to endure, because they see him who is invisible, and have their vision focused into the after-a-while. Men like Moses, with the vision of Moses, can be reared today by godly parents who fear not the forces of this world!

### **Moses And The Enjoyment Of Suffering For A Time**

Moses renounced the pleasures of sin for a season. The Bible does not hide the fact that sin is pleasurable and it satisfies. But these pleasures are "seasonal." Too many find out too late that the pleasure of sin, like the early morning dew, is quickly gone. Sadly, many today, as always, are making the choice to enjoy a seasonal pleasure. Inflamed with the pleasure of the moment and blinded to the recklessness of their choice, they refuse to see that the pleasures of sin will turn to misery and unhappiness. In contrast, the reproach of Christ becomes the smile of God. The reproach of Christ is seasonal also, and the pleasure fruit of that reproach is everlasting! Friends, every soul is thrust into the arena of life and is asked to choose. Those who choose as Moses did are the ones who will enjoy the never-ending sweetness of the Son kissed land of bliss. Somewhere in some hidden place, there is a withered up mummy of the Pharaoh of Moses' youth; and, in the flames of Tartarus that Pharaoh cries out for just one more season of pleasure. At the same time, Moses is fully satisfied with his plate full of pleasure!

Moses had chosen affliction with the people of God and already had attempted to work for their deliverance. Yet it was not God's appointed time for the deliverance of his people. One of the harder things in life must be the ability to wait on God. God is the one working all things out according to his schedule. God is the one "[d]eclaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*" (Isa. 46:10). The task of a servant is to be faithful and true to God while patiently making the journey through life. Moses' call of God came forty years later, when the bush burned in the desert. The burning bush grabbed Moses' attention, and then the sound of that voice which broke the stillness of the desert commissioned Moses to deliver God's people.

## **The Prophet And Deliverer And Lover Of God's People**

The life of Moses as a prophet and a deliverer illustrates the power of a single experience of the presence of God. One such experience is enough to strengthen and safeguard through a long life of diligent service. Moses had his burning bush; Samuel, the voice of God while he slept in the holy house at Shiloh; Isaiah, his vision of the Lord in the temple; Paul, his vision and voice and burning light on the way to Damascus. Henceforth, all of them followed the light and obeyed the voice. We too need to focus on the light and follow the voice of God all of the days of our service. David was right when he said to God, *"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path"* (Psa. 119:105). Today *"we have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts"* (II Pet. 1:19). The product of great men inspired by the Holy Ghost is enough to strengthen and safeguard the Christian in his service (II Tim. 3:16-17).

After forty years of magnificent leadership and complete devotion to Israel, Moses finished his work. The forty years of wandering finally passed, and Israel is encamped tribe by tribe, standard by standard, around the ark on the borders of Canaan. Finally God's people are ready to pass over the river Jordan. There lay the goal of all the dreams and all the labors of Moses. This was the good land toward which for forty years he had been leading his people. Patient with the rebellious people of God and given to serve and wear himself out for Israel was Moses. Finally all of the hardship and forbearance of Moses bore fruit.

Brethren, there is a tremendous and needed lesson for the people of God wrapped up in the life of Moses. That is the need to be firm with the truth at the same time one loves the people of God. Too often good men and congregations are written up and written off, long before the right time. Where is the patience and love that is needed to bear with, and plead for, the people of God? Where is the persistent leadership of Moses' tribe? You can see Moses' patience and endurance in Paul. Consider Paul's inspired letters to congregations moving away from the cross of Christ. He was pleading for brethren to turn back to God, even though many of those brethren held Paul in utter contempt. Many of today's Christians would mark a congregation like first century Corinth and council brethren to withhold their contribution until division occurs. But not a man like Paul, who had the insight and patience of Moses. Paul wrote to his brethren and treated them as his beloved brethren. He gave them needed instructive discipline, encouraged the brethren to come together in greater love, and then told them that they needed to give better! How many congregations have gone into radicalism or liberalism, because otherwise sound brethren lacked the patience and stickability of Moses?



## Moses' Rebellion

Sad it is that the great leader of God's people was not permitted to pass over with his people. On the borders of the land flowing with milk and honey, Moses remembers the word of God, spoken long ago, that he was not to go over the Jordan. Yet when he saw the land before him, Moses made his petition that he might be permitted to go over with the people. *"I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon"* (Deut. 3:25). But the Lord said to him, *"Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up unto the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward and behold it with thine eyes, for thou shalt not go over the Jordan"* (Deut. 3:26, 27).

The offense that now arises out of the past and stands like a barrier in the way of Moses happened at Kadesh, when Moses smote the rock to bring water out of the rock for the people. Wearied with the murmurings of the people on that occasion, Moses in a moment of impatience and loss of self-control exclaimed, *".....Hear, ye rebels; must I bring water for you out of the rock?"* (Nu. 20:10). Then he lifted his rod in disobedience to the Lord's command and smote the rock twice. His transgression strikes us as something not very serious, a rather small offense. When Moses' long record of fidelity to God is taken into consideration, coupled with his tender solicitude for Israel, one sees a devotion so sincere that on one occasion when he prayed for the forgiveness of the people, he asked God that if he would not forgive them to blot his name out of the Book of Life. But if the offense strikes you and me as trivial and as a failing which leaned to virtue's side, that only goes to show the difference between man and God. On one occasion God said, *"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isa. 55:9). Friends it is foolish to assume that God will treat his word as fickle as men treat their own words.

A very searching and solemn commentary denoting one of the differences between God and men is this: Moses was shut out from the land of promise upon the influence and far-reaching effect of a single sin. After the gospel of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:16), sin is the most powerful thing in the universe. Almost unsurpassed in the Bible is the final scene of Moses' life. No longer opposing the will of God, Moses climbed Mount Nebo to the top of Pisgah. There, from that lofty summit, he surveyed Canaan's land. Beneath him flowed the river Jordan; to the north, the Sea of Galilee; and, to the south, the Dead Sea. Where the mountains begin to rise on the other side lay Jericho with its palm trees, and in the distance the summit upon which the temple at Jerusalem was afterward to rise, and near it the Mount of Olives. Far to the northwest, Mount Tabor; and furthest in the distance, Mount Carmel; and beyond that, a flash of the Great Sea itself. Moses drew it all in like an inhalation. There was the land

to which he had led Israel, where their immortal destiny within the scheme of redemption was to unfold. This was land which was to be trodden by the sacred feet of him before whom Moses bowed. But only with his eyes did Moses enter that land. *"So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day"* (Deut. 34:5-6).

### **Moses And The Reward For His Repentant Heart**

The ages had passed and that prophet of whom Moses wrote had come into the world (Deut. 18:15; Acts 3:22-23). Friends, at that time the Lord answered the request of Moses, which was recorded long ago (Deut. 3:25). Jesus with his inner three climbed to the top of a mountain in that grand and glorious land. There he was transfigured in majestic glory; and two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared with him in glory and spake with him concerning his atoning sacrifice, which he should accomplish outside the gates of Jerusalem. Moses was called out of the hades realm to stand with Christ on Canaan's soil. That was a far greater joy than to have led the hosts of Israel over the river Jordan in person! There he was speaking with that prophet face to face!

So far as the time side of life was concerned, the great life of Moses ended in what strikes men as an overwhelming disappointment. But in God's appointed time the petition of Moses was answered, when he stood with Christ on the mount. Christian yoke-fellows, we all pass through disappointments, discouragements, and trials of life. At times they may seem to become all the greater as life goes on. But the good news of salvation in Christ is that these disappointments have in them the possibility of something greater. At the end of the faithful Christian's journey, he too may stand with Moses and worship at the feet of the one who called Moses in the long ago.

# **"ISAIAH"**

by John Mayo

## **Introduction:**

1. What makes a great man?
2. Especially what made men great in the scriptures?
3. Certainly, we find that all men in the Bible were not great. There are plenty of villains and ungodly men.
  - a. Cain in the Old Testament and Demas in the New Testament are but a couple of the many men who were not great.
4. Yet many were great, this lecture program lists some, but surely not all of the great men in the Bible.
5. John, Peter, and Paul in the New Testament and Noah, Abraham, and Joseph in the Old are but a few of the many great men found in the Bible.
6. My assignment is Isaiah--what made him great?

## **Body:**

### **Background of Isaiah:**

1. He was the son of Amoz. Isaiah 1:1
2. He was married with two children. Isaiah 7:3; 8:1-3
3. His name meant "Jehovah is salvation."
4. He, like all men, was guilty of sin. Isaiah 6:5-7
5. He lived approximately 700 years before Christ in the days of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Isaiah 1:1
6. Yet this background is not what made him great. He was great because:

**I. He knew his limitations. Isaiah 6:5-7**

**II. He had a deep desire to serve God. Isaiah 6:8**

**III. He did not fear men, even the king, but did fear God. II Kings 18 and 19, Isaiah 8:11-13**

**IV. He was God's spokesman. Isaiah 8:1**

**V. He was often spoken of as a prophet of prominence in the New Testament. Matthew 3:1-3; 4:14; 8:17; 12:14-21; both in Mark and Luke and four times in the book of John.**

**VI. He was often quoted by Jesus. Matthew 13:14; 15:7 and others.**

- A. Some modern liberal theologians claim that Isaiah did not write all of the book that bears his name, but Jesus said that he did.

**VII. Finally, even though long physically dead, he still evangelizes.**

- A. Acts 8:26-40, the story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch.

- 1. Those passages of scripture has helped many see the way of salvation.

**Conclusion:** In preaching from the words of the inspired prophet Isaiah, Philip preached Jesus the savior of mankind. He also preached the good news of the gospel, and need for obedience to it. We should surely be thankful for great men like Isaiah. If we are faithful Christians we will get to meet him some day.

# LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF "JOSEPH"

by David Irick

## Introduction:

1. A study of the life of Joseph is refreshing. His life was filled with events that would lead others of less character to bitterness. When Joseph was handed lemons he made lemonade! Studying God's faithful servant Joseph should give us hope and courage knowing that we should do our best with the right attitude regardless of what comes about in life. His life provides a lofty example for us to follow!
2. Consider a general overview of his life.

## Discussion:

### I. JOSEPH WAS A MAN FAITHFUL IN OVERCOMING TEMPTATIONS.

#### A. *Potiphar's Wife Sought To Entice Joseph To Sin Through Fornication.*

1. Gen. 39:7-12 (This woman was persistent in trying to lure Joseph to her bed, but he steadfastly resisted her advances. We may safely assume that she tried every ploy, but nothing worked!).
2. Prov. 7:26 (Sexual temptations have led many *strong* men to be destroyed!).

#### B. *Joseph Provides Us A Valuable Lesson In Overcoming Sexual Temptations.*

1. It is possible for young men and woman to say no to sexual temptation! (Gen. 39:8)
2. Joseph did not take the temptation lightly. He realized it was a great sin. (Gen. 39:9)
3. Joseph did not 'toy' with temptation. He refused to be with her! (Gen. 39:10)
  - a. I Thes. 5:22 ("Abstain from all appearance of evil").
  - b. Eph. 4:27 ("Neither give place to the devil").
  - c. When necessary, he ran to safety! (Gen. 39:12).

c. When necessary, he ran to safety! (Gen. 39:12).

d. I Cor. 10:13 (There is a way to escape temptation!).

C. *Have We Considered The Danger Of Wanting To Be Attractive? Many People Want To 'Turn Heads', Drawing Attention To Themselves Through Physical Attraction. But Briefly Consider The Hardships This Brought Many People!*

1. Gen. 39:6 (Joseph was handsome in appearance. Did this contribute to Potiphar's wife desiring him?).
2. Gen. 12:10-14 (Abram told a lie [half equals a whole!] because he knew others would desire Sarai).
3. Gen. 26:7 (Isaac lied because he knew others would desire Rebecca).
4. Esther 1:11 (The king wanted to show the people and princes her beauty).
5. I Pet. 3:3-4 (We should seek to emphasize inward beauty, not the outward).

## **II. JOSEPH WAS A MAN WITH POSITIVE ATTITUDES IN THE MIDST OF PHYSICAL HARDSHIPS.**

A. *Men Had Mistreated Joseph In Many Ways, Yet He Remained Faithful With A Good Attitude!*

1. (Gen. 37:8) He was hated by his brothers.
2. (Gen. 37:25-28) His brothers sold him into slavery.
3. (Gen. 39:16-19) He was falsely accused of attempting rape.
4. (Gen. 39:20) He was unjustly imprisoned.
5. (Gen. 41:1) The butler failed to remember him as promised, leading him to spend two more years in prison.

B. *God Takes Care Of His Faithful Servant.*

1. Gen. 39:1-5 (God blessed him as a slave to Potiphar).

2. Gen. 39:20-23 (God blessed him in prison).
3. Gen. 41:51-52 ("...For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction...").
4. Examples of Noah, Abraham, Job and others could be cited. We must always remember to have a positive outlook on life and trust in God's providence to provide what is best in the end!
5. Phil. 1:12-14 (Good things came out of Paul's imprisonment).

### **III. JOSEPH PROVIDES THE PERFECT EXAMPLE OF FORGIVENESS.**

#### *A. Stop And Think Of The Many Reasons Joseph Had To Harbor Hatred Toward Others.*

1. His freedom was stolen away by those who should have loved him. He had many years to think of his father, friends, and possessions left behind. And then there were the years he spent in prison and so forth. The seeds of hatred were available, but thankfully Joseph refused to plant them in his heart.

#### *B. Joseph Was In A Prime Position To Seek Revenge Upon Those Who Sought Him Harm, But Instead He Forgave Them!*

1. Gen. 45:5 (Joseph thinks positively upon the good things that have come about and not the bad.).
2. Gen. 45:9-11 (Instead of desiring them evil, he wants to support them with nourishment of food stored up for the famine.).
3. Gen. 45:15 (He kisses all his brethren).
4. Gen. 45:24 (He even warns them not to fall out with each other over the events of selling him into slavery)

#### *C. We Must Be Willing To Forgive Others!*

1. Matt. 6:14-15.
2. Rom. 12:17-21.

**Conclusion:**

1. *"Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you."* (Phil 4:9)
2. We would do well to think of Paul's advice and make application toward God's faithful servant **Joseph**.



**"TIMOTHY"**  
**"His Life and His Lessons"**  
by Harry Calloway

Relatively little is known about Timothy. However, that which we can learn about his life and from the lessons he learned from Paul are invaluable.

**I. His Life**

- A. Timothy is mentioned first in Acts 16:1 – *"a certain disciple."*
- B. He was a missionary (Acts 16:3ff; 17:14; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4).
- C. He was Paul's *"son in the faith"* (1 Timothy 1:2).
- D. Paul also called Timothy:
  - 1. *"my workfellow"* (Romans 16:21).
  - 2. *"brother"* (2 Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 1:1).
  - 3. *"servant of Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 1:1).
- E. Timothy is mentioned last in Hebrews 13:23 – *"is set at liberty."*

**II. His Lessons**

- A. Be a teacher
  - 1. 2 Timothy 2:24
  - 2. 1 Timothy 1:3; 6:3ff; 2 Timothy 4:2ff (see also 1 Timothy 4:6; Colossians 1:27, 28)
- B. Be a worker
  - 1. 2 Timothy 2:15
  - 2. 2 Timothy 4:15 (see also Romans 16:21)

C. Be a fighter

1. 1 Timothy 1:18
2. 1 Timothy 6:12 (see also 2 Corinthians 10:4; Ephesians 6:13ff)

D. Be steadfast

1. 2 Timothy 1:8
2. 2 Timothy 1:13 (see also 1 Thessalonians 5:21)
3. 2 Timothy 2:1
4. 2 Timothy 3:14ff

E. Be an example

1. 1 Timothy 4:12ff
2. 1 Timothy 5:21, 22
3. 1 Thessalonians 1:6; Philippians 3:17 (see also 1 Corinthians 11:1)

## **Conclusion**

1. Be respected (Acts 16:1, 2)
2. Be trusted (1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Thessalonians 3:2-6; Philippians 2:19ff; See also Philippians 2:2-4)
3. Be faithful (1 Timothy 6:20)

## **"NEHEMIAH"**

by Jonnie Hutchison

1. The book of Nehemiah is a Holy Spirit inspired historical account of the compassion and the leadership of a man who loved his God and his nation.
  - A. It is written in the first person which means that Nehemiah himself was used by the Holy Spirit as the writer of the book that bears his name which further gives credence to the accuracy of the divine account.
  - B. Nehemiah was the son of Hachaliah..
    - 1) Some believe it is "highly probable that he was a descendent of the tribe of Judah and the royal family of David."
    - 2) "From Nehemiah 10:1-8 some have inferred that he was a priest, since Nehemiah comes first in the list of names ending with the phrase, "these were the priests." Of course this would make Nehemiah a Levite.
    - 3) Actually, little is known of his genealogy and no conclusive evidence exists to prove either of the above claims.
  - C. The significance of the man Nehemiah is not in his genealogy, but in his great example of compassion, leadership, refusal to compromise and his diligence in restoring the things of God.

### **NEHEMIAH - THE COMPASSIONATE LEADER.**

- A. His compassion seen in:
  1. His concern for the remnant of his brethren in Jerusalem – 1:2-3.
  2. His weeping, mourning, fasting, and praying – 1:4.
  3. His sad countenance – 2:3.
- B. His compassionate concern.
  1. Nehemiah initiated the conversation concerning the welfare of

his brethren in Jerusalem.

2. When Hanani gave him the report it caused him great sadness.
3. He was greatly concerned with the condition of the remnant.

C. His compassionate response.

1. He sat down and wept and mourned – expressive of the tremendous sorrow he experienced at what he had heard.
2. He fasted – expressive of the great distress he felt at the report of the condition of his people.

D. His compassionate prayer.

1. A prayer of reverence – 1:5, 11.
2. A prayer of humility – 1:6.
3. A prayer of penitence – 1:7.
4. A prayer of petition – 1:11.

E. *The Church of Today Needs Compassionate Leaders Like Nehemiah.*

1. Leaders who can see the true needs of those both in and out of the church.
2. Leaders who can experience genuine sorrow at the condition of lost souls.
3. Leaders who are distressed by the unfaithfulness of erring brethren and the deluge of false teachers afflicting the church today.
4. Leaders who are themselves penitent and humble and who trust in the power of prayer.

**NEHEMIAH – THE PLANNING LEADER.**

- F. Nehemiah determined to do something about the conditions of the remnant in Jerusalem – 2:5-8.

1. A request was made to the king for him to return and rebuild the walls.
2. He requested letters from the king for safe passage and for building supplies.

G. Nehemiah surveyed the damage – 2:11-15.

1. He saw what needed to be done and determined how it would be carried out.
2. He garnered the support of the people – 2:17-18. The response of majority of the people was *"Let us rise up and build."*
  - a) But not all reacted that way – some *"laughed us to scorn and despised us."* V. 19.
  - b) Nehemiah's response was not discouragement, loss of enthusiasm, or fear – instead v. 20, *"The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build...."* He had implicit faith in God.

H. *The Lord's Work Will Only Be Accomplished By Leaders Who Will Plan the Work and Work the Plan.*

1. God's leaders need to survey the condition of their respective congregations and then plan to rebuild what has fallen down – Heb. 12:12-13.
2. God's leaders must then lead in actually carrying out the plan and truly say, *"Let **us** rise up and build."* (cf. James 1:22).
3. God's leaders must have implicit faith in God – *"God will prosper us"*. 2 Sam. 22:31; Psalm 18:2.

## **NEHEMIAH – THE FEARLESS, UNCOMPROMISING LEADER.**

- I. Nehemiah had opposition from without which threatened to stop the work..
  1. It took the form of Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabians, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites 4:1-8.

2. Nehemiah's response to this threat was to pray and set a watch – 4:9.
  - a) He armed the people – 4:13.
  - b) He encouraged the people to not be afraid but to trust in God – 4:14, 20 *"our God shall fight for us."*
  - c) He made sure that the rebuilding of the walls continued in spite of the threat of attack – 4:16-18.
3. Nehemiah was asked to compromise. 6:1-4.
  - a) When Sanballat saw that he could not defeat Nehemiah by a direct assault, he sought to deceive Nehemiah into ceasing the work by inviting him to come to the plains of Ono for a meeting.
  - b) Nehemiah's answer – *"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down...."* (6:3).
4. Nehemiah was falsely accused – 6:5-8.
  - a) Of intending to lead the Jews in rebellion against the king – 6:6.
  - b) Of seeking to be a king himself.
  - c) No doubt Sanballat was trying to intimidate Nehemiah into ceasing his work.
  - d) Nehemiah denied the accusations and went on with the work – 6:8,9.
5. Nehemiah's very life was threatened but he would not yield – 6:10-15.
- J. Nehemiah had problems from within which threatened to halt the work.
  1. The rulers and nobles had mistreated the people, exacting tribute and interest from them unjustly.
  2. Nehemiah's answer was to rebuke the rulers and nobles who

then promised they would cease the practice.

3. Note 5:16, "Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall ...."

K. *Today the Lord's work is under attack from without and within.*

1. False, man-made religions seek to destroy the uniqueness that is New Testament Christianity.

a) They would have us to extend spiritual fellowship beyond the bounds that God has set.

(1) They would try to intimidate us with false accusations of not believing in the grace of God and trying to earn our way to heaven.

(2) They seek to bring us down to their level – the level of man-made religion- by falsely claiming that the church of Christ is just one denomination among many and was started by Alexander Campbell.

b) In essence they are inviting us down to the denominational plains of Ono for compromise.

c) But our answer should be the same as Nehemiah's – "*I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.*" Eph. 5:11; 2 John 9-11.

d) As Nehemiah told his people, "Fear not, our God will fight for us."

2. False teachers from within the church are seeking to lead precious souls away from the truth that makes us free – John 8:32.

a) What should be the reaction of God's leaders?

b) There is the great need to rebuke the false teacher – 2 Tim. 4:2-3; Tit. 1:13; Rev. 3:19; Rom. 16:17-18.

c) Stand firm in the faith – 1 Cor. 16:13; Gal. 5:1; Phil. 4:1; 1 Thess. 3:8; 2 Thess. 2:15.

3. The church must be armed with the sword of the spirit to

overcome the wicked one – Eph. 6:13-18.

## **NEHEMIAH – THE RESTORING LEADER.**

L. Nehemiah led the people to restore the walls of Jerusalem.

1. Neh. 4:6 *"So built we the wall ... for the people had a mind to work."*
2. We can do anything that God requires of us if we truly have "a mind to work."

M. Nehemiah led the people to restore the law of God.

1. Chapter 8.
2. We need men today who will do as verse 8 says, *"So they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."*
3. Sadly, many have departed from teaching and preaching the Book.
  - a) Hosea 4:6.
  - b) Prov. 1:30-32.
  - c) 2 Tim. 4:2; 1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 1:16-17.

N. Nehemiah led the people to restore respect for God's House.

1. Neh. 13:11, *"Then contended I with the rulers, and said, Why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together, and set them in their place."*
2. Many have lost respect for the house of God today.
  - a) What is the house of God? 1 Tim. 3:15.
  - b) Some would make it one more denomination among many.
3. We must stand firm and respect this divine institution.
  - a) Jesus built it, and it belongs to Him – Matthew 16:18.



- b) Christ is the head of it – Eph. 1:22-23.
- c) All of the saved are in it – Acts 2:47; Eph. 5:23.
- d) Jesus shed his blood to purchase it – Acts 20:28.
- e) It is unique and one of a kind – it is the body of the saved.

## **CONCLUSION**

- 4. The man Nehemiah was a compassionate leader, a planning leader, a fearless and uncompromising leader and a restoring leader.
- 5. What a tremendous example his life sets for anyone today who would accept the responsibility of leadership in the church of our Lord.

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Robert Jamieson, A.R. Fausset and David Brown Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (Electronic Version).  
International Standard Bible Encyclopedia.

# **"Paul", the Apostle Who Changed Churches**

by David Pharr

Text: Philippians 3:4-8

1. We are impressed when we see dramatic changes in a person's life.
  - a. A few years ago there was a murderer serving time in a Texas prison. He had been labeled "the meanest man in Texas." Over time in reading the Bible he turned to the Lord and eventually was pardoned from prison and became a gospel preacher and superintendent of a children's home. I know a brother who served years in prison for violent rapes with added years for violent escape attempts who is now a dedicated prison minister. Perhaps less dramatic are the people we know who once were drunkards, or blasphemers, etc., who now are respected Christians.
  - b. A few months ago we read of the conversion of Jeremiah Fard Muhammed, a prominent assistant to Louis Farrakhan out of the Nation of Islam. I have also known of successful pastors of various denominations who gave up their positions to embrace pure biblical Christianity. We have even heard of the conversion of Catholic priests. Recently a former nun, now a Christian, spoke at a ladies program in Columbia. A few years ago I baptized a woman who had once entered into training as a nun.
  - c. Some present (including myself) were once members of various denominations.
2. Some folks seem very uncomfortable with the idea of changing churches. Many assume that "one church is as good as another." Others feel loyalty to family traditions and some have too much pride to admit to having been wrong. (After hearing the late Marshall Keeble, a woman told him that she realized that what he preached was right, but that she didn't believe in "jumping from limb to limb." He replied that he didn't either--unless he was on a "rotten limb.")
3. The text is about the apostle Paul and recalls what he gave up when he changed churches. Of course this was that he might "win Christ." We all understand that the end in view is Christ, not merely a better church. But in coming to Christ he had to break with his former religion--give up his old church, and become a member of the church established by Christ.

**I. The conversion of Saul of Tarsus is the most dramatic conversion story ever told.** (It surpasses any of the examples we have named.)

- A. Briefly review the events as recorded in Acts 9, 22, and 26. See also I Timothy 1:12-15.
- B. When he was baptized his conversion was complete (Acts 22:16). His past was forgiven (Acts 2:38) and he became a member of the one body (I Corinthians 12:13), which is the church (Colossians 1:18). He knew that this was the church Jesus established (Matthew 16:18), and he spent the rest of his life in it.

**II. The text names the kind of things that might have hindered others from making such a change, but which Paul surrendered in order to do the will of the Lord.**

- A. He gave up a distinguished family heritage--*Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews* (5).
  - 1. He came from a pure blood line--a true "blue blood." His tribe was one of the loyal tribes, from whence had come the first king, whose name he shared. From birth his parents had reared him according to Jewish customs. Some are proud to be "daughters of the Revolution," or "sons of the Confederacy," but Paul traced his ancestry to Benjamin, Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. Yet for the sake of Christ and truth, he did not let his family heritage keep him from changing religions.
  - 2. I heard of a Jewish youth who was converted, and, as a result, his family disowned him.
- B. He left the largest and most influential denomination among the Jews--*a Pharisee* (5).
  - 1. Today the term Pharisee connotes a hypocrite, and many were, but Pharisees were also "the straitest sect of our religion" (Acts 26:5). They were "conservative" in contrast to Sadducees. See Acts 23:8. Though Jesus was critical of the hypocrites among them, generally they were a respected church, whereas the church of Christ was called a sect everywhere spoken against (Acts 28:22).

2. He had been trained to be a leader at the feet of the famous teacher Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). Money and time had been invested. With his brilliant mind, his education, and his background, he was on his way to "the top."
- C. His persecution of Christians was because he sincerely believed they were wrong and that the religion he had inherited was right--*Concerning zeal, persecuting the church* (6). (Acts 26:9). This was evidence that he had been no part-time, or half-hearted church member (Galatians 1:13-14).
  - D. His change was not because he lacked moral integrity--*touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless* (6).
    1. Some don't practice even the religion they profess. Paul had always sought to have a good conscience (Acts 23:1; 24:16).
    2. It is often thought that moral goodness is all that matters. "Just keep the ten commandments." This is one of the greatest hindrances to many obeying the gospel.

### **III. His change had one supreme goal in view: his own eternal salvation.**

- A. Some might change churches for advantages in business or politics, or for popularity, or because of friends. On the other hand some might refuse to change for the same reasons.
- B. Paul became convinced of truth which he had not known and believed before.
  1. He had been in error (I Timothy 1:13). Error will not lead one to salvation (Matthew 15:14). Truth leads to freedom (John 8:32).
  2. What is the truth needed? it is the truth that correctly answers the question: What must I do to be saved? Paul had asked this question (Acts 22:10), and the answer of truth had been given (16).
  3. Many questions concern us. There are numerous issues that attract us--some important and some not so important. But there is one thing that matters above all else: the saving of our souls. (I knew a man who put off being baptized. His excuse was that he did not understand a certain minor doctrinal issue.

This is foolish because there is one issue that takes precedent over all others: the plan of salvation.)

- C. Paul's commitment to truth and right, which is to say commitment to Christ, and his goal of heaven is summed up in the marvelous words of Philippians 3:8-14.

### **Conclusion:**

We look again at I Timothy 1:12-15. Many have been amazed that a man like Paul could be so changed, yet none was ever more amazed at the grace of God than was he. His point in verse 15 might be simply stated: "If God can save a man like me, he can save anybody."