

baptized (Acts 2:38). They obeyed the gospel (Acts 2:41) and the Lord added them to the church (the body of the saved; Acts 2:47). God cannot save the disobedient, but He can save you... if you submit yourself to His righteousness!!

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

1. HEAR THE WORD OF GOD
Romans 10:17; Matthew 7:24-27
2. BELIEVE THE WORD OF GOD
Hebrews 11:6; Mark 16:15-16
3. REPENT OF YOUR SINS
Acts 2:38; 17:30; Luke 13:3
4. CONFESS THAT JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD
Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:36
5. BE BAPTIZED FOR THE REMISSION OF YOUR SINS
Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:3-4
6. LIVE FAITHFULLY UNTO DEATH
Revelation 2:10



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HE WILL COMMAND HIS CHILDREN AFTER HIM

Phil Grear

As parents, we truly appreciate a compliment about the way we are raising our children. It is a difficult task, and it is always gratifying when our efforts are noticed. But it is particularly gratifying when God approves. God gave Abraham such a compliment in Genesis 18:19, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." God's confidence in Abraham was well-founded, and the influence this godly man exerted on his family has been felt for generations.

At the time God made this statement Abraham had only one child, a thirteen-year-old son named Ishmael. But God had promised him another son, even though he would be one hundred years old when that child was born. Isaac would be the one through whom Christ would ultimately come, and so Abraham had to train that child right. It is always vital that fathers raise their children as God wants. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4) Abraham knew that to "command his children" after God involved more than just handing down orders and punishing disobedience. He must use the power of example in raising his children. "Do as I say, not as I do," would not work. He would have to live godliness in front of them before he could command it.

HE LIVED AN EXAMPLE OF COURAGE BEFORE HIS FAMILY

It would cost Abraham to receive God's promises. He would have to show his willingness to be a part of God's covenant by being circumcised, and insisting his son, Ishmael, do the same. "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be

merely to submit. Since that is the case, perhaps Israel just hadn't heard the gospel. "Not so," says Paul! They heard the report (e.g. the gospel) just as God designed, but they had not believed it (vv 16-18). All things necessary to the salvation of Israel had been accomplished; all that remained was for them to believe the report and submit themselves to the righteousness of God by obeying His commands.

God's Righteousness and those who had not been a People (vv 19-20)

Under the previous covenant, the Jews were God's chosen people. However, under the gospel system, status before God is achieved through faith, not through bloodline. Israel, of all people, should have recognized this principle. In fact, the very law they professed to revere had predicted the casting off of the Jews and the acceptance of the Gentiles. In these 2 verses, Paul cites 2 Old Testament passages that said as much (i.e. Deuteronomy 32:21 & Isaiah 65:1). God had not pulled any punches, so to speak. He had apprised Israel of His righteous intent all along. The law itself pointed to a better covenant. The law also predicted the casting off of Israel and the adoption of the Gentiles. Israel had refused to submit themselves to the righteousness of God while the Gentiles gladly rushed to a favored place by God's side.

Conclusion - God's Righteousness not for Disobedient and Contrary People (v 21)

"All day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and contrary people." (Romans 10:21). God had been and continued to be willing to save. In this figure, His hands are outstretched; He is ready to receive; His invitation is open to all! However, there are conditions. He cannot save a disobedient person. On the other hand, He can save those who are obedient, those who submit themselves to His righteousness.

There is a classic picture of the process in Acts 2 when His righteousness was first revealed. Rebellious Jews killed the Son. They sought forgiveness when they heard Peter's message (Acts 2:37). Peter heard their question and commanded them to repent and be

pointed to the Messiah and to the system of righteousness that He would ultimately establish.

When Paul wrote the book of Romans, the Messiah that the law predicted was not a future Messiah; He had already come. No one needed to go to heaven and bring Him down or descend into the bowels of the earth to bring Him up from the dead; that had already been done! The future Savior foreseen in the Mosaic covenant was a current reality. In fact, He was as near as the word of faith spoken by Paul and the rest of the apostles; not future, but present reality!

The work of the Savior was a finished work. The final ingredient needed for man's righteousness did not rest in God's hands. Rather, the realization of man's righteousness depended upon his submission to the gospel through faith. As Paul cites Isaiah 28:16, he is saying that the tried and precious stone had already been laid; belief in Him was the missing ingredient, not some series of complicated heroic deeds. The need was to call on the name of the Lord out of faith (vv 9-11) in exactly the same way that Paul had done at his conversion. As recorded by Luke, Paul penitently awaited instructions from God's messenger. When Ananias finally came to him he said, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16). Paul called on the name of the Lord in obedience and so should every would-be follower of the Lord. In so doing, they submit themselves to the righteousness of God.

God's Righteousness the Same for All Humanity (vv 12-18)

"For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved." (Romans 10:12-13). The final act of calling on the Lord completes the process that God designed. Faith, the motivating element behind the realization of righteousness, comes by God's design. The word has to be heard. In order to be heard, it has to be preached. In order to be preached, there must be a preacher. And, in order for a preacher to preach, he has to be sent. Faith is a product of God's design and so is the hearing (v 17). From beginning to end, it is His system of righteousness. Man's part is

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." (Genesis 17:12-14) This had to be a frightening prospect for a ninety-year old man. The thought of undergoing such painful surgery had to concern him. But God had told him to do it, and that was that.

Perhaps just as painful, or more so, was telling his thirteen year old son he would have to be circumcised. No father wants his child to suffer pain. But God had said so, and the issue was settled. "And Abraham took Ishmael his son, and all that were born in his house, and all that were bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house; and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin in the selfsame day, as God had said unto him. And Abraham was ninety years old and nine, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was thirteen years old, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin." (Genesis 17:23-25) Many fathers would have balked at this. Too many want to relax God's commandments for their children. Does the world laugh at you for not being like them? Well, then, you may just have to go along for now. Does going to church interfere with some favorite activity? Then just this once it will be all right. We do not want our children to have to make any sacrifices for God. We want to smooth the road over and make it easy for them. But God never promised it would be easy, and we must expect more of our children.

Abraham could expect obedience from Ishmael because he was willing to do it himself. He showed a personal willingness to sacrifice for God, and thus was able to ask it of others.

HE SHOWED AN EXAMPLE OF TRUSTING FAITH

The greatest test of Abraham's life came several years later when God called upon him for a greater sacrifice. Isaac had been born just as God had said. This was the son through whom God had promised to send Jesus. But God told Abraham to "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.” (Genesis 22:2) What a challenge to Abraham’s faith! But there is no indication that Abraham ever wavered, Instead we are told, “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...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 they came to the place which God had told him of and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.” (Genesis 22:3-9) Abraham never questioned what God said, nor did he hesitate to obey. Only when God intervened and provided a ram, did Abraham stop the process of offering Isaac.

A man of such faith was in a position to pass that faith to the next generation. One who was willing to so completely obey the commands of God could expect the same of his children. He was in a position to “command his children” after God. Ishmael and Isaac grew up observing that kind of unwavering faith and obedience on the part of their father. They knew he was requiring of them only what he lived himself. Such had to have a powerful influence on them.

What do our children see in us? Can they observe our willingness to do whatever it takes to please God, or do they see us looking for “loopholes” and making compromises. Do they see our unswerving determination to obey God, or do they hear us rationalizing and justifying the things we want to do? Only when they see true faithfulness to God in our lives can we command our children after God.

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is noble. Could God say that we are noble? If we follow the example of the Bereans we trust that one day we will hear Him say that we are (Matthew 25:21).

Revelations from Romans (11 of 12) The Revelation of the Righteousness of God (Romans 10)

God is righteous, but that is not what Romans 10 is about. Rather, it is about the system that God designed and implemented to make men righteous.

God’s Righteousness and Israel’s Ignorance (vv 1-3)

Israel, like many today, sought to establish their own righteousness. In doing so, they rejected the system that God authored in exchange for their own system. They were zealous in their pursuits, but ignorant of God’s way. In that condition, they were lost. Paul knew from first hand experience what it meant to reject God’s way and embrace error with great zeal and dedication. After all before his conversion to Christ, he was the most feared persecutor of the early church. His knowledge of that mindset enabled him to speak with authority on the matter. In Romans 10 he speaks with authority and with emotion “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.” (Romans 10:1).

God’s Righteousness Revealed in Christ (vv 4-11)

“For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness.” (Romans 10:4). The word “end” as used here refers not to termination but to objective or purpose. The very reason that the law was given was so that a people could be prepared from whom and to whom the Messiah could come. After all, the law itself had declared the necessity of perfect obedience in order for righteousness to result (Romans 10:5 & Leviticus 18:5). This was a state of perfection to which no one could attain. Therefore, it is evident from the law that righteousness was not to come through the law. However, the law

2. **They searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so (Acts 17:11).** Somehow, people have got it in their minds that Bible study is just devotional reading. Bible study, however, is more than just a casual reading of the Bible, profitable as that may be. These Jews in Berea “searched,” or “examined” the scriptures. This word means “to sift up and down, to make careful and exact research as in a legal proceeding,” (Luke 23:14; Acts 4:9; 12:19). These Bereans “scrutinized, investigated, and interrogated in a forensic sense” the Old Testament scriptures to determine the truthfulness of Paul’s preaching. Just as witnesses may be intensely questioned in a court setting to uncover all of the relevant facts, these Jews meticulously scrutinized the Messianic prophecies to determine if Jesus was indeed the Christ. It is this kind, serious and reverential approach to Bible study that pleases its divine Author.

3. **Many of them believed (Acts 17:12).** Many have believed the word of God throughout the ages, but for different reasons. Some believe it just because the preacher says it, and they trust the preacher. The human soul, however, is far too valuable to trust, without question, the words of a fallible man! (Matthew 16:26). Others, not taking anything for granted, refuse to believe a thing until they have measured it by the standard, God’s divine truth. Once these Bereans were satisfied that Paul’s preaching was in harmony with the scriptures they believed it. But, what is entailed in their belief? Did they simply agree with Paul, but then go on living as they had before they heard his preaching? Of course not. As in every case, if their faith was a living faith, they obeyed from the heart the teaching they believed (James 2:17-26; Romans 6:17,18). And according to the “Book of Conversions” those who believed the gospel all obeyed in the same way, they repented and were baptized (Acts 2:38,41; 8:12, 35-39; 10:44-48; 16:14,15, 30-34; 19:4,5; 22:16). If the Bereans’ faith was a living faith, they did this also.

Could God Say That We Are Noble?

Why were the Jews in Berea more noble than the Jews in Thessalonica? They received the word with an open mind, they examined the scriptures to see if what they heard was true, and having determined that it was, they obeyed it. According to God, that

A MAN AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART

I SAMUEL 13:13-14

Larry G. Reynolds

In Paul’s sermon at Antioch, in which he briefly recounts the history of Israel, he refers to the statement made by God concerning David: “I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will” (Acts 13:22). The original statement was made because King Saul did not follow the instructions of God. He chose to follow his own ideas instead of doing what God wanted him to do. As a result God would select a man that would do His will and that man would be David (I Samuel 13:13,14). This beautiful compliment, “a man after My own heart”, is one that should characterize every person who wears the name of Christ. Many of the attitudes that David possessed were later perfected in the life of Christ. In this article we will notice some of the attitudes that David possessed that prompted God to compliment him in this beautiful way.

DAVID A MAN WHO FACED MANY PROBLEMS

First we point out that David was a man that would face many problems in his life. He was pursued by King Saul, he faced several assassination attempts, his entire family was kidnapped on one occasion, his friends turned against him, his son Amnon raped his daughter Tamar, his other son Absalom murdered Amnon, Absalom led a revolt against his father, Absalom himself was killed, with much to David’s grief. As you can see he was a man with many problems! Yet somehow, he survived them all and has come to be remembered as “a man after God’s own heart.” How was he able to do this? We find the answer as we consider what David did when he was faced with one of his most serious problems, as recorded in I Samuel 30:1-6. Verse 6 says, *“Now David was greatly distressed for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.”* David would strengthen himself in the Lord his God by composing psalms and singing them to God. While pursued by Saul, he wrote Psalm 59:1-4; When imprisoned in Gath, he wrote Psalm 56, when fleeing from Absalom, he wrote Psalm 3.

Please consider also when David sinned he sat down and wrote about his sin and put it to music and had it sung in worship. *“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight- That You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge”* (Psalm 51:1-4). David would seek God’s help in his time of need and believed that God would supply all that he needed.

DAVID LOVED THE WORD OF GOD

David was a man after God’s own heart because he knew the value of God’s Divine Word. *“Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day”* (Psalm 119:97). David grew to know God through meditating upon His law. He knew that it would protect him from sin. *“Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”* (Psalm 119:11). He understood that God’s word would revive him in affliction. *“This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.”* (Psalm 119:50). It would give him peace of mind. *“Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble”* (Psalm 119:165).

If we want to be a man after God ‘s own heart we too must love and meditate upon God’s word. We need to “hide it” in our hearts so that we don’t sin against God. We need to follow the instructions given by David in (Psalm 1:1-3) *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful: But his delight is in the law of the Lord, And in His law he meditates day and night”*. Learn to delight in the Word, meditate upon it daily, then we will be truly “blessed”!

DAVID LOVED TO PRAY

David loved to pray because he knew that God had answered his prayers, *“I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live”* (Psalm 116:1-2). He knew that God

We must not let the manner of Paul’s departure from Thessalonica blind us to the fact that his work in that city was a great success. A great number of people were converted in Thessalonica as a result of his preaching (Acts 17:4). This church became a great example to the believers in Macedonia and Achaia, and the word of the Lord sounded from them in Macedonia, Achaia, and beyond (I Thessalonians 1:7, 8). While Paul was no doubt disappointed with the conduct of the unbelieving Jews he was by no means surprised (Acts 13:44-50; 14:1-5, 19).

Paul In Berea

After leaving Thessalonica by night Paul traveled some sixty miles to the city of Berea. Upon locating the Jewish synagogue he entered and taught the same message he taught everywhere else (Acts 17:10,13). How refreshing and gratifying it must have been for Paul to have found the Jewish community in Berea to be “more noble” than the Jewish community in Thessalonica! (Acts 17:10,11). What did these Jews do that was so different from the majority of the Jews in Thessalonica? Why did God see fit to preserve this compliment in the pages of the everlasting gospel? The answer to these questions is the key that opens the door to the unsearchable riches of Christ and the kingdom of heaven.

1. They received the word with all readiness of mind (Acts 17:11). At last, an open minded Jewish audience! This is the willing and forward mind of Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians (II Corinthians 8:11-19; 9:2). These Jews were “eager, rushing forward” to hear what Paul had to say. Paul had seen both ends of the spectrum. Perhaps the most striking example of a stubborn closed mind was the angry mob that murdered Stephen. When they could bear to hear him no more “they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord” (Acts 7:57). On that occasion Paul/Saul stood with the close-minded mob (Acts 7:58-8:1). That is reminiscent of the little child who places his hands over his ears when he does not want to hear something and shouts “I can’t hear you, I can’t hear you!” If only there could be more audiences today who, like those “noble Bereans,” would give the gospel a fair hearing.

THE NOBLE BEREANS

A.J. Cox

Countless generations of Christians have learned from and been encouraged by the Bereans of Acts 17:10-15. Rarely has the topic of “Bible Study” been addressed when the practice of these Jews has not been used as an example of the kind of study habits we should all develop. Why were these Jews in Berea “more noble” than the Jews of Thessalonica? What warranted such high praise from the pen of the inspired physician?

Paul In Thessalonica

Thessalonica was a major commercial city, and a provincial capital. Its Jewish population was large enough for the establishment of a synagogue. It was most likely the presence of this synagogue that prompted Paul and his company to simply pass through Amphipolis and Apollonia on their way to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1).

As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue and argued from the Old Testament scriptures that Jesus was the Christ (Acts 17:2,3). Paul’s preaching was also accompanied by miraculous confirmation (I Thessalonians 1:5). The result was a great multitude of the devout Greeks and many of the chief women believed (Acts 17:4). Sadly, only some of the Jews believed Paul’s preaching.

The Jews of the synagogue who did not believe were jealous of Paul’s success and set all the city on an uproar (Acts 17:5). When they could not find Paul and his companions they took Jason, with whom Paul and his company had been staying, and certain brethren and accused them before the rulers of the city (Acts 17:6-8). Though Jason and these brethren were eventually released it was not before they had given security to the rulers (Acts 17:9). This may have been bond money, or it may have been Jason’s assurance that he would see to it that Paul and Silas left the city. At any rate, it became clear that as long as Paul and Silas were in Thessalonica neither they, nor the brethren would be safe. Thus, the brethren immediately sent them away by night (Acts 17:10).

had greatly blessed him and that he needed God. So it was prayer that brought him closer to God. *“The Lord is near to all who call upon Him, To all who call upon Him in truth, He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; He also will hear their cry and save them”* (Psalm 145:18,19). In prayer David would give God praise for His righteous judgments, for His greatness and lovingkindness. He did this in public as well as in private. He wanted to let God know what was in his heart and how much he loved Him.

How is our love for prayer? Have we found it to be a source of peace “which surpasses all understanding”? To truly be a man after God’s own heart we must trust Him and depend upon prayer for our very preservation.

DAVID RATED EVERY FALSE WAY

Through the course of David’s life he faced many obstacles that would make most men give up. But as he continued striving to follow God he became more in tune with the mind of God. He progressed to the point he would say that he hated every false way (Psalm 119:104). *“Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way”*. Notice, he hated these false ways based upon his understanding of God’s precepts. Because of this hatred for false ways it affected his selection of activities and friends, *“I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me. A perverse heart shall depart from me, I will not know wickedness”* (Psalm 101:3,4).

What is our attitude toward false ways? Are we soft or compromising? We must be aggressive in opposing sin. We must love the souls of men to the point that we strive to seek and save the lost from sin. If we want to be a man after God’s own heart we will hate every false way.

MEEK MOSES

Edd Sterchi

Introduction

Moses stands as one of the great human figures of the Bible. Practically everyone knows well of his providential survival as an infant while the male Israelite children were being slaughtered by the Egyptians. Also notable and memorable is his Egyptian upbringing, his calling from the Lord through the burning bush, his leading the Hebrew people out of slavery via the Red Sea Crossing, his receiving the Ten Commandments from God, and his frustrations with the people while wandering in the wilderness and his mediation between them and God during the process. Without a doubt, Moses was a great leader, lawgiver, and prophet.

But through all of this, we need to remember that Moses was a man. He was a man who made mistakes, but also who trusted in God. He was a man who became discouraged, but also found strength in the Lord. He was a man who was weak from time to time, but is also referred to as “very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3 KJV).

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the Lord, And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy” (Luke 1:46-54). This devotion continued even after the birth of Jesus. “And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb. And when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord; (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;) And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons” (Luke 2:21-24). Notice that once Jesus was born Mary did not adopt the attitude, “I am the mother of the Messiah. I am above the law. God will make exceptions for me. I am special and deserve special privileges.” Even after the Christ was born she had Him circumcised after eight days, as the law of God required. She named Him Jesus, as God had specified. She took Him to the temple to sanctify Him to God, as the law demanded. Because Mary was devoted to serving God, even after she gave birth to the Son of God, she continued to serve the Lord faithfully. Is it any wonder the Bible proclaims that Jesus was also devoted in His service to the Father? This is why God chose Mary.

When God sent Gabriel to inform Mary of His decision she was told, “Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women” (Luke 1:28). Mary was greatly respected by God because she was pure in her living, humble in her attitude and devoted to serving Him. Because of this Mary was the mother chosen by the Father.

name was Joseph, of the house of David; and **the virgin's name was Mary**...Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing **I know not a man?**" (Luke 1:26-27, 34). Perhaps Mary was a young woman, but she was also a woman who had never entered into sexual relations with a man. Mary was not a "modern" woman, confident in her sexuality. Had she lived in the twenty-first century she would not have been on the beaches of spring break celebrating hedonism and debauchery. Were God to look for a mother for Jesus today He might have a difficult time finding a young woman who takes pride in her purity. A preacher preaching a sermon on immodest dress would never "step on her toes" because Mary would have covered her body properly. If God wanted His Son to be of the highest moral standard it was necessary that He choose a mother of the same caliber, so He chose Mary.

Mary Was Humble In Her Attitude

When Gabriel informed her that Jehovah had chosen her to bear His only begotten Son she did not reply, "Well it's about time. I knew that I had to be the chosen one." The fact that this was not her attitude was part of the reason why she was chosen. Mary did not think she deserved this honor; she was amazed that God would choose a lowly person like her. "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath regarded the **low estate** of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed" (Luke 1:47-48). Notice that she rejoiced, "in God my Savior," and not in herself. She considered herself to be of "low estate." She did not exalt herself; she exalted God, and because of this He exalted her, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:10). "And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:12). Mary was a woman of true humility, hiding behind the throne of God, and because of this He chose her.

Mary Was Devoted In Her Service To God

God did not choose Mary to win her heart and motivate her to serve Him. God chose Mary because He already had her heart and she was already devoted to serving Him. "And Mary said, My soul doth magnify

What is Meekness?

Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary defines meekness as "an attitude of humility toward God and gentleness toward men, springing from a recognition that God is in control." Contrary to modern terminology, weakness and meekness are not the same. Weakness is derived from a lack of strength, courage, or character. But meekness comes about due to one having his powers of strength under control. While some may use the phrase "meek as a mouse," or believe that meekness is like a cowering individual afraid to speak up, let us remember for the purposes of this study, that biblical meekness is quite the opposite of that concept. Meekness in the language of the Bible was used to describe an animal which had been trained by its master. Wild and unruly animals are worthless, but when trained they become meek, that is teachable and usable. Energy out of control is

dangerous, but energy under control is powerful. That is meekness—strength under control.

Background of Numbers 12

Let's now turn our attention to this passage that refers to Moses as the meekest of all men. It is found in Numbers chapter 12. Here Moses' brother and sister, Aaron and Miriam, challenge Moses as being God's principal spokesman during the wilderness journey. In verse 2 they say, "Has the Lord indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us also?" This challenge was regarded as a question of God's authority (vs. 6-8). God then struck Miriam with leprosy (v. 10). Aaron pleaded with Moses to speak to God on her behalf (vs. 11-12). Moses did so, and God healed her (vs. 13-15). Incidentally, it is believed by most scholars that Miriam was the principal offender here since her name was mentioned first in the text and also because she alone was severely punished by God.

How Moses Used His Meekness

From this passage, we can get an insight to the level of meekness portrayed by Moses. Note for example:

Meekness is knowing when to hold your tongue. When Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, he made no verbal retaliation or attack upon them. To control the tongue is very difficult to do (cf. James 3:1-12), but it can be done, and the meek train themselves to do so. It is not easy, but those who work at it will use their words for building up, not tearing down (cf. Ephesians 4:29; 5:4; Colossians 3:8).

Meekness is practicing faith in God. God Himself admitted of Moses, “He is faithful in all my house” (Numbers 12:7). We are all endowed with free moral will from our Creator. We need to choose to use our human powers to submit to the will of the Father in heaven. Moses, when given a choice between the passing pleasure of sin and doing the Lord’s will, chose the latter and was honored as a man of faith for doing so (Hebrews 11:24-26). When he broke the tablets of stone upon seeing the people’s idolatry, Moses demonstrated his strength of faith in standing for the truth (Exodus 32). Meekness will always choose the eternal over the temporal (1 Timothy 6:10-11).

Meekness is utilizing others for help. When the time came, Moses did pray to God for his sister to be healed (Numbers 12:13). Moses knew Who to go to for help. Moses was meek because He submitted to God’s control.

I’m reminded of a father watching his son attempt to move a large rock. After several futile efforts, the father asked, “Have you used all of your resources?” The boy thought a while then tried to make a lever out of a piece of lumber and a smaller rock to pry the large rock away. But it didn’t work. “Have you used all of your resources?” the father again asked. The boy again thought and then tried tying a rope around the stone and pulling on it, but again to no avail. “Have you used all of your resources?” the father questioned a third time. “Yes,” the boy disgustingly answered. “No you haven’t,” the father replied, “you’ve yet to ask me to help.” A part of the son’s potential strength in moving the rock was available through his father.

who would. After all, to a great extent this person will be the single most influential person in your child’s life. His future, what he will become, believe and do will be determined by how he is raised. As serious as that decision would be, what if your decision not only impacted the life of your child, but the lives of all people everywhere? If you can begin to comprehend the magnitude of such a decision you can begin to understand the daunting task God was facing.

The time had come for God to send forth His Son, born of a woman (Gal. 4:4), but before He could send His Son, He had to choose a woman to be His mother. This woman would be the primary caregiver and biggest influence in His life. His mission was to save the lost (Luke 19:10) and if He failed it meant certain doom for all of mankind. The Father had to choose a woman who would ensure the child would be brought, “up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4). He did not choose a mother based on her physical beauty, outward appearance, financial prosperity or social standing, “for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (1 Sam. 16:7). Had these things been the criteria for His decision, Mary would never have been chosen. She was poor, seemingly introverted, and unknown to the social elite. She would not be able to provide the Son of God with a first rate secular education or opportunities to climb to the heights of worldly fame. So why did God choose her? What was it about this woman that made God say, “This is the woman I want to be the mother of my Son?”

Mary Was Pure In Her Living

The prophecy concerning the birth of Christ stated that He would be born of a virgin. “Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel” (Isa. 7:14). In order for Mary to even qualify as a candidate for the mother of Jesus she had to be a woman of purity. Some have wrongly speculated that since the Hebrew word for virgin can mean, “a young woman,” it has no bearing on her chastity. However, the Lord makes it clear as to the purity of Mary. “And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose

can throw him. He is sure that man will choose the evil rather than the good. He believes that man will not follow God unless there is some benefit to be gained from it. That is why Satan approaches man with the promise of immediate reward. Is God worthy to be worshipped, in spite of the blessings that come from following Him? Is Satan right that we only follow the Lord because of the promise of reward? Job was going to remain faithful, even if God took back all those things He had given to Job. I believe Job vindicates God, showing that there are those who will follow God simply because He is God.

How many of us would have turned our backs upon God given a similar situation? How many times do people give up on God when they suffer far less than what Job endured? If Satan were to come before God today, would God readily recommend us to be tested, knowing our faithfulness and loyalty to Him? Would God be able to speak as highly about us as He did of Job? We must determine to remain steadfast in spite of the circumstances of life that may befall us. We must not allow the tragedies of life to keep us from singing in the dungeon (Acts 16:25). We must commit ourselves to following in the footsteps of the Lord, wherever they may take us. If we will remain faithful to God, and exercise patience in enduring the trials of life, we will hear the greatest compliment of all at the last day—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord" (Matthew 25:21).

Mary: The Highly Favored Woman (Luke 1:28)

Brandon Britton

Imagine you had to relinquish custody of your child. What if you could no longer be the parent of that child, but you were allowed to choose who would raise him? Would you make the choice flippantly or would you carefully make your selection? What type of person would you choose to be the primary influence, teacher and caregiver in your child's life? Would you select parents who were prone to violence and abuse? Would you select people who were liars or drunks? Would thieves or people with loose morals be your first choice? If you could not raise your child yourself you would be careful in selecting those

Moses knew that God's strength and power was just a prayer away. I wonder how many of us have forgotten that as we struggle to get things done ourselves. Moses knew that God's strength came through obeying His words. How many of us are weak in faith because we are weak in the knowledge and obedience of God's word (cf. Hosea 4:6)? True meekness is always God-centered (cf. 2 Cor. 10:1; 1 Pet. 3:3-4).

Our Meekness

We need to realize that to attain the level of meekness that Moses exemplified will not be easy. From the lesson text, we can clearly see that meekness is strength under control. Our meekness involves us controlling our time, our words, and our actions as guided by the Word of God. To do this properly, we need, coupled with a working knowledge of the Bible (cf. James 1:21), to keep constant vigil on our thoughts, utterances, and demeanor. Meekness is humility. It is being "teachable" (cf. Psalm 25:9) and, as a result, being "usable" (cf. Eph. 4:1-3). It is submitting to the complete control and guidance of God.

The meekness of Moses was perfected in Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:29), and was imitated by Paul (1 Corinthians 11:1). We too, are expected to follow the example of Christ and live our lives upon the earth following God's will in meekness.

"For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people: he will beautify the meek with salvation" (Psa. 149:4 KJV)

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MY SERVANT JOB

Patrick Morrison

The story of Job is one of the most remarkable accounts of patience and fidelity in all of Scripture. Job was tested like few have ever been tested, yet he retained his integrity and his faith in God. What a great example for us to emulate today! Ezekiel reminds us of Job's righteousness (Ezekiel 14:14,20), and James reminds us of His great

patience (James 5:11). These passages of Scripture are compliments paid to Job by God, for those who wrote the Bible did so by the power, and under the direction of Almighty God. In the book of Job, we find more compliments paid to this great man of God. It would be good for us to refresh our memories regarding the story of Job, and to see why God would compliment Job so highly.

The story of Job reflects the great ongoing struggle of Satan against God, and the place man assumes in this struggle. Man can either choose to be a pawn in Satan's army, seeking to destroy that which is good and right, or he can stand with God, and keep the forces and ways of evil in check. Satan comes before God after a period of going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it (Job 1:7), no doubt seeking after souls that he may devour them (I Peter 5:8). Knowing that Satan was on this mission, God poses a question to 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)? Without reservation, God pits Job against all the cunning and all the devices Satan can muster. God is fully confident that Job will remain faithful and loyal to truth and right. As a matter of fact, God tells Satan that there is no one on earth quite like Job. That is not to say that there were no others who were faithful to the Lord at this time, but there was none greater than Job. God further describes Job as perfect **and** upright, emphasizing the godly character of Job twice over. As if that were not enough, Jehovah knows Job to be a man who despises evil, and will do everything within his power to avoid it and overcome it. What an incredible compliment paid to Job!

Satan accepts the challenge of testing Job's faith. He accuses Job of serving God only because God blesses him (vv. 9-11). In reality, Satan is telling God that He is not worthy of worship, that He must bribe men and women to follow Him and honor Him. God allows Satan to touch all that Job has, with the exception of Job himself Satan destroys all of Job's earthly possessions, including all ten of his children. The only thing spared in each instance of destruction is one servant, who then runs and relays the bad news to Job. As soon as one servant finishes his account of the evil that has befallen, another rushes in right behind him to bring even more bad news. Despite Satan's attempts to destroy Job's faith, Job refused to give up on God (vv.21,22).

Having failed in his first attempt, Satan then goes back before God. He has once again been busy searching for souls to destroy (2:2). Without a second thought, God again places Job before Satan. As great as the compliment was the first time, how much greater is it now that Job has experienced the loss of all his possessions, yet is still faithful? God repeats much of what He has already spoken about Job, but includes these words this time, "And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause" (vs.3). How hard it must have been for God to sit back and watch Satan inflict great anguish upon Job! Yet God allowed it, because He knew the character of Job. Satan brings a new accusation against Job. He is sure that if God would allow him to touch Job physically, then Job would curse God. God acquiesces and allows Satan to touch Job physically, just not to the point of killing him (vs.6). Satan inflicts Job with boils from the crown of his head to the bottom of his feet (vs.7). Not only was Job hurting mentally and emotionally, but now Satan had seen to it that he would suffer physically. His situation is so grim that his wife tells him to curse God and die (vs.9). At a time when Job needs godly advice perhaps more than he ever needed it, his wife advises him to do exactly what Satan desires that he do—give up on God. In spite of all that befalls him, Job maintains his faith in God. Although he does not understand all that is happening or why it is happening, he never gives up. He reasoned that if God could give him all that he enjoyed in life, then surely God could take it away. Although it was not God who was taking away his blessings and his health, Job's attitude is remarkable. Throughout the book, Job wonders why this has happened to him. At times he questions his faithfulness—perhaps it is for some evil that he has done that he is being punished. At other times he wants to know why God would allow this to happen. Despite the questions and accusations, Job never sinned with his lips (1:22; 2:10). In the end, God rewards Job's patience and fidelity by blessing him with twice as much as he had before (42:10).

One of the greatest lessons I gather from this interchange between Satan and God is the trust that God shows toward man, and the lack of trust that Satan has toward man. God trusted Job to do what was right, and He was not afraid for Job to be tested. God trusts us to do what is right. That is why He allows us the opportunity to choose to follow Him. On the other hand, Satan does not trust man as far as he