

The Old Paths

Volume 21, Issue 47

January 18, 2015

“Christ Shall Be Magnified In My Body”

Jarrod Jacobs

In Philippians 1:20, the apostle Paul expressed his desire for Christ to be “*magnified*” in his body. To be “*magnified*” is to “hold up, honor, exalt, to make great”. Albert Barnes says that the word “*magnify*” carries with it the idea that Christ will be held up to the view of man as the true and only Savior (Barnes’ Notes). In the context of Philippians 1:20, we see this was Paul’s desire whether living or dead. Adam Clarke said, “Whether life or death, was to him perfectly equal, and perfectly indifferent, providing Christ were magnified - his person, nature, doctrine, etc., shown to be, what they really are, most noble, most excellent, most necessary, and most glorious” (Commentary On The Whole Bible).

This is not the only time Paul declared his intent to “*magnify*” and even glorify God. At the time of this writing, remember that Paul was sitting in a Roman prison! Whether in prison, or set free, whether in life or death, Paul wanted Christ to be “*magnified*” in his body!

The question before us is, “How could he ‘*magnify*’ God while in prison? Consider again the definition of the word “*magnify*” (“hold up, honor, exalt, make great”). He had the ability to “*magnify*” Christ in his body through teaching those

NOT in prison, and encouraging their faithfulness. He had the ability to “*magnify*” God through his letters to the Christians and through the teaching he did when folks personally visited him (Acts 28:23-24, 30-31; II Tim. 4:9-13).

Further, he could pray for the brethren. For example, in the books of II Corinthians 13:7; Colossians 1:9; Ephesians 1:16, 3:14; Philippians 1:4, 9, 19; and I Thessalonians 5:23, Paul expressed his love for the brethren and his prayers on their behalf. How easy it would have been to adopt a “woe is me” attitude, and feeling sorry for himself. How easy it would have been to be bitter, or to turn against God and the brethren who loved him. Especially would this have been easy considering that Paul knew some were preaching out of contention toward him, and thought they could add affliction to his bonds in their preaching (Phil. 1:14-17). Instead, he took the attitude that regardless of what others did or did not do, he would “*magnify*” God so long as he lived!

Friends, may we learn a lesson from the apostle Paul. We cannot control what others do to us. We cannot control what others think or say about us. We can only control ourselves and control our attitudes! Brethren, have we determined to “*magnify*” God in our bodies? Are we determined to honor, exalt, lift up, and make great the God of Heaven while we are on this earth?

If not, why not? God has created us (Gen. 1-2). God sustains us (Acts 17:24-28). God made salvation possible for us, and Christ died on the cross while we were still in our sin (Rom. 5:8; Jn. 3:16)! God’s love abounds to this day! Are we then going to ignore this? Will we act in a selfish manner? Are we guilty of conducting ourselves in such a way that makes men want to honor, exalt, and hold us up instead of God? I pray we never do such. To do this is the recipe for disaster! Read what happened to the Gentiles when they did not glorify God as God and were not thankful (Rom. 1:18-32). Furthermore, consider the fact that God has the ability to bring men low when they exalt themselves (Matt. 23:12; Jas. 4:10; I Pet. 5:6).

Brethren, let us have the attitude of Paul and “*magnify*” God in our bodies. Honor and exalt God all the days of our lives, and honor Him even in our deaths! This is something we can do regardless of our age! This is something we can do regardless of how we are treated by others. In fact, when we are treated the worst is the time folks need to see Christ in us the most (Gal. 2:20)!

We “*magnify*” God in our bodies when we remember that He comes first (Matt. 22:37, 6:33) and then reflect this in our lives. We “*magnify*” God when we use our tongues to praise Him (Jas. 3; Heb. 13:15) and His “*wonderful works*” (Ps. 40:5, 78:4). We “*magnify*” God when we show ourselves to be righteous examples toward others and allow our lights to “*shine before men*” (Matt. 5:16). This is not always an easy task, but it is a daily task (Lk. 9:23) and we need to be about it! Our bodies belong to the Lord (I Cor. 6:20), therefore, let us “*magnify*” God in them!

Making The Right Decisions

Aric Russell

Romans 12:1-2 says, *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”* The world we live in has a great deal of influence on our lives. Some influence is good, but often times the influence we encounter is wicked. That is why we are challenged to not conform to this world. We have been given examples throughout the Bible of those who were affected by both positive and negative influences. These examples we have been given are for our benefit. One individual we can learn from is Lot, the nephew of Abraham.

Lot was a righteous man (II Pet. 2:7-8). He also had the benefit of being able to learn from the influence of Abraham (Gen. 12:4-5). However, Lot still made a horrible decision. Due to the conflict of Lot’s herdsman and Abraham’s herdsman in Genesis 13:7-13, we find that Abraham told Lot to separate from him. Given his choice, we find that Lot chose to go to the east which was the plain of Jordan.

This decision Lot made does not seem like a bad decision on the surface. After all, Lot chose the land that was well-watered. However, notice where this land was located. The plain of Jordan was near the city of Sodom. This is important because we are told in Genesis 13:13 that the land of Sodom was exceedingly wicked

and sinful against the Lord.

Lot’s decision to choose the land near Sodom turned out to be a bad decision. By being near Sodom we find that Lot allowed the influence of this wicked and sinful city to affect his life. Psalm 1:1 says, *“Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.”* Lot’s decision to choose the land near Sodom paralleled the pattern we find in Psalm 1:1. Notice the verbs of this verse. They indicate a pattern of increasing involvement. One goes from simply walking within distance of the ungodly, to standing in the way with sinners, to sitting down and joining the scornful. This is exactly what Lot did. He started by choosing the land near Sodom and it led to Lot being found *“sitting in the gate”* in Sodom (Gen. 19:1). *“Sitting in the gate”* implies that Lot had joined himself to the people of Sodom. He was a citizen of this wicked and sinful city.

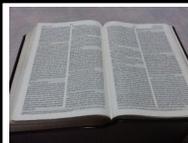
Not only did Sodom have an influence on Lot, but the city also had an influence of Lot’s family. In Genesis 19:12-14, when Lot approached his sons-in-law to tell them that the Lord was going to destroy the city, we find that they thought Lot was joking. In verses 24-26 of this same chapter we see that Lot’s wife turned to look upon the city after she was instructed

not to. In doing so, she was turned into a pillar of salt. Lot’s daughters were also affected by the influence of the city. Their morals were ruined. In Genesis 19:30-38 we read that both of the daughters committed incest with their father. Lot moved to Sodom because it appeared better. It was a business decision. However, in the end, Lot lost everything he had by going to Sodom.

There are many things we can learn from the example of Lot. We can learn that we must set the right priorities. If we have the right priorities, then correct decisions will take care of themselves (Matt. 6:33). We can learn that exposure to wickedness leads to tolerance and involvement (Ps. 1:1). We also learn that we will reap what we sow. All of the decisions we make will have an impact on our lives (Gal. 6:7). Finally, we learn to be on guard against the lust of the eyes. In I John 2:15-17 we are warned that the lust of the eyes is of the world and not of the Father. Notice as well what is said of the things that are of this world. They are passing away. Our desire should be that of heaven.

What kind of decisions are you making today? Are you making decisions that lead you to Christ, or are you making decisions that are influenced by the world we live in? May we all learn from Lot and make decisions that bring us closer to our Lord and Savior.

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