



Nobility

**“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica,
in that they received the word with all readiness of mind,
and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”
— Acts 17:11**

Pride and Contention Go Hand in Hand

Proverbs 13:10 states, “Only by pride cometh contention...” Adam Clark in his commentary summed up this passage in this way; “Perhaps there is not a quarrel among individuals in private life, nor a war among nations, that does not proceed from pride and ambition. Neither man nor nation will be content to be less than another; and to acquire the wished-for superiority all is thrown into general confusion, both in public and private life.” It is pride that will cause men to be haughty and self-centered. In Proverbs 6:17-19, there is a list of seven things which the Lord hates. His hating pride should be of no surprise because this disposition of men’s hearts is associated with violence, fatness, corruption, oppression, and a haughty spirit. Each of these characteristics reveals the heart and are foreign to godliness (Psalm 73:6-8).

The words pride and proud are found in both the Old and New Testaments. Pride is found in forty-six verses, and proud in forty-seven. This number does not include other words which carry the same meaning. The word pride means “empty, braggart talk or display; swagger; and thence an insolent and vain assurance in one’s own resources, or in the stability of earthly things, which issues in a contempt of divine laws. The *vainglory of life* is the vainglory which belongs to the present life” (Vincent Word Studies). The prideful man craves the grandeur and pomp of a vain-glorious life; this includes thirst after honor and applause. It is the feeling of a person being full of self with no regard or need for another. Someone has said that pride hides a man’s faults and magnifies them to everyone else. As we have already stated, pride is something which God hates (Proverbs 6:16-19), and those who possess such is resisted (opposed) of God (1 Peter 5:5).

Why is God so much opposed to pride? Why is it so bad in His sight? Pride is the disposition of mind which leads men to reject the will and way of God. The prideful will not seek after God, and God is not in his thoughts at all. We will list just a few of the things which pride will cause a person to do when it becomes our set of mind and way of living.

Pride causes us to forget who we are and what we are to be. We are to be servants and not ones who seek to be served. The Lord’s lesson in Luke 17:7-10 is that some men demand to be served and do not even give thanks. When we serve the Lord, we are simply doing our duty. “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do” (Luke 17: 10; Ecclesiastes 12:13). Yet man’s pride will keep him from being a servant. In Philippians 2:1-8, Paul gives an example of servitude. We are to have the mind of Christ and be content with being a servant of the Lord.

Pride will cause men to overlook their own sins. This principle is taught in Matthew 7:1-5 when we overlook our faults and magnify the error of others. One man said; “On one side, self-love blinds us to ourselves; and, on the other, envy and malice give us piercing eyes

in respect of others. When we shall have as much zeal to correct ourselves as we have inclination to reprove and correct others, we shall know our own defects better than we know those of our neighbor.” Pride will cause us to stay in our sinful condition because there is no humility which causes one to see his own state of affairs. Humility is the opposite of pride. Godly people will be clothed in humility, thus avoiding the sin of pride (1 Peter 5:5).

Pride will cause men to avoid repenting from their sins. To keep oneself in the right condition with God, he must be willing to admit sins and turn from them. The prideful person will seek to justify what he does. He will turn every way seeking solace of self. God’s word tells us we must take a clear and hard look at ourselves through the eyes of truth and make whatever changes are necessary. James encourages us to look honestly at our lives and not be ruled by pride (James 1:19-26). The proud will see the image and convince himself that the reflection of his self is not so bad and will go away and forget what he really is. The humble will be exalted and will inherit the earth (1 Peter 5:6; Matthew 5:5). Why? Because they will see themselves through the eyes of truth and will make the changes necessary to please God. (John 8:32; 1 John 1:5-10)

We need to examine ourselves from time to time so as to know where we are and what we are (2 Corinthians 13:5). When we humble ourselves before God, it is an impossibility to be prideful and haughty. When we truly realize the power and majesty of God, pride will have no place in our hearts (Psalm 139:14). Every man should recognize it is God who will preside at the final judgment scene. At that time every prideful spirit will realize the worth of his ego. “I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jeremiah 10:23). God promised to lift up those who will humble themselves before Him (Matthew 23:12).

The outcome of pride is failure and being in contention with God will bring a dreadful end. Therefore let us ever seek to be the humble servants of God (James 4:6, 10; 1 Peter 5:5-6; Philippians 2:1-8). Humility is the key to a successful life (Proverbs 22:4).

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Judgment Day Is Coming!

Will there be a Judgment Day? It is a fact that one day the God of Heaven will judge the world. A cursory reading of the Old or New Testament will reveal this fact. The apostle Paul said, *“because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained”* (Acts 17:31). The *“Man”* spoken of in this verse is *“the Man Christ Jesus”* (1 Timothy 2:5). The Psalmist wrote concerning the day of judgment, *“For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with His Truth”* (Psalm 96:13). The *“Truth”* spoken of in this verse is the word of Christ Jesus, the New Testament. Jesus said, *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him – the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”* (John 12:48). The *“last day”* spoken of in this verse is the Judgment Day.

Who will be judged on the Judgment Day? The apostle Paul gives us the answer in 2 Corinthians 5:10 where he wrote, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* Everyone, from Adam to the last man born on the earth, will appear before the judgment seat of Christ on the Judgment Day. At this time, each soul will receive according to what he has done in his life. All of the thoughts he has thought, all of the words he has spoken, and all the actions he has taken will be questioned, searched, examined, and narrowly sifted before the Lord. The atheist, the unbeliever, the materialist, the good and moral who never obeyed the Gospel of Christ, the religiously sincere but wrong, and the lukewarm and indifferent Christian, and all other sinners will

hear the words of our Lord, *“I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness”* (Matthew 7:23). However, the righteous will hear our Lord say, *“Well done, good and faithful servant....Enter into the joy of your Lord”* (Matthew 25:23).

What will be the results of the Judgment Day? Those of the world who have done *“good,”* that is, the things which Jehovah God has required, will have life eternal in heaven with God and the righteous of the earth. Those of the world who have done *“bad,”* that is, have not obeyed Jehovah God and have lived a life of sin contrary to His revealed word will go into eternal punishment (cf. Matthew 25:31-46).

Yes, Judgment Day is coming in which all will be judged. If the Judgment Day came right now, where would you be in eternity? Have you obeyed the Gospel of Christ (Hebrews 5:9)? Do you believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (John 8:24)? Are you not willing to turn from the things that have separated you from your God and turn back to Him in repentance (Acts 17:30)? Are you not willing to confess publicly what you believe in your heart (Romans 10:10)? Are you not willing to be baptized and have your sins washed away and be added to the body of Christ, the church (Acts 2:47; 22:16)? If you have answered ‘No’ to any of these questions, please contact us and let us know how we may help you prepare for the Judgment Day.

“Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect” (Matthew 24:44).

Jimmie B. Hill, Duluth, GA

TWO TIMES SIX IS TWO

Acts 2 is the record of the establishment of the church that Jesus promised to build in Matthew 16:18,19. The establishment of this church/kingdom was prophesied often in the Old Testament. Six of those prophecies are in the second chapters of various Old Testament books. Thus, the title of this lesson is saying that we are looking briefly at six prophecies that are fulfilled in Acts 2.

Psalm 2: This prophecy is about the Messiah (God’s anointed King). That person is Jesus. In Acts 4:25-28, Peter taught that this prophecy is truly about Jesus. In this prophecy, God said that He had set his king on His holy hill of Zion (Psalm 2:7). Zion is another way of referring to Jerusalem, and **Acts 2:36** confirms that Psalm 2 was fulfilled.

Daniel 2: This prophecy was given through the Babylonian King, Nebuchadnezzar. It was about four earthly kingdoms (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome) and one heavenly kingdom that God would set up in the days of the Roman Empire (Daniel 2:44,45). Acts 1:9-11 and Daniel 7:13,14 confirm that when Jesus ascended to the Father, He went to receive a kingdom. The fact that Jesus is sitting on a throne in **Acts 2:30** proves that Daniel 2 is fulfilled.

Isaiah 2: Among other things, this prophecy teaches that the establishment of this “house” (kingdom/church) would be in Jerusalem. In Acts 1, Jesus told the apostles to go to Jerusalem and stay there until His predictions came true. They obeyed Him, and in **Acts 2:1-47**, we learn that the kingdom that had been at hand (nearby; Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 9:1) was indeed established in Jerusalem.

Hosea 2: In Hosea, the prophet uses names to describe the changing status of his children and God’s people. “Loamni” becomes “Ammi” (“not my people” becomes “my people”). Also “Loruhamah” becomes “Ruhamah” (“not having obtained mercy” becomes “having obtained mercy”). In 1 Peter 2, the apostle uses this same play on words to illustrate the difference between being the people of God today. This change is due to the mercy of God through the gospel (1 Peter 1:13-25). The first example of this is in **Acts 2:37-41**, where about 3000 people were immersed for the remission of sins. Thus, that was the first fulfillment of Hosea 2.

Haggai 2: At the end of this brief prophecy, Haggai used words that are quoted in Hebrews 12, where they are applied to a kingdom that was in existence when Hebrews 12 was written. As a matter of fact, the author and recipients of Hebrews were in the kingdom! It was based on a new covenant (Hebrews 8:8-13). That covenant, law, word, and path was first preached in **Acts 2:22-36**, so Haggai 2 was fulfilled on Pentecost.

Joel 2: Acts 2:16-21 records a quotation from Joel 2:28-32 in which the prophet predicted the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was to occur at the same time and place that the kingdom came, the power came, and the power of the Holy Spirit came (see Mark 9:1; Matthew 16:28; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4-8). This occurred in **Acts 2:1-4**. Therefore Joel 2, Psalm 2, Daniel 2, Isaiah 2, Hosea 2, and Haggai 2 were fulfilled on the same day!

Are you a member of the church/kingdom that the prophets saw?

Skip Andrews, Duluth, GA

Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

Throughout time, man has been puzzled about this reality of life. The concept of punishment for crimes is not difficult to accept, because we see it as justice. But suffering as the result of another's actions or for no obvious reason tests our faith in a loving God. God has granted to all people freedom of choice between righteousness or sin. As a deterrent, he has also promised heaven to the righteous and eternal hell to the sinful (Hebrews 10:26-27). If God were to always intervene when someone chooses sin, it would violate this principle of free choice.

Job's story helps us put things in perspective. His livestock was taken and servants killed, some by evil doers (Job 1:14-15, 17), others in some sort of natural calamity, perhaps a volcanic eruption (Job 1:16). His children died when a mighty wind destroyed the house they were in (Job 1:18-19). Later, he endured terrible physical pain as his body was covered with sores from head to foot (Job 2:7-8). Friends Eliphaz and Bildad were convinced that Job and his children were being punished for some evil of their own (Job 4:7; 8:6). But the rare heavenly perspective we are given shows clearly that this was not the case. In fact, God stated to Satan (Job 1:8) that Job was "perfect" and "upright", that he feared God and hated evil (Job 1:8), and that the action against him was "without cause" (Job 2:3). The only explanation given is that Job was being tested (Job 1:8-12; 2:4-6). And his test reached even beyond these losses as his friends accused him and his own wife (Job 2:9) tried to influence him to sin. But Job refused to curse God, although he did express his lack of understanding. In the end, after Job repented from complaining (Job 42:3, 6) and had prayed for his friends (Job 42:8), God blessed and comforted Job in ways that surely surpassed all his dreams (Job 42:10-17). God did not forget to reward his faithful servant. James reminds us of Job and others prophets who suffered, and said we "have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." (James 5:11)

Just as God gives some good blessings to both the good and the bad (Matthew 5:54), he clearly allows both the good and bad people to suffer. Job said "shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" (Job 2:10). However, God will not permit any person to suffer beyond his or her own ability to overcome (1 Corinthians 10:13). A great trial therefore reveals God's confidence in one's ability!

Every godly person will suffer (1 Peter 4:1-2, 12-19; 2 Timothy 3:12). Many of us will suffer from accidents or from the cruel actions of others. Then we will turn either toward or away from God. This is the test of faith. Do we blame God for evil experiences? (James 1:13) Or do we turn to him for help? (James 1:17; Hebrews 2:18) Do we become bitter toward God like Job's wife? (Job 2:9) Or do we try harder to enter heaven where there will be no more pain, no more tears? (Hebrews 11:13-16, 35-40; Revelation 21:4) Will we pass or fail these tests? God is willing to provide all that we need; give us a better home; and comfort us in this life. Do we believe him? Will your tests of faith draw you closer to God? Or will you wrongfully blame God and reject the only real hope for deliverance?

Randy Watson, Riga, Latvia

Men Are Men and Women Are Women

God created man and then created woman to be his "help meet," which means "a help suitable for." "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). He then brought the woman unto the man (Genesis 2:22). When God created woman, he not only created a help suitable for man, but also suitable for the family unit. This family unit was created so that children, the next generation, could most effectively be raised to adulthood in such a way that they can take their place as young adults.

Men and women were created to be different! Men are much more, on the average, aggressive than women because God intended for them to save the family from harm. Women are more, on the average, gentle, emotional, and less aggressive than men because God intended for them to be the glue that holds the family together. The most pitiful thing on earth is a feminine man or a masculine woman! Either is out of place and is not what God created them to be!

When men and women or husbands and wives reverse their responsibilities, they confuse the next generation. This is one reason for the homosexual problem in America today, which according to the Bible is sinful. "For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet" (Romans 1:26-27).

This is not the only problem that arises in the next generation because men and women do not function together as God intended for them to function. Men direct their aggressiveness toward their wives and beat the very ones they profess to love the most. Because men do not make a commitment toward their own children, many mothers and their children are one parent families that live in deep poverty. Because of a lack of commitment from both partners, divorce is out of control in our country.

Children have reached adulthood without being equipped for the responsibilities of adulthood. When this happens, it is hard to find one's way back to the path that God laid out for the family! This is one of the biggest problems in America today!

What is the answer? Husbands need to be men, and wives need to be women! Both husbands and wives need to follow the plan that God has mapped out for them in His Bible. Husbands need to take the lead in the family and love their wives (Ephesians 5:25). Wives need to submit unto their husbands. (Ephesians 5:22). If husbands truly love their wives, and wives truly respect their husbands, they make a wonderful team for raising children. "Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:33). If all husbands and wives in America would pattern their marriages after God's instructions, many of our country's problems would be solved.

Jerry Dickison, Newton Kansas

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**“I’ve notice the Bible has two sections:
the Old Testament and New Testament.
What are these, and what do they mean?”**

There are three periods of Bible history: the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the New Testament ages. The patriarchal and Mosaic ages are recorded in the Old Testament while the New

Testament age is recorded in the New Testament as the name suggests. Though the Patriarchal age is recorded in the Old Testament, it is simply an inspired written account of historical events during this time period. Like all of the Old Testament, it was written to the nation of Israel. Basically, it lasted from the creation until the receiving of the Law of Moses on Mount Sinai. The Mosaic age began at the giving of the Mosaic code and ended with the death of Jesus. Thus, the Old Testament records two periods of Bible history but was written to those living under the Mosaic law.

The Old Testament was a covenant made with the children of Israel. Throughout the Patriarchal age, God prophesied of a covenant that He would make with the descendants of Abraham. He told him He would make of him a great nation (Genesis 12:1-3). This is what is often referred to as the Nation-Land promise. Later, this promise was renewed to Isaac, Abraham’s son through Sarah (Genesis 26:1-4), and to Jacob (Genesis 28:3-14) who was given the name Israel. Thus, the Patriarchal age is the history of events that lead to the establishment of the nation of Israel.

The Old Testament was written to descendants of Israel and was never intended for all men to follow. The first five books of the Old Testament are often referred to as the Law because it was God’s law given through Moses to the children of Israel (Exodus 19:3-6). Its purpose was to govern them as a theocratic nation.

However, within the pages of the Old Testament, a new and better way was prophesied and promised which was the New Testament age. Thus the Old Testament was the schoolmaster that leads to Christ (Galatians 3:24). Because it leads men to Christ, it revealed Him and His kingdom through prophecy. Many of the identifying marks of Christ such as His virgin birth, birthplace, home,

forerunner, and death are revealed in the Old Testament. These identifying marks clearly identified Him when He came into this world. In addition, many identifying characteristics of His kingdom are also found within the pages of the Old Testament such as the city in which the Messianic kingdom would be established, a basic time frame (i.e. during the days of the Roman Empire), and the nature of His kingdom such as its peaceable quality.

Unlike the Old Testament, the New Testament was written for all men to follow. After His death, Jesus told His disciples to go “into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). After being God’s chosen nation for so many years, this was hard to understand for many of the descendants of Abraham. After a vision, Peter went to the gentile Cornelius and said, “Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34-35).

Just as the Old Testament was God’s law to Israel given through Moses, the New Testament is God’s law for all men given through His Son Jesus Christ. Thus, Jesus is the mediator of the New Testament (Hebrews 9:15; 12:24) which came into force after His death (Hebrews 9:16-17) and took the old law out of effect (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14). Therefore, to return to the Law of Moses is to make Christ’s sacrifice of no value. If a person can have forgiveness of sins without the death of Christ, then Christ suffered for no reason. Paul said, “Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:4).

What does all this mean? It means we live under the New Testaments and must obey its precepts and promises. Though the Old Testament still serves a purpose (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11), yet the New Testament is of force because the Testator, Jesus Christ, died and established a new law — the law of Christ.

Are you living according to the law of Him who died for you? If we can help you in your obedience, please let us know.

Chuck Northrop, Conway, AR