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What is His Name? Jehovah-tsabaoth "The Lord of Hosts"

Joel Portman

"And this man went up out of his city yearly to worship and to sacrifice unto the LORD of hosts in Shiloh . . . And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of His life, and there shall no razor come upon his head." (1 Samuel 1:3, 11).

The Timing

Reading Israel's history in the days of the Judges causes us to realize that their spiritual state and military might had diminished, and continued to do so to the point that they were often dominated by their surrounding foes. That state continued until the time of David's reign. It is markedly the case that, when God's people degenerate spiritually and introduce into their lives objects of worship and attention apart from the true God, there will be a corresponding decline economically and politically. This is true in a national sense as well. This is borne out repeatedly in the history of Israel, a history that is intended to be an example and a warning to us in our day.

In such a state, we encounter the first mention of this title of Jehovah; He is "the LORD of Hosts" and it is in the environment of severe and extreme declension in the house of God among the sons of Eli (1 Sam. 1:3, 2:12-17, 22-25, 3:13). Yet in that environment, we encounter a faithful, believing Israelite in Elkanah who had a spiritual wife, Hannah, who was deeply exercised about her personal condition and the need for a man-child to be raised of God

who would be instrumental to address these sins and lead the people back to the Lord. In her personal inability and weakness, it appears that she realized that she must turn to the One who is the leader of all hosts, over all in supreme majesty and control, and who alone had the capability to correct this degeneracy and meet that need.

The Title

This interesting title of Jehovah is not found in any book prior to this one. But it is found many times in the prophets: in Isaiah 54x, Jeremiah 71x, Haggai 14x, Zechariah 57x, and Malachi 24x. However, it is anticipated in earlier books, such as in Genesis 32:1-2, when Jacob, returning in his weakness to meet Esau once again, encountered the angels of God and said, "This is God's host." He recognized those angelic beings. They had been sent by God to escort and protect him in this very hazardous part of his journey, and they should have instilled complete confidence in his heart. Again in Joshua 5:13-15, we learn that Joshua, anticipating the battle at Jericho, encountered the man with his sword drawn in his hand and learned that he was "captain of the host of the LORD" who would lead Israel to victory over their foes in the land. So we learn that this title indicates the control of the LORD over all the hosts of heaven who are at His disposal and can be sent for the aid of His people.

The expression "hosts of heaven" also applies to the stellar creation (Deut. 4:19, Acts 7:42 and many other references, most of which warn God's people not to

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worship those visible aspects of God's creation, but rather the One who is in control and Who has made them). Thus we learn that all elements of the heavenly creation as well as angelic powers are part of His hosts. We see a suggestion of that heavenly host of angels in 1 Kings 22:19, where the scene of consultation regarding the destruction of Ahab was conducted in a heavenly court that involved the host of heaven surrounding the LORD's throne.

This expression also applies to the Lord's people marching out of Egypt (Exo. 12:41) moving under His command and in order in a triumphant exodus from that land of bondage. That occurrence recollects the Lord's declaration in Exo. 7:4, where He says that He would ". . . bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out off the land of Egypt by great judgments" (also Exo. 6:26). Some have objected to a definition involving "armies," but this word means more than a mass, or great number. It definitely speaks of all that which is under His command and moving together to accomplish His will.

The thought of all being under the supreme command of Jehovah (who is our blessed Lord), and moving for the deliverance and victory of His people over Jehovah's enemies causes worship and praise to rise in the hearts of His people as they rejoice in the unlimited power of God to work according to His will. He will show Himself strong on behalf of those who fear Him (2 Chron. 16:9), something that Asa didn't learn but which Jehoshaphat did (2 Chron. 20:3, 6).

The Teaching

Elkanah and Hannah evidently recognized that the only resource for the Lord's people was in "the LORD of hosts." Man had failed, whether judges or priests, yet the Lord was still on the throne and in command, with all power to work on their behalf. So they faithfully returned each year to worship and for Hannah to present her pathetic petition to the Lord, who alone could answer and provide. There was a desperate need for a "man child" who would function as a Nazarite for God and for the restoration of the Lord's people, and thus she cried unto the Lord. "The point not to be overlooked, however, is the fact that Elkanah was conscious that if there was to be deliverance for his people, Jehovah-Sabaoth must bring it to pass, the Lord of the invisible and invincible armies." (L. Strauss, *"The Godhead"*). We, in our day, should never forget that "it is no vain thing to wait upon the Lord," and "*they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength. . .*" (Isa. 40:31). David confessed the same truth in the valley of Elah (1 Sam.

17:36, 45, 47), when he ran to meet Goliath in the name of the "*LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel*" with the assurance that "*the battle is the LORD's, and he will give you into our hands.*" Again, Strauss says, "The Philistine was a big man to be sure, more than nine feet tall, but not too big for Jehovah-Sabaoth." David would not go against this tall foe with Saul's armor, as this would have been depending on the arm of the flesh, but rather it was in the "*name of the LORD of hosts.*" It is always true that when the Lord's people move with confidence in their God, that they are assured of victory, but if they depart from following Him (as Saul and Israel had done), they lose that confidence and find that the Lord can also be the One who fights against them! However, as Stevenson has said ("*Titles of the Triune God*"), "He would not countenance, however, any sham or superstitious "faith"; so that when the Israelites brought the Ark of the Covenant into the field of battle in the name of the LORD of hosts, He allowed it to be captured by the Philistines and Israel to be discomfited (1 Sam. 4:4, 10-11)."

It is not surprising that we find this title many times in the prophets, for in the days of declining national strength and spiritual departure, the prophets reminded the people that there was no lack with God or limitation on His part to deliver them if they would turn to Him again. It was "the LORD of hosts" that Isaiah saw in vision when he commenced his ministry in Isa. 6. It was the "LORD of hosts" of whom Jeremiah constantly reminded the people when they were sadly depending on their own limited strength and not on His power. It was the "LORD of hosts" who is the constant theme of Haggai and Zechariah's prophecies as they encouraged the people to build in dependence on the infinite power of Him who had brought them back into the land. It is evident in Malachi's references to this title that He was seeking to remind them of the constant resource that they had in "the LORD of hosts" even though they had sadly departed from Him once again.

Psalms 24 anticipates the future victorious scene of our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem following the battles to defeat all His foes, and it is with the proclamation, "*Lift up your heads, O ye gates. . . and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.*" (v. 7, 9). How beautiful to know that despite the weakness of His people, both then and now, He is the triumphant One, who will vanquish all His foes and reign supreme. May we learn increasingly to trust Him in the midst of the uncertainties and discouragements of life. May we be as Elijah, who could stand before wicked Ahab and

pronounce God's judgment on him because he was standing before the living God of Israel, and then, later, appear to him and speak in words such as these, "*As the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand. . .*" May we be as Elisha, when the armies of Syria surrounded the city, who could see the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire around them (2 Kings 6:16-17). Our trust must be in the LORD of hosts, who will not fail nor be overcome. We are no stronger than they, and our enemies are as opposed as ever. However, our God is the same, and we gain strength when we learn the reality of His sufficiency as "the LORD of Hosts."

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Micah 6:8

Jonah, Part 3

Steve Walvatne

In this paper we'll look at the third verse of Jonah chapter one, and consider what might be termed,

The Mutiny

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, and went down to Joppa; and he found a ship going to Tarshish: so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord."

None of the Lord's prophets disobeyed as Jonah did. There were those that *resisted* His call and even *recoiled* from it, but Jonah flatly *refused* it. Like a mutinous sailor, he threw off his Master's constraints, determined to chart his own course. In fact, he headed for open seas rather than take the overland route to Nineveh. His hatred for the city so blurred his thinking, that any joy he felt in hearing Jehovah's voice soon dissipated. We'll note his mutiny under five headings:

1. Jonah's Defiance
2. Jonah's Destiny
3. Jonah's Descent
4. Jonah's Delight
5. Jonah's Deal

Jonah's Defiance

"But Jonah rose up to flee...from the presence of the Lord." For a moment, all seemed right. Commanded by God to "Arise," Jonah instantly rose up and began journeying. Only Jonah wasn't going to Nineveh. His ambitions lay contrary to God's will. Without hesitation or remonstrance, he simply "bolted" from the Lord's presence and went to Joppa (Jaffa). Not to escape the Lord completely, for he surely knew "*all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do*" (Heb. 3:4), but rather, to flee His "immediate" or "felt" presence, in order to sidestep His will. J.M. Flanigan adds, "If he could leave the coasts of the Land of Israel behind, then he would be leaving the Land of the prophets and leaving the presence and government of the Lord in that sense" (*What the Bible Teaches: Jonah*).

Does Jonah's defiance resonate with us? Have we ever run counter to God's revealed will? If so, then like Jonah, we committed a form of mutiny. Jonah had no right to act on his own and neither have we. The loyal servant is obedient. Those that question or analyze their Master's command, assume authority that isn't theirs and cease to serve. Satan did this and fell (Isa. 14:12-15), and later, Adam (Gen. 3:5-7). By contrast, our Savior the Perfect Servant, was impeccable. His way harmonized perfectly with the Father (Jn. 8:29), and His glorious example of submission so accurately illustrated in the gospels, leaves each of us more accountable than Jonah, who had none of these New Testament scriptures to contemplate.

Jonah's Destiny

"...Unto Tarshish...to Tarshish...unto Tarshish." Some think Jonah boarded the first boat that beckoned and sailed for Tarshish by chance, but our verse contradicts that. Over and over and over again, Tarshish echoed through Jonah's brain. That awful peal conveyed "deliberate purpose" on Jonah's part, reinforcing his disobedience (Thomas McComiskey: *The Minor Prophets*). The Lord said "Nineveh," but Jonah thought "Tarshish." Yet knowing this, the Lord still called. He would not *excuse* Jonah, but *chastise* him, that through bitter training he might become a better man for God (Heb. 12:10-11). We must not minimize the importance of life experiences. Sin is never excusable – NEVER! – yet in our failures, lessons often lurk that cannot be learned from a book. If we're properly exercised and humbled thereby, our entire demeanor will improve. How gracious are the ways of God!

The Tarshish referred to here, was in all

probability, the one located on the southern tip of Spain. If so, it stretched polar opposite to Nineveh, further illustrating Jonah's opposition to God's will. Its name denotes "melting" or "to be smelted" (McComiskey), an apt label for a city where surrounding mineral deposits were processed. Newberry translates it "breaking," and J. B. Jackson has, "she will cause poverty" or "she will shatter" (*A Dictionary of Scripture Proper Names*). This emphasis on "breaking" or "shattering," envisions a loud, crashing effect, akin to the spiritual consequences entailed when notable servants transgress against God. Had Jonah reached Tarshish, his testimony may have been shattered, for Tarshish destinations "*will cause poverty.*" But mercifully, God overruled and Jonah was castaway by sailors that he might not be castaway (disqualified for service) by his Sovereign (1 Cor. 9:27). Sin has solemn ramifications. Who, like the Psalmist, hasn't shuddered when recalling some wayward attitude or action, and thought with head bowed, "*My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped*" (73:2)?

Jonah's Descent

"*And went down to Joppa...and went down into it...from the presence of the Lord.*" Jonah's journey was downward, with the physical slide mirroring that of his soul. For sinners, the descending tramp of rebellion brings eternal languish, but for saints, eternal loss (1 Cor. 3:15). Said the Psalmist, "*Be not silent to me: lest, if Thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit*" (Ps. 28:1).

Jonah first "went down" to Joppa, a renowned center of commerce on the Mediterranean Sea. Its name means "beautiful" or "fair" and so it likely appeared to Jonah on that fateful day. Worldly "Joppas" always enthrall hearts that have turned their backs on true loveliness. Joppa, not Jehovah, was now Jonah's focus, and thus, like Peter who lost sight of Christ on the boisterous sea, he began to "sink" (Mt. 14:30). If only he had stopped while "beginning" to sink, and cried – "Lord, save me!" – further decline could have been avoided. But Jonah pressed on.

The beauty of Joppa soon gave way to the dark, damp depths of an ocean liner. The deeper saints go in their journey from God, the more dismal and chilling its effects become. Lot, by settling in Sodom, "*tormented [his] righteous soul day after day*" with the lawless deeds of the wicked (2 Pet. 2:7-8, JND). If no pangs disrupt our reckless pursuit, then we have reason to question our profession. Yet, full restoration rarely occurs until God intervenes. The Lord brought Jonah "*down to the bottom of the mountains*"

(2:6), where at last, he acknowledged his sin and surrendered his will.

Jonah's Delight

"*...And he found a ship going to Tarshish.*" A Latin proverb says, "*Non omne quod niter aurum est*" – "Not all that shines is gold" – and Christians do well to remember that. Even our archenemy Satan "*transforms himself into an angel of light*" (2 Cor. 11:14, JND). It's his *habitual* practice. Doubtless, Jonah thought he'd "struck gold" at Joppa, when portside he found a boat heading to Tarshish, the very place he wanted to go. The vessel was "*going*" or "*about to leave,*" and Jonah was just in time. Surely, this was divine Providence paving his way! If that's what Jonah thought, he was badly mistaken. Have we thought in similar things? Perhaps we've linked material prosperity to our spiritual state, thinking God must be pleased with our path when it wasn't a true measurement at all. Says Matthew Henry, "We may be out of the way of duty and yet may meet with a favorable gale."

Dear believer, mark it well: If we resolve to run from God, Satan will have a car at the curb to whisk us away. Yet however logical or legitimate these conveyances may seem, nothing that facilitates disobedience to God's Word is right. Rationalize and romanticize as we would, insubordination to revealed truth is wrong and cannot be glossed over. If a ferryboat fooled a prophet of Jonah's stature, what might our folly yield when once we veer from God?

Jonah's Deal

"*...So he paid the fare thereof...to go with them unto Tarshish, from the presence of the Lord.*" Backsliding costs. Jonah "*paid the fare,*" and however steep that fare for Tarshish was, it paled in comparison to what Jonah paid spiritually. Scripture exhorts us to "*buy the truth*" (Pr. 23:23), not tickets away from it. Yet sadly, in our day, many hold the truth lightly. Some believers forfeit all their time and talents – yea, even their testimony before the world – on things that gratify the flesh. "Jonah may well have convinced himself that he had escaped without having to face the consequences. He appears to have had a feeling of security and peace in his disobedience...He should have known better" (J.M. Flanigan). The Lord's patience was about to end and any ease he enjoyed on his journey thus far, was not going to translate into smooth sailing at sea.

In closing this section, observe another troubling feature of Jonah's deal. Rather than going with God, it

meant going with “*them*.” “A man is known by the company he keeps,” or as Proverbs 13:20 declares, “*He that walketh with wise [men] becometh wise; but a companion of the foolish will be depraved*” (JND). Our companionships betray our condition. If heavenly communion has succumbed to heathen conversation as with Jonah, then things are amiss. Malachi said, “*Then they that feared the Lord spake often **one to another**: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that **thought upon His Name***” (3:16). Let us heed the deals we make. Saints that shirk both the Lord and His people are in imminent danger.

***As for me, I will behold thy face in
righteousness, I shall be satisfied, when I
awake, with thy likeness***

Psalm 17:15

**And shall I really see thee, glorious Lord
Who though unseen, is worshiped, loved, adored?
What joy and rapture fills my longing heart,
To think that I shall see Thee as Thou art:
Shall stand before Thee-perfect, spotless, whole
Fruit of thy suffering, travail of thy soul,
O joy of joys, O ecstasy of bliss,
What thought can measure such a thought as this?**

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(continued)

What Happened at Bethany, pt. 1

Gelson Villegas

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Though Bethany was a village or small town on the western slope of the Mount of Olives, only a few miles from Jerusalem (John 11:18), it has tremendous importance in the New Testament. We believe that there is one very special reason for this; it was the epicenter of activities related to the Savior from heaven who visited us. We would know very little or nothing about Bethany if the blessed Christ had not been there. And, without doubt, there is this relevant truth that we cannot forget: the true history of nations, peoples and persons has an eternal importance that agrees with that of ours regarding Jesus Christ the Lord.

The same truth can be noted in the case of

Bethlehem, concerning which we read in Micah, “*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*” (Micah 5:2). When we read this quotation in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit presents us with the true sense of the text, because it says, “*And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel*” (Matt. 2:6). So that, the nation, people and person that wants nothing to do with this Admirable Person will be lost, not only in history, but also so far as life in eternity.

The significance of the name “Bethany” isn’t very clear, and possibly for this reason, there have been many suggestions made by Biblical commentaries. The New Illustrated Bible Dictionary gives us only two: “House of Dates” and “House of Figs,” considering that if both are correct, they allude to the abundance of these species of fruit in the area of Bethany.

With respect to a spiritual sense, in Bethany a family lived that was composed of three persons, Lazarus, Martha, and Mary, that produced abundant fruit for the Lord. Such a family was to the Redeemer as the beloved of the Song of Solomon (ch. 4, 5), a garden of fruit and fragrances expressing a permanent attitude of invitation (“*. . . let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.*” ch. 4:16), where He satisfied his thirst and hunger for fellowship many times with His redeemed: “*I am come in my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered . . . I have eaten . . . I have drunk. . .*” (5:1). Touching this, His desire and message is valid: “*In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples.*” (Jn. 15:8).

A friend of theirs, Simon the leper, also lived in Bethany (Matt. 26:6, Mark. 14:3). This man also was fruitful for Christ and we believe that we can discern the reason. The expression “the leper” doesn’t indicate that at the time of the account that we have in these passages that he was a leper, but more likely the reference is to a sad reality in his past, because he had been a miserable leper, but he had been healed from this terrible infirmity, and what would be difficult in his knowing the One who had healed him?

The expression, “*Martha received him into her house*” makes us remember, in contrast, that the Owner of the entire universe isn’t always received by his creatures. “*He came unto his own, but his own received him not*” (Jn.

1:11), and neither for Him nor his parents was there room for them in the inn. To this we can add that in the country of Gadara, *“they besought him to depart from them,”* (Luke 8:37).

But how good it is to know that *“Martha received him into her house,”* that Zaccheus *“received him joyfully,”* and that *“to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God,”* (Jn. 1:12). Touching this, our only comment is the following: If anything great is to take place, if anything with true eternal weight is going to result, it is essential that Jesus Christ is seen inside the door. All those who don't receive Him, those who leave Him outside the door, will have to weep eternally in outer darkness, *“who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from (away from) the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.”* (2 Thess. 1:9).

But the story continues by saying that Martha *“had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet and heard his word.”* (Luke 10:39). Mary's physical position contrasts, diametrically, with that of Martha, who, probably, ran about the house nervously and frantically, occupied with many things, being cumbered and burdened with those things and disconnected from that which at that moment had heaven's approval.

In the Bible, we also encounter others in other scenes who were seated in the edifying sense of the purpose and situation. For example, the young woman of the Song was seated *“under his shadow with great delight”* (Song 2:3), in order to find, without doubt, a refuge from the heat, and supposedly, sweet fruit for her taste, since our Beloved isn't like the sterile fig tree mentioned in Mark 11 and Matthew 21, but one that *“bringeth forth his fruit in his season”* (Psalm 1:3). With respect to every believer, it is written that God hath *“raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly (places) in Christ Jesus,”* (Eph. 2:6).

Mary, at the feet of Jesus, heard His word, understanding that place as the only location to hear the Divine Teacher. We don't always hear the Word at His feet (showing the humility of a disciple), but many times we hear with arrogance and pretension, and it is that spirit that causes dissension in Bible studies, for example.

Moreover, not everyone sees the exclusivity of “the feet of Jesus” in order to learn from Him. Thus, he who was once Saul of Tarsus was instructed at the feet of Gamaliel and, even though that didn't cause shame in his past life, that school made him a fanatical Pharisee and not a zealous child of God. Most of the ministers of Christian groups are

formed “at the feet” of theological seminaries. From there, they go forth with big heads and stiff backs, because they have not been “at the feet of Jesus.”

In this, Mary of Bethany is a special example because, as the majority of expositors indicate, those times when she is seen in the scenes of the New Testament we encounter her, precisely, at the feet of her Lord, for instruction in Luke 10:39, for consolation in John 11:32 and to express her devotion in John 12:3.

In this passage, a marked contrast is noted between the attitude of Martha and Mary. The first is worried with many things to do and disturbed and busy . . . with many things. In the same way, this happens to us many times, and what is bad isn't in that we have “something” to do, but that we desire to occupy ourselves completely, over-evaluating in this our own capacity and creating thus a very fertile ground to unbalance our mental and physical health and, also, to cancel ourselves from offering to the Lord a service that is conformable to His will.

In these conditions we are capable of missing the mark as Martha did, in which she expressed a veiled reproach to her sister and an open censure of the Teacher (*“dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?”*) It is noted that, as someone has said, many of us have to renounce our position as general directors of the universe. Evidently, Martha didn't know how to appreciate the moment, because she was devoting her time and energy to things that could wait, seeing that the Lord sanctioned the attitude of Mary, who was sitting at His feet and hearing His word, as the only thing necessary, (as we read at the beginning of verse 42). It is not that Martha was doing things that were ethically bad, but that in beneficial terms, Mary *“hath chosen that good part.”* Neither is it to say that the temporary dedication of her time didn't have value, but that the choice of Mary was used in what had eternal weight, thus from the lips of the Lord, and it remains established that her chosen part that *“shall not be taken away from her”* will last for all earthly time and its effect will reverberate in scenes eternal.

(continued)

The World, pt. 2

Robert Surgenor

The Christian's Attitude toward the World

The Scriptures are very clear as to our attitude toward the world. The words could not be plainer. *“Love*

not the world, neither the things that are in the world" (1 Jn. 2:15). Those things have just been dealt with. Matthew Henry said, "This world is our passage, not our portion." We are forbidden to covet what society likes. The unconverted lust after the sports, theatrics, and other vain pleasures that adorn this corrupt society. For a professing Christian to be all taken up with sports and the theater, places a big question mark as to the reality of their profession of being a Christian. To sit before a TV set and watch ungodly men compete with each other is a total abandonment of the Christian's God-given position in this world. Hollywood produces movies that are fables. That is why the people that are engaged in the show are termed actors. They are "make-believers." The whole show is fiction, which God plainly condemns. "Neither give heed to fables" (1 Timothy 1:4). "*Wherefore laying aside all ...hypocrisies*" [play acting] (1 Peter 2:1). Fiction, fables, play-acting has no place in the Christian's schedule.

With all its power, craftiness, and attraction, the godly Christian defeats the world. "*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*" (1 John 5:4). The power for victory came when faith first began. That was conversion's day. "*Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God*" (1 John 5:5).

John carries one's relationship to the world to the very extreme. Notice these terse words. "*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*" (1 Jn. 2:15). In other words, "*The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us*" (Rom. 5:5). Every born again soul has the love of God within them. But the Scripture declares that if one loves the world, this implant of the love of God in one's heart has never taken place. It simply is not there. So the conclusion is, that they are not born again. That is why I can righteously question one's profession if their whole life is characterized by loving the world. Ask yourself the question; Do I constantly thirst for what the world has to offer? Is it my delight and the pleasure of my heart? If so, you are not saved.

Three Downward Steps

There are three downward steps in relation to the world. One: The friendship of the world. Two: spotted by the world. Three: conformed to the world.

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God"

(James 4:4). It is not that they were adulterers and adulteresses literally, but rather in a figurative and metaphorical sense. Their affections had been moved from loving God with all of their hearts, to loving the world instead. How deplorable! They were complying with the sinful manners and customs of the world, thus manifesting an enmity of mind against God.

What does it mean to be a friend of the world? The word will be is emphatic, and means, "shall be resolved to be." Whether he succeeds or not, if his wish is to be the friend of the world, he renders himself, becomes, by the very fact, "the enemy of God." What a contrast to Abraham, who was called "the friend of God."

Of course the world here is not the world of created things (nature) nor is it mankind. No, no! The world here is the present world-system, the present age that has Satan as its god and prince. It is the system that rejects Christ and His teaching. A Christian cannot walk in spiritual fellowship with God, and at the same time follow the world. One who corrupts himself with the vanities of the world cannot love God. It is a total impossibility, no matter what they say. For a person to engage in worldly pleasures on Saturday, and stand up and publicly worship on the Lord's Day, is the ultimate in hypocrisy. Paul, in writing to the saints at Philippi spoke of the "*enemies of the cross of Christ ... who mind earthly things*" (Phil. 3:18-19). Minding earthly things, earthly pleasures, earthly possessions, and even earthy recognition, is worldly. Christians are exhorted, "*Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth*" (Col. 3:2). When a saint cultivates the world's friendship, being controlled by the spirit of worldliness and conforming to its principles and aims, he is manifesting blatantly his disloyalty to God. He makes himself an enemy of God! That is, after consideration, he deliberately makes his choice to be a friend of the world. He defies God's rightful claim to his total allegiance. This is not merely a matter of a Christian unintentionally finding himself in an atmosphere pervaded by worldliness. This friendship with the world is a deliberate choice.

"Pure religion [service – charity to others and a clean life] *and undefiled before God and the Father is this; To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world*" (James 1:27). Christians are to maintain a personal holiness. This does not mean bodily separation from the society in which we live, but it does mean a refusal to accept the practices and purposes of a Christ-rejecting world, a world dominated by the spirit of the "prince of the world" (Jn.14:30 RV). The

Christian is not to have *“fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”* (Eph. 5:11). Is my speech unspotted or is it spotted with worldly expressions, worldly jokes, and worldly ideas? Is my dress worldly (flashy or immodest)? How do the ungodly look upon me, do they see a difference? If we keep ourselves unspotted from the world, they will see that our conduct is different from theirs.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:1-2). What does it mean to be conformed to this world? Simply this; world conformity is to take on its characteristics in my life, to look and act like the unregenerate mass of mankind, and to match one’s life to all the fashions of the world. Our body is the organ for our actions. It meets the sinful contacts by which the power of sin invades our entire being. Satan’s uses our ears and eyes as a means of entry for his lies. We are to present our bodies to God, just as a priest in Old Testament times would offer a burnt offering sacrifice wholly for God. We are not our own. *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”* (1 Cor. 6:20). Putting the body in the place of unnecessary danger such as skiing, skydiving, amusement park rides, auto, four-wheeler, or motorcycle racing, could hardly be termed presenting one’s body a living sacrifice for God. What about transporting one’s self in an automobile, airplane, train or ship? Is there not an element of danger? Yes there is, but it is what one would term *“a necessary evil,”* not to be abused or used for mere excitement.

The believer is a transformed person, who has been renewed by his mind. To serve God, the Christian must undergo a metamorphosis. His life is no longer dominated by human nature at its lowest, but rather dominated by Christ and the Holy Spirit. He no longer lives a self-centered, but a Christ-centered life. Thus Christ being the center of his life, every moment and every action on his part is essentially worship to God.

Four Categories

The world has, basically, four categories. (1) The Jericho world. This embraces evil spirits that seek to hinder us from enjoying spiritual blessings. (2) The Sodom world. This involves the baser things of the flesh, sensual evils. (3)

The Babylon world. This is the great world system of religion without Christ. (4) The Egyptian world. This takes in materialism, pleasures without God, and pomp and ceremony.

What has ended the believer’s relationship to the world? The answer is found in the following verses. *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”* (Gal. 2:20). *“I am crucified with Christ.”* What a tremendous statement! This is nothing less than a public judicial act. It is in the perfect tense; indicating that it was a past act with present results. One’s old self is gone! His life is no longer self-centered, but Christ-centered! Christ is now living out His life in him. His faith indicates his total dependence upon Him. Do you mean to tell me that a crucified man can sit in front of a TV and watch the ungodly manifest the pride of life through a sporting event? Away with such a thing! Do you, for one minute, think that the Lord is sitting beside a professing Christian in a sports arena, cheering for His team? Even such a thought is blasphemous. The crucified man loves not the world!

This doctrine of crucifixion rises again in Galatians 5:24. *“They that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”* As a result of belonging to Christ, the believer has crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. The aorist tense indicates a decisive act, once for all. He has put to death his affections. That is, his impulses resulting from the innate forces resident in his evil nature. His lusts involve something more. These are his cravings and longings. These are the forces reaching out to find expression in the gratification of these desires. Having done this, the believer lives in the Spirit and walks in the Spirit. Spirit controlled footsteps never walk back into the world!

Paul exclaimed, *“I die daily”* (1 Cor. 15:31). His baptism declared that he was as one dead (1 Cor. 15:29). In writing the Romans he announces the Christian’s true position. *“Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”* (Rom. 6:4). Being buried (the final proof of death), we are finished entirely with this life and world. Burial is an act, which consummates the breaking of the last tie between man and his earthly life. In like manner, the Christian breaks with the present world and his own natural life. Having done this, he now walks (behaves) in newness of life, meaning that he has a new quality of life imparted, a holy life springing from a new source. Thus his behavior is

ordered in the power of that new life imparted.

Demas

In closing, let me hold up to you a man that started well, but slipped. His name is Demas, and he was a companion of Paul.

Paul mentions four men. *“Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.”* Demas labored with Paul. (Philemon 1:24). *“Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you”* (Col. 4:14). Was there a cooling of affection toward Demas since Luke is spoken of as “beloved,” but not Demas? Two years later. *“For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica”* (2 Tim. 4:10).

Demas’ love to Christ cooled, and he fell in love with the world, never to be referred to again on the pages of Holy Writ. Oh the deceit of riches, popularity, materialism, and the giddy crowd. May the Lord preserve us from ever leaving our first love. May God give us grace, not to be isolationists, but grace to walk a path in total separation from a godless world that surrounds us.

The Church and the World walked far apart
On the changing shore of Time;
The World was singing a giddy song,
And the Church a hymn sublime.
“Come, give me your hand,” cried the merry World,
“And walk with me this way;”
But the good Church hid her snowy hands,
And solemnly answered, “Nay;
I will not give you my hand at all,
And I will not walk with you;
Your way is the way of endless death;
Your words are all untrue.”

“Nay, walk with me but a little space,”
Said the World with a kindly air;
“The road I walk is a pleasant road,
And the sun shines always there.
Your path is thorny, and rough, and rude,
And mine is broad and plain;
My road is paved with flowers and dews
And yours with tears and pain.”
Half shyly the Church approached the World,
And gave him her hand of snow;
The World quickly grasped it and walked along,
Saying in accents low,
“Your dress is too simple to please my taste;
I will give you pearls to wear,
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,
And diamonds to deck your hair.
Your house is too plain,” said the proud old World;
“I’ll build you one like mine
Carpets of Brussels, and curtains of lace,

And furniture ever so fine.”

So he built her a costly and beautiful house,
Splendid it was to behold;
Her sons and her beautiful daughters dwelt there,
Gleaming in purple and gold;
And fairs and shows in the halls were held,
And the World and his children were there;
And laughter and music and feasts were heard
In the place that was meant for prayer.

The Angel of Mercy flew over the Church,
And whispered, “I know thy sin”:
Then the Church looked back with a sigh and longed
To gather her children in;
But some were off at the midnight ball,
And some were off at the play,
And some were drinking in gay saloons,
So she quietly went her way.

Then the sly World gallantly said to her:
“Your children mean no harm,
Merely indulging in innocent sports”;
So she leaned on his proffered arm
And smiled and chatted and gathered flowers
As she walked along with the World;
While millions and millions of sorrowing souls
To eternal death were hurled.

**“We should be rigorous in judging ourselves
and gracious in judging others.”**

**“What one generation tolerates,
the next generation will embrace.”**

“God grant that I may never live to be useless!”

— John Wesley

Apollos

H. G. McEwen

This interesting and exemplary character of the New Testament is worthy of the study and emulation of young believers today. What choice men were the companions of Paul. Luke, the beloved physician. Timothy, with his natural care for the state of the Church. Epaphras, the fervent laborer in prayer. Tychicus, the faithful minister. Not least

Luke, at the close of the eighteenth chapter of the Acts, has given us many good things concerning him. Notice them.

1. Mighty in the Scriptures

The Scriptures, this will give us the secret of his grace, power and usefulness. One does not become mighty in them without a deep love for and daily feeding upon them. As a Jew, though an Alexandrian Jew and not a Jerusalem Jew, he would be taught them in his youth. He would hear them in the synagogue. It was a duty. But what a new interest would spring up in his heart when he found one day the real treasure of the Books, Christ in the Scriptures. He would read them anew until mind and heart would be full to overflowing. Christian, do you love God's Word?

2. Eloquent in Speech

Jeremiah said *"His Word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing and I could not stay."* No more could the heart of Apollos contain that burning Word but the message of its Saviour burst from his eloquent lips and stirred the hearts of many others. And who can contain it? Not the early Apostles, *"We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."* Not Paul, *"Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel."* Can you? Do you not feel it rising up within when you are in conversation with that stranger? Or that fellow workman? Or that neighbor? Tongues that at other times may stammer speak eloquently when they speak of HIM, for He is the abundance of the heart.

3. Fervent in Spirit

Apollos was no cold, calm preacher of points. There was warmth, there was fervency in his service and in his speech. He did not seek out the odd things in the scriptures and make them appear still more odd in order to excite the wonder of the people. He had a grand heart warming theme, Jesus the Christ. And as he set forth from type and prophecy the person and work of the Saviour *"he mightily convinced"* his hearers. The youngest believer can do the same. I knew an unbeliever who had been taken to hear great preachers without conviction, he listened to a new born soul tell his conversion and was convicted and saved. It was fresh, it was warm.

4. Teachable in Mind

Seldom do you find a man, so great in other ways, great enough to let others teach him. This is the greatness

of humility. *"Understandest thou what thou readest?"* asked Philip of the eunuch. Imagine the answer from a man who held such a position in this day. The eunuch was teachable and was led to Christ. Apollos was teachable and was led into the way of God more perfectly. Aquila and Priscilla, too, had a knowledge of the Word, longer on the way and often under the teaching of the Apostle Paul they could see the deficiencies of the young disciple, theirs was not the scorn of the false critic, but the grace of the true helper and they took him to them and taught him. Pray, young disciple, for the humble spirit of the learner, and pray that God may open such homes and raise up such helpers.

5. Commendable in Life

Such was his life amongst them that, when he left, the brethren could write, commending him to others, and others could receive him without fear because of the commendation. They could commend him to others because, first, he had commended himself to them by his godly life and sound teaching. Paul, too, could write well of Apollos, telling the Corinthians that he greatly desired him to come to them. It could be said of him what Paul said to the Thessalonians of himself and other companions, *"Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblamably we behaved ourselves among you that believe."* Men of such life are still welcome in the homes and assemblies of believers.

6. Loved by the Church

Besides being fruitful in conversions Apollos was refreshing in ministry to the saints. He convinced many of the truth that Jesus was the Christ and Paul speaks of him as one that "watered." His ministry would revive the hearts and freshen the lives of those in the assemblies he visited. They would naturally love him in return. Sad to think, though, that their love should lead them to surround him with a glory that was not his. "I am of Apollos" was their cry, thus displacing Christ with a human leader, not that he took the place, it was in their foolish hearts to give it but his own was too wise to accept it. He would be the leader of no party. Would that all teachers had the same wisdom and grace today.

Surely, in all these things, Apollos is worthy of our imitation. .