

## The Speck In My Brother's Eye

by Hendrik Joubert

Are you disappointed when you read that, although ***Jehoash did right in the sight of the LORD all his days in which Jehoiada the priest instructed him. Only the high places were not taken away; the people still sacrificed and burned incense on the high places?*** (2Kings 12:2-3) Or when you learn about the king who received wisdom from God: ***...Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of his father David, except he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places.*** (1Kings 3:3)

Are you disappointed to see how this lack of respect for Jehovah continued throughout the Old Testament in spite of the prophets sent by God continually speaking out against these things so that Stephen eventually asks his generation: ***"Which one of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? They killed those who had previously announced the coming of the Righteous One, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become; <sup>53</sup> you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."*** (Acts 7:52-53)

The facts were recorded for that very reason, to create within us the desire to do better: ***Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.*** (1Cointhians 10:6) ***For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.*** (Romans 15:4)

Having this zeal for God, causing us to be disappointed to recognize weakness in others, is not sufficient within itself; it must be guided by knowledge of what He reveals as that which makes *me* righteous in His sight. (Romans 10:1-3) Humans seem to have this morbid tendency to recognize, and condemn, the weaknesses of others while failing to identify and correct their own. Finding someone else whom we consider worse than ourselves gives us a sense of loyalty to God.

Consider the fact that 26 of the 27 books of the New Testament contain warnings against false teachers, preachers, prophets, elders, apostles and even christs... What would the Lord have to say about me after I am gone; would it list a few good things, but conclude with an "only" or "except" clause as was the case with many of the "good" kings we are so disappointed in?

One of the more troubling warnings in the New Testament must be the one found in Hebrews 2:1: ***For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.*** The alarming concept conveyed here is the idea of *drifting*; a subtle process that may take place unnoticed. Over the years things tend to change in the church as we are pressured by society. While we tend to be meticulous and *scholarly* on some issues as we search the Scriptures, we reason like the denominations on others. On the head

covering some will *interpret **pray and prophecy*** as the *assembly*, while we create a setting where the (often covered) woman may contribute to the teaching process – as long as she speaks under *the authority of the teacher*. (A female member of a denomination in White River, South Africa preaches *under the authority of her husband*.)

We need to consider the *substance* of our answers to the questions we are asked; how much of it is done by supplying chapter and verse, and how much consists of statements such as “that would mean” and “are you saying?” Are we *necessarily inferring*, or are we trying to embarrass the questioner, considering it an answer ourselves? Please supply the Scripture so we may believe... (**Romans 10:17**)

Many of the issues we may be drifting on are being justified by what Paul wrote in **Romans 14**. Notice the significance of the concluding statement in this regard: ***The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.*** (**Romans 14:22**) What I present to God should be what I have become convinced of, realizing that even then I may be condemning myself by what I (subjectively?) *approve*.

The significant role played by the characteristics in **Matthew 5:3-11** in keeping ourselves and the church pure cannot be overstressed. They may very well be considered first principles, but therein lays the significance in approaching everything we do to honor God. If the foundation is not solid in this regard what was said to Ephesus may very well apply to us, although we are careful to do things right, we are not being pure in heart by doing it with the proper motivation; because we love God and for our fellow man – we may be keeping our high places. **Matthew 7** is part of the sermon. It addresses the tendency to focus on the mistakes of others while ignoring our own, or perhaps to feel better about ours. (**Vs. 3-5**) Many abuse the opening statements of this chapter, not only to escape the frivolous judgments of people, but in an attempt to escape the judgment of God. It is moments later that the Lord announces the fact that the way is narrow, and few will find it. (**Vs. 13-14**) It is not too long before He concludes that some will have the confidence to reason with Him in person concerning their salvation. (**Vs. 21-23**)

We see the denominations as clearly as daylight in this passage; however it addresses all who are confident, suggesting that we keep on looking at ourselves as we are to be *poor in spirit, mourning our own tendency to sin, merciful towards others and meek towards God, doing what we do from a pure heart*. We need to take care that we do not ***neglect so great a salvation*** and ***drift away*** by focusing on others, instead of looking at ourselves. We must continually look back to the *marker*. (**Acts 17:11; 2Timothy 3:16-17**)