

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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What Is Pride?

(Jerry Fite)

We know God resists, scoffs at and hates pride when it manifests itself in the hearts and actions of men (James 4:6, Proverbs 3:34, Proverbs 6: 6-17). We know it is the opposite of humility. But what is it?

Pride issues from a “self-satisfied” heart. God says to His people, “*I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought. According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted: therefore have they forgotten me*” (Hosea 13:5-6). In the dry wilderness, God was there with His people, providing for them in a vast “drought land.” When God’s people ate from their own pasture in the land God had promised, they were filled. But their heart was “exalted” to forget God as Provider. In pride, they replaced God with “themselves.” It was “*their pasture.*” God says they have “*forgotten me.*” Pride has a powerful affect upon one’s memory.

Pride exalts self above the instructions of the Lord. With a “marred girdle” in hand, Jeremiah warns God’s people that Jehovah “*...will mar the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. This evil people, that refuse to hear my words, that walk in the stubbornness of their heart, and are gone after other gods to serve them, and*

to worship them, shall even be as this girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing” (Jeremiah 13:9-10). As the girdle once clave to the loins of Jeremiah, God and His people clave together. But when people refuse to hear and follow God’s words, which bind man with God, pride is at work replacing God’s instructions with man’s desires. Pride is sometimes at work when people “wander from” God’s “commandments” (Psalm 119:21).

Pride does not blush in taking credit for what God does. Nebuchadnezzar was glorying in His kingdom. Rhetorically He said, “*Is not this great Babylon, which I have built for the royal dwelling place, by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?*” (Daniel 4:30). Ironically, “*while the word was in the king’s mouth*” God answered by saying, “*...thou shalt be driven from men and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field.*” (Daniel 4:32). For a time, Nebuchadnezzar’s rule was to be taken away from him, and the king would eat grass like oxen... until he knew and acknowledged that “*the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men*” (Daniel 4:32). When God later restored Nebuchadnezzar in his kingdom, Nebuchadnezzar honored God and His power by acknowledging that

“*those who walk in pride He is able to abase*” (Daniel 4:37).

Sometimes pride takes the next step and covets the place of God. King Herod heard and apparently embraced the crowd’s praise when they shouted, “*The voice of a god, and not a man*” (Acts 12:22). God’s immediate response was an angel of the Lord smiting the enthroned king “*because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost*” (Acts 12:23).

God sometimes shows us a place where we might not think pride is hiding. He opens the door of the heart and we see pride working in an anxious heart. Inseparable from humbling oneself under the mighty hand of God is “*casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He careth for you*” (1 Peter 5:7). God takes offense when His people are anxious for what man can do to them. He says, “*...who art thou, that thou art afraid of man that shall die, and of the son of man that shall be made as grass and has forgotten Jehovah thy maker...*” (Isaiah 51:12-13). We may need the antidote of faith to fight anxiety (Matthew 6: 30). But we also may need to address our pride for not trusting in God by saying to ourselves, “Who are you to forget a caring God?”