

2001 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa. 61:1-2

A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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He Did It Anyway

Nehemiah 2:11-20

By Dee Bowman

The story of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem is one of the most stirring in the Old Testament. It is a story of determination and courage.

It took courage for Nehemiah to set his proposal before the King. In fact, it took courage for Nehemiah to be sad in the presence of the king, for to appear before him unhappy might have sent him into a rage with dire consequences for the young cup-bearer. **But he did it anyway.**

It took courage for Nehemiah to ask for the king's help for the mission. After all, the King had no feelings for Jerusalem, no particular interest in her restoration. As long as she paid her tribute, he was satisfied. **But Nehemiah did it anyway.**

It took courage for Nehemiah to deal with his detractors, Sanballat and Tobiah. They had no pleasure in his mission. They opposed him at every turn. **But he did it anyway.**

It took courage to gather the men for the rebuilding of the walls. The survey by night took courage. The recommendations took courage. The work itself was so dangerous that each man did his work with his instrument of war at his side. **HE DID IT ANYWAY!**

It takes courage today to do what God says, to be what God wants you to be. You may face many battles if you try to do it. But be like Nehemiah. **He did it anyway.** So can you. —Dee Bowman

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THE COURSE OF SIN

W. L. Wharton, Jr.

“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempteth no man: but each is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lust, and enticed. Then the lust, when it hath conceived, beareth sin: and the sin, when it is fullgrown, bringeth forth death” (James 1:13-15, ASV). This concise analogy of sin forms a perfect compliment to Paul’s conclusion:

“The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Sin is not inherited. It is not something one contacts like a disease. Sin is the product of a man’s own doing. But, while this is true, it does not explain why a man will enter into such service and collect such wages. So, while Paul’s conclusion about the outcome of sin is the same as that in our text, he does not explain why men will serve the devil. The text in James does afford us an explanation.

The Matter of Lust Whereby The Devil Entices Men Into His Service

No man ever entered the service of Satan out of love or admiration either for the devil or for his cause. He enters for one reason only...his own selfish desire to gratify his lust. The term “enticed” is from a word which means “to lure by a bait.” In our text it is used metaphorically for lust itself, by which a man is enticed. “Lust” is strong desire of any character, whether good or evil. Such desires are evil when they run contrary to the direction of Jehovah.

Were the devil unable to excite in man (1) a strong desire (lust) for obtaining some forbidden possession or experience, or (2) a revulsion against God’s will, he would be powerless to lead man into sin. This is a powerful truth to be prized by all who would cease to serve Satan. Satan’s first overture to Eve well illustrates this particular truth. If man’s own heart did not respond to the devil’s allurements, the terrible journey of sin would never begin.

Sin Itself Considered In The Light Of Being The Offspring Of Lust

John tells us that *“sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4)*. God has set the course of man’s race and the devil’s design is to either get man to step outside (transgress) or fail in any particular. We frequently hear it spoken of as sins of “omission” or “commission.” If the selfishness in one’s heart is not sufficiently aroused by one approach or avenue, then Satan will resort to another. These tricks are varied and his allurements endless as he strives for the ruin of every man. It is a terrible tribute to his untiring efforts and devilish cunning that no man, save Jesus of Nazareth, has ever completely eluded him. How true that, when lust hath conceived it beareth sin. Sin is the child of lust and the devil its daddy, but the sinner allowed that child to be born to the lust that was in his heart. What a fearful and personal responsibility for sin in one’s own life.

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The Final Fruit Of This Course Is Death Itself

By this series of striking metaphors, James represents the devil and one's personal lust as the progenitors of death (eternal separation from God). The eternal separation of the sinner from God is the natural offspring of the sinner's response (lust) to the devil's temptation. For a man to be eternally separated from God, he must have supplied a lustful reception to the devil's offering and have allowed that lust to lead him into the execution of sin. It is more than passing strange that no man loves the devil; but men love sin and so serve the devil. Satan makes no efforts to win the affection of his followers for he is altogether hateful and vicious. He appeals, not to the good that is in man, but to what may be turned to evil. What is worse, man accepts the service of this monster and brings upon himself ruin, not out of admiration of Satan or even of evil in general, but simply out of selfishness for a passing moment. Like a drug addict, the sinner is brought to contemplate his desire out of context with reality. Only selfishness can explain his indulgence. Satan is a despot ruler without a loyal subject or admirer in his kingdom. His is an empire of wickedness spawned by his evil designs carried out by selfish souls. It is perhaps only in this light that one comes to self-knowledge about himself and his course in sin that will shock him into resistance against the devil and lead him to Christ. Faced with the reality of sin, none can rightfully blame oth-

ers with their crime. *W.L. Whar-
ton, Jr*

BORN OF A VIRGIN Jim R. Everett

"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us," (Matthew 1:23, as quoted by the Holy Spirit from Isaiah 7:14). "...The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man and the virgin's name was Mary," (Luke 1:26-27). But modern theologians say that belief in the virgin birth of Jesus is not important. In fact, some of them not only doubt that Mary was a virgin, they openly ridicule the idea. But notice that it was the Holy Spirit who quoted Isaiah 7:14, and applied it to the birth of Mary's son. The birth of a baby by a virgin was a sign from God to verify the incarnation of His Son into the world. He was "God with us."

There are three witnesses who can be called to testify about the virginity of Mary: Mary herself; Joseph, the husband of Mary; and the Holy Spirit. Mary would know, because it was in her womb that Jesus was conceived. She knew that she had never had a relationship with a man. Joseph would know — as Mary's husband he knew that he had not had a relationship with her. And, finally, the Holy Spirit was the revealer of her virginity; first, by prophecy (Isaiah 7:14), and; second, by direct revelation to Mary and Joseph about the miraculous conception (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38).

Evidence to support the virgin birth can also be gathered from the personal conviction of Matthew and Luke. They obviously believed what they reported. They record the events factually and without any doubt. While they relate the account from different views, they are harmonious in the material written.

To this evidence can be added historical testimony. The "Apostles' Creed" which was based upon the old Roman Baptismal Confession (ca AD 200) affirms the virgin birth. The use of the creed by Tertullian and Irenaeus place the acceptance of Mary's virginity well back toward the middle of the second century. Both Justin Martyr (ca. AD 100) and Ignatius (ca. AD 117) mention that Jesus was born of a virgin. Any other birth than the virgin birth would be a denial of messianic prophecy and a failure of Jesus to be God's son. It is no less than crude blasphemy to say that Jesus was an illegitimate son of Mary, and Joseph married her to cover it up. No doubt, God chose a virgin to bear His son,

not only for the sake of purity, but also to eradicate false accusations of Jesus being just a man.

"Raison D'etre"

For too many, life will simply end without them ever knowing why it began.

Raison D'etre (rā'zōn de'tre) is a French phrase meaning "reason or justification for being or existence." What is your **raison d'etre**? What is your purpose in life? What is the reason for your existence?

Some have made prosperity their purpose in life. These will "spend" their lives making money to "spend" upon material possessions. Big bank accounts, the finest of houses and cars, and luxurious vacations are the top priorities in their lives. Jesus warned, "*Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses*" (**Luke 12:15**).

For others, their raison d'etre is the pursuit of knowledge. To seek to grow in knowledge is worthwhile, but we must be sure to seek the right kind of knowledge. It is possible to know a lot, yet not know those things which are most important. The lives of many today are characterized in the Scriptures as those who are "*always learning, but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*" (**2Tim 3:7**).

Some pursue worldly pleasure as the sole reason for their existence.

Some continue to live by the Epicurean philosophy of old: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." This philosophy fails to recognize the fact that we have been created accountable beings which one day will give account of how we have lived (**Romans 14:12**). Again

the scriptures warn of many who are "*lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*" (**2 Timothy 3:4**).

Others seek **position, power, popularity**, and the list goes on and on.

What is your reason for existence?

The Scriptures teach us that we were created by our Creator to worship and serve Him. The Apostle Paul summed up our **raison d'etre** in these words: "*Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God*" (**1 Corinthians 10:31**). **To glorify God is our reason for existence.** This means that we have been created to magnify and exalt the Lord our God as we humble ourselves and submit to His authority.

Until each of us recognizes this divine **raison d'etre**, our lives will never find the fulfillment for which they were intended.

The theme of the Bible has been stated as "the salvation of man through Christ to the glory of God." **Herein lies our reason for existence; it is found in doing God's will, NOT our own. Blessed are those who choose God's way:** those who believe in Jesus (**Acts 16:31**), repent of their sins (**Acts 17:30**), are baptized into Christ for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**), and live their lives to the glory of God, for they have recognized our true **raison d'etre**.

The late Batsell Barrett Baxter once wrote: "Life becomes meaningful only when one understands the deeper purpose behind it, and one understands that deeper purpose only when he knows Christ."

Have you realized God's raison d'etre for your life? May God bless you as you seek to do His will.

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