

## HUMILITY MAKES THE DIFFERENCE

John Edwards

The Scriptures often emphasize the importance of humility. “*God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble*” (Jas. 4:6; Prov. 3:34). A study of the book of Second Chronicles shows humility makes the difference. The Lord said, “*If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land*” (2 Chr. 7:14). The Lord’s hearing, forgiving and healing all hinged on the people’s praying, seeking and turning. This required humility! Let’s note some examples where humility made the difference.

**WHEN SHISHAK CAME AGAINST JERUSALEM.** Shishak, king of Egypt, came up against Jerusalem “*because they had transgressed against the Lord*” (2 Chr. 12:1-2). Rehoboam, and all Israel with him, had forsaken the law of the Lord. A prophet came to Rehoboam and the princes of Judah with the message from the Lord: “*Ye have forsaken me, and therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak*” (v. 5). Now see where humility

made the difference:

“*Whereupon the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, The Lord is righteous. And when the Lord saw that they humbled themselves, the word of the Lord came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves; therefore I will not destroy them, but I will grant them some deliverance; and my wrath shall not be poured out upon Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak*” (vv. 6-7). Humility made the difference between destruction and deliverance! Would we have humbled ourselves?

**WHEN THE HEART OF HEZEKIAH WAS LIFTED UP.** 2 Chronicles 32 reports, “*In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord: and he spake unto him, and he gave him a sign. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem. Notwithstanding Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, both he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the Lord came not upon them in the days of Hezekiah*” (vv. 24-26). Humility made the difference as to when the Lord’s wrath came. If you had been Hezekiah, would you have humbled

yourself?

**WHEN MANASSEH WAS IN AFFLICTION.** Hezekiah’s son, Manasseh, was a very wicked king. He “*made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen*” (2 Chr. 33:9). “*Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon*” (v. 11). Note the effect this had on the king: “*And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God*” (vv. 12-13). What a story! A king as wicked as Manasseh could be restored! Humility made the difference! Unfortunately, his son, Amon, “*humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh his father had humbled himself; but Amon trespassed more and more. And his servants conspired against him, and slew him in his own house*” (vv. 23-24).

One of the great lessons of the book: “*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up*” (Jas. 4:10).

## HEAVEN AND HELL CONTRASTED

Nicolas Edwards

The Bible says much about these two places. There are similarities between them. 1. They are both real (Mt. 10:28; Rev. 21:1-8). 2. They are both eternal (Mt. 25:46). 3. Anyone can enter them — entrance into heaven or hell depends upon our own works and choices (Rev. 20:12-15). But they are very different places reserved for very different people! Here are some contrasts:

**REST/NO REST.** Those in hell will be tormented “*forever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night*”, but the faithful who die in the Lord will “*rest from their labours*” in heaven (Rev. 14:10-13). I want rest!

**NO TEARS/WEEPING.** In heaven, there will be no tears nor crying (Rev. 21:4). In hell, there will be “*weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30).

**NO PAIN/TORMENT.** In heaven, there will be no pain or sorrow (Rev. 21:4). In hell,

there will be torment (Mt. 8:29; Rev. 14:10-11). I want no pain!

**LIGHT/DARKNESS.** Heaven is a place of light. There is no night there (Rev. 21:23-25; 22:5). Hell is a place of outer darkness (Mt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). God will not be there to lighten it!

**LIFE/DEATH.** Heaven is a place of life (Jn. 3:15-16; Rom. 2:7; Titus 1:2; Rev. 22:2, 5, 14). Hell is a place of death (Rev. 20:14-15; 21:8; 22:15). I want life!

**WITH GOD/WITHOUT GOD.** Those in heaven will be with God forever (1 Th. 4:17; Rev. 21:3; 22:3-4). Those in hell will be without God forever (2 Th. 1:7-9). They will be with the devil and his angels (Mt. 25:41). I want to be with God!

**GOOD/BAD COMPANIONSHIP.** In heaven, we will be with the Lord, the righteous, the faithful in Christ, nothing that defiles (Mt. 25:46; Col. 1:5; Rev. 21:27). In hell, we will be with the devil and his angels, the wicked, the unrighteous, workers of the flesh, and such like! (Mt. 25:41; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).

I want to be among those in heaven; not those in hell! Some Christians seem to get along better with those who will be in hell rather than the faithful saints of God. The two will be separated at judgment — who will you be among? If you don't like being with brethren and prefer those of the world, how do you expect to make it to heaven? I want to be among the saints.

I want to go to heaven! That is all that matters. If I don't make it to heaven that means I will be in hell forever and ever. One cannot even imagine how terrible that is. How beautiful heaven must be! How horrible, hopeless, and intolerable hell must be! It is only through God's grace and mercy that we do not have to go to hell. He has provided everything we need in order to go to heaven! We must obey the gospel (2 Th. 1:7-9), do His commandments (Rev. 22:14), be faithful (Rev. 2:10). We will be judged according to our works (Rev. 20:13). Will we hear well done (Mt. 25:21, 23) or depart from me (Mt. 7:23)? Will you do God's will or will you work iniquity (Mt. 7:21-23)?

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