

# The Old Paths

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## “Doing God Service”

Jarrold Jacobs

**J**esus warned the eleven: *“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me”* (Jn. 16:1-3). This is an eye-opening statement to me. Jesus told His apostles that there were some people who were quite zealous and adamant about their beliefs, yet they were wrong! Jesus warned of folks killing the apostles, and in so doing, thinking they were serving God! How wrong can people get?

Execution for preaching Christ was not an act limited to the apostles, though. In his younger days, Saul of Tarsus consented to the death of Stephen, a child of God (Acts 8:1). In later years, he admitted that he thought within himself, *“That I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities”* (Acts 26:9-11). How could someone brought up at the feet of Gamaliel and “taught ac-

*ording to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers”*; a man “zealous toward God” (Acts 22:3), end up making such a wrong decision? I think a key point in Paul’s case was his admission: *“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth”* (Acts 26:9). Somewhere in his life, he went off-track, and began selfishly following the whims and wishes of men rather than selflessly following the pure will of God!

How do I know this is what happened? It is because if he had followed the pure will of God, he would have accepted Christ rather than rejected Him! Remember Jesus said, *“Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad”* (Jn. 8:56)! Remember, Moses wrote about Christ (Jn. 5:46)! Jesus on another occasion told the people, *“Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?”* (Jn. 7:19)! Therefore, if he (or any of the Jews who had rejected Christ and the Christians in the first century) was following the pure will of God, he would have listened to the Scripture, i.e., the words of Abraham and Moses, and would have accepted Christ. Those who accepted the truth from the inspired words of Abraham, Moses, and other prophets followed Christ! Yet, because folks like Saul of Tarsus and others were following the whims and wishes of men, they were taught to kill Christ and Christians, and in so doing, they would “do God service.” How tragic!

What can I learn from this? I can

learn that just because I think something is “good” or “holy” or “righteous” does not make it so. The inspired word of God equips us for “*every good work*” (II Tim. 3:16-17). Therefore, if what I am doing does not have its basis and authority from the Scriptures, it is not a good work! Maybe it is time we examined our lives (II Cor. 13:5) and made sure what we are doing is what has been authorized by God in His revealed Scriptures. If we find we are following the will of man instead of God, then we need to repent, or be guilty of the same thing those Jews were guilty of in the first century. Specifically, we can be guilty of doing something sinful, and saying it is being done “in God’s service.”

Some 700 years before Christ came to the earth, God said there were folks guilty of calling “*evil good and good evil ... (putting) darkness for light, and light for darkness; ... (putting) bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter*” (Isa. 5:20). He went on to say, *“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”* (Isa. 5:21). Today, it is the same. Woe to people who exchange their “think-so’s” for God’s word and then claim they are following the Lord! If we are guilty of this, beware, for we fool ourselves into thinking we are “doing God service” when in actuality, we are harming the Lord’s cause. We end up working for Satan by default, and destroying the very thing we claim to be building. *“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good”* (I Thess. 5:21). Follow God’s will only, and forsake man’s will. Let us not be guilty of sinning while claiming we are “doing God service”!

### ***A Thought Worth Thinking....***

“No man is too wicked to go to church!  
No man is too righteous to stay away!”

- Claude Davis, 1965

*“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.” (Jer. 6:16)*

## “Jonathan”

Jarrold Jacobs

**I**n my opinion, we do not speak enough about the brave man, Jonathan. Jonathan was King Saul's son (I Sam. 13:16, 14:1, 49), and seemingly heir to the throne of Israel, until God took the throne from Saul and gave it to David (I Sam. 15-16). One of the factors that I think makes Jonathan stand out is that he was a man who readily accepted God's decision about David being the second king of Israel. Jonathan was a close friend to David, even when this meant choosing between his friendship with David and his loyalty to his father.

### Jonathan Was A Man Of Principle.

His loyalty to David over his father was not an arbitrary decision, but was done because Saul was WRONG! Saul's pursuit and attempts to murder David were attempts to break the sixth commandment under which Israel lived (Ex. 20:13). Too, Saul was fighting against God in another way, for God intended for David to be the next king, not Jonathan, Mishui, Melchishua, or anyone else in Saul's family. God chose David (I Sam. 16:12-13)! Yet, instead of accepting the verdict of Heaven, Saul spent his days in pursuing and attempting to kill his "competition" (I Sam. 20:31)! Jonathan would have no part of that.

### Jonathan Was A Man Of Fierce Loyalty.

When David revealed Saul's intention to kill him, Jonathan denied this (I Sam. 20:1-2). Yet, when David suggested a test by which Jonathan would finally

know the true character of Saul, he told David, "... if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?" (v. 9). When David's plan falls into place, and Saul confesses the truth concerning his intentions for murdering David, this solidifies Jonathan's resolve. There was no doubt of the loyalty Jonathan possessed for God's anointed, David.

### Jonathan Was Not Possessed By Jealousy.

In the entire record of the lives of Jonathan and David, I see no evidence of jealousy directed toward David for being chosen by God to succeed Saul instead of Jonathan or his brothers. In fact, I find the opposite. I Samuel 23:17 records Jonathan saying, "*Fear not: for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also Saul my father knoweth.*" This says something great about Jonathan and his attitude. He was willing to accept the Lord's plan even when it meant "someone else" would be considered greater than he. On more than one occasion, Jonathan and David made covenants of loyalty between each other (I Sam. 18:3, 20:12-17, 42, 23:18). Sometimes, when folks see others being blessed in various ways, they might tend to think,

"What about me? Don't I also deserve \_\_\_\_\_?" Not so with Jonathan. He was well-satisfied to accept the Lord's dealings as good, and wanted the best for David. His love was genuine for this shepherd from Judah that God had chosen. Jonathan "*strengthened* (David's) *hand in God*" (I Sam. 23:16)!

### Jonathan Died Valiantly.

Sadly, because of Saul's sin, God determined that not only his life, but the lives of his sons would be lost in war (I Sam. 28:17-19). This happened as Saul and the army fought the Philistines at Mount Gilboa (I Sam. 31:2). Though Jonathan did not follow the wishes of Saul and betray David, this did not mean that Jonathan hated his father. He still loved him, and we find Jonathan fighting for the nation of Israel against the enemies of the Lord with his father and brothers, and dying in battle as God said.

### Conclusion

I hope this short account of Jonathan's life would encourage us to read the record of Jonathan and David in its entirety in I Samuel 18-31. It is a wonderful account, teaching us about love, service, loyalty, and obedience to God's will, even when it means we don't get things "our way" (Rom. 15:4)! May the Lord raise up more "Jonathan's" to help encourage and strengthen the "David's" God will raise!



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