

Who Is On The Lord's Side?

by Bob Allgood

When Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, "Who is on the Lord's side ? Let him come unto me." And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. (Exodus 32:26) Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." (Matthew 12:30)

We have here something old and something new, brought forth from the treasure chest of Truth. What Moses asked in the old, Jesus answers in the new. The timely question "Who is on the Lord's side"? is just as valid today as it was when Moses asked it. Those who were on the Lord's side in Moses' day, and those who are on the Lord's side in our day, are separated only by time. Three timely truths in the OT text caught my attention and stirred my mind for this short article. (1) Moses saw that the people were naked. (2) He asked, Who is own the Lord's side? (3) Then, all the sons of Levi gathered themselves unto him. I will not attempt to separate these three threads, but rather I will try to intertwine them with the words of Christ to make a threefold cord which is not quickly broken (Eccles. 4:12).

I remember as a boy in school we would choose up sides to play basketball or touch football. In order to identify ourselves, one side would leave their shirts on and the other side would take their shirts off. If you played, you either

played for the Shirts or the Skins. In modern day organized sports, from "Little League" to "Professionals", teams now wear brightly colored uniforms to identify themselves. Now days, even the fans show their pride in their teams by wearing team colors. 'College' and 'Professional' teams spend much more money than 'High School' or 'Little League' teams on their uniforms and equipment. All of this helps to prove that the real difference between Men and Boys can be measured by the price of their toys. Do not misunderstand me, I am not 'putting down' sports. I like sports. I watch sports on TV. Until I reached fifty, I fantasized that I could still play. That is child's play.

When it comes to serving God we ought to have a different attitude. Paul said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Cor. 13:11). When it comes to serving God it is childish to try and choose up sides and say, "I'm on this side or that side". When it comes to serving God there can only be one side - The Lord's side. We are either on his side or we are not ! Remember Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt 12:30). There are no two sides about it !

Serving God is not a game - it is a serious matter ! When Moses said, "Who is on the Lord's side ? let him come unto me" only the sons of Levi, the 'priestly' order came unto him. Over 600,000 men, plus women and children, came up out of Egypt (Exodus 12:37). When we study the history of Israel's wanderings, we find that it was always the vast majority that often murmured and rebelled against God and his blessings. The eternal sons of God are not always on the Lord's side in time. Of those who did not respond to Moses by coming unto him - 3,000 men died as an example. They paid the price for serving a false god. Aaron had made them naked unto their own shame, by making them an idol - a golden calf to worship. One could say the skins or the naked lost that day. While there is a vast difference between the eternally naked and those who are made naked in time,

both are losers.

The naked lost in the garden of Eden. God had told Adam not to eat of "the tree of knowledge of good and evil -- for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (dying thou shalt die)". Adam did eat and Adam died and began to die - for "the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew they were naked." Prior to sin entering in, "they were both naked - and were not ashamed". After sinning Adam and Eve tried in their own way to cover their nakedness by making some insufficient aprons of itchy, sticky fig leaves. When they heard the voice of God in the garden, they tried to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God. They were no longer on 'The Lord's Side'. Sin had alienated them from God, and caused them to be un-reconciled, even as enemies of God. But God, who is rich in his mercy, clothed their nakedness, for, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skin and clothed them." (Gen. 3:21)

Because of Adam's sin every natural born person is conceived into this world naked and destitute of righteousness. As Job said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither --". Do you know of any natural human baby that was not born naked ? David said, "In sin did my mother conceive me". Paul wrote, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned". Do you know of any natural human being that has never been subject to the condemnation of 'death' ? "Verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity" (Ps. 39:5). For "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom 3:10).

Every elect child of God must be clothed with or made the righteousness of God, so they will be fit for heaven and 'on the Lord's side' eternally. "For he (God) hath made him (Christ) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). As it is written, "We know that all things work together for good

to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son –“ (Rom. 8:28-29a). But that is an eternal matter. While God has reconciled all of his elect to himself in Christ on the cross, not all of God’s elect are reconciled to him in time. Some live and die in disobedience to his word. Who then, is on the Lord's side in time - day by day ?

In order to be reconciled to God and be on the Lord’s side in this time world the elect must first be converted to the truth of the gospel. The gospel, (i.e. the good news about Christ according to the Scriptures) is not the means of eternal life. Jesus Christ himself is the means of eternal life (John 5:39, I John 5:11-12). The gospel brings that “life and immortality to light” (II Tim. 1:7-10). Conversion is the work of God and not the work of man (as is regeneration, i. e. being born again). God must give understanding or “hearing ears” to the elect in order for them to hear and understand the gospel.

Scripture often uses the analogy of “athletes” to teach truth. David did in Psalms 19:5, as did Solomon in Eccles. 9:11, and Paul did so in I Cor. 9:24 and Heb. 12:1. Meaning no disrespect to the language of Scripture, I would like to use a football analogy to present what is on my mind. Since it is true, that only God gives birth to his children, and only God gives understanding or hearing ears to those whom he gives birth, it could be said, God ‘recruits some’ to be on his team or on his side in time. I am sure some will not take kindly to my terminology, but please be charitable, after all - Jesus did say “Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own ? --- for many be called , but few chosen”.

While God causes us to be born again, and then converts us to the truth, several things must take place, (again using my football analogy), in order for us to make the team or be on the Lord’s side in time. While these things do not require any individual ability on our part, (and if it did the Lord would give those to us), it does require some work. Paul

wrote, "-- work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:12-13). And again we read, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10). The very grace of God that brings salvation teaches us to live godly in this present world (Titus 2:11).

It seems to me that the first thing we must do in order to be on the Lord's side, (using my football analogy), is we must be good receivers. Paul wrote, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain". Jesus came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as did receive him ---". Some receivers receive the seed by the way side. Some receive the seed into stony places, with joy, but only endure for a little while. Some receive the seed among the thorns, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and they become unfruitful. "But he that received the seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matthew 13:18-22).

During the four years I played football I always played "center" and "linebacker" except for one play in one game. One of our receivers was injured and our coach gave some of us Seniors a chance for "glory". I ran out for one pass. The ball almost hit me in the head. I didn't catch it. The next play I was returned to my position as center. I am so glad the Lord plows the good ground and makes us good receivers.

It also occurred to me that we must be good kickers. The old habits of the flesh must be kicked or "put off". Paul wrote, "If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: That ye put off concerning the former conversation (way of life) the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts –

Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another". We should kick the old man so hard that he dies. I know that sounds bad to the natural ear, but we are told to "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth". That word mortify means to subdue, deaden or put to death. (The way some people misinterpret scripture, it's a miracle we don't have more mass murders in some religions.)

Then I realized we must also be good carriers - not of a ball - or gossip - or of a disease, but of a cross. Jesus said, "If any man (woman, boy or girl) will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow me". We do not need to create a new path (or as they say in football open a hole) - we just need to follow Christ in "his steps" – in the old path. We are not worthy of being on the Lord's side unless we are willing to carry a cross – Jesus said, "He that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:32-39).

Finally, as I bring this sporting analogy to a close, we must know which uniform to put on. A player on one team would be totally out of place wearing the uniform of the other team. He would have to line up on the other side of the field with the other team. He would look and sound rather stupid, standing with the other team, but shouting "hey, I'm on the other side". I played ball before the face mask and so many player protective rules. Bloody noses and black eyes were common place. Thanks to football, I have worn partial false teeth since my senior year in high school.

As rough as contact sports can be, can you imagine what it would be like to wear the wrong uniform in the time of war. Yet we find some of God's minister's who claim to be on The Lord's Side, but want to wear the uniform of the enemy. That can be down right dangerous to say the least, and hypocritical to say the most (Isaiah 4:1). If a person is going to wear the wrong uniform he ought not to complain when he gets hit on the field of play or shot at in the battle.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

The Lord's side has a uniform to wear. We must put on Christ. We must put on truth. We must put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against spiritual wickedness in high places. Our uniform glows in the dark, for by putting on Christ, we should reflect the light of the world, and men should see our good works and glorify our Father which is heaven.

Who is on the Lord's side ? Not those who give lip service to his name, and follow after the ways of the golden calf. Not those who depart from the faith and give heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. Not those who forsake the truth and turn God's people unto fables. Not those who forsake the "old paths, where is the good way" and proclaim "We will not walk therein". Not those who are lukewarm with apathy and indifference, wallowing in self satisfaction and materialism. They may think they are on the Lord's side – But Jesus says, "I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked --".

The Laodicean church was surely loved of the Lord for he said, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten --". But some of them were not on the Lord's side in time, for he said, "be zealous therefore and repent". They were poor and naked before God in time,

their apathy and indifference had separated them from God's blessings. Jesus said unto them, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear ---" (Rev. 3:18).

Who is on the Lord's side ? Those who lose their life for His sake. Those who have a little strength, and have kept

His word, and have not denied His name. Those who run the race lawfully. Those who finish the course. Those who remain faithful even unto death, contending for the faith once delivered unto the saints. Those who say with Paul, “For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain”. Those who can say, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me”. (BA)

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