

THE ROYAL GUIDE ON THE ROYAL ROAD

“Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Hebrews 1:9).

Happy the subject whose king is mighty enough to provide an invincible fortress against the enemy. Happier still, the subject whose king is wise enough to provide inerrant guidance in the course of life. Such a king is Christ. No one of His people need miss the meaning of life, or waste precious years following futile paths that lead ultimately to frustration or desolation. Their King has received His crown—His right to rule—for His irrevocable commitment to that which is right and lawful—conforming to Divine regulation.

Thou hast elected rightness...rejected lawlessness. The words “love” and “hate” must be seen in this light, rather than as an expression of emotional attitudes toward these concepts. Else, we are in dilemma of contradictions. The most fundamental insight into the issue is the statement of God in Malachi 1:2, and later quoted by Paul in Romans 9:13—“*Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated.*” This is, of course, in direct contradiction to God’s injunctions to love even our enemies. Jesus, himself, seems to contradict this injunction in His statement that he who does not “*hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters is not able to be my disciple*” (Luke 14:26). Obviously the words “hate” and “love” are relative expressions of these texts—the choice to follow Christ, over objections by any one of these persons. In the matter of Jacob and Esau, it is clear from different texts in both the Old and New Testaments, that God never abandoned Esau in terms of a personal identity with him, but rather had elected Jacob to be the father of His people, over Esau who was the rightful heir as the firstborn. Esau could have (although he apparently did not) enjoyed whatever degree of personal relationship to God that he would choose.

The importance of this distinction lies in the issue of will versus emotions. The commitment of Christ to the principles of truth and rightness is beyond all human feeling. Therein lies the inexorable fulfillment of God’s purposes in the world. By the same token, therein lies the stability of the followers of Christ. The human emotions of either love or hate are completely undependable, as well as unfathomable. There are many residual attitudes or feelings in the believer that remain irrepressibly empathetic with human folly. The human mind is not instantly purged of all of them. A moment of commitment to Christ does not erase all human affections and render the brain *tabula rasa* (clean sheet). There is much of reorientation and renewal, but there is also much that must yet be purged in the refining fires of God’s dealing with us. Salvation is evidenced, not by good deeds or right thoughts or pure feelings, but by caring about Christ. Paul urges the Colossians to “*set your affections on things above*” (Col. 3:2). They obviously needed this instruction. Such an attitude was not an automatic part of conversion.

It is further important to understand the meaning of the word translated “Iniquity.” It is the Hebrew word, *rasa*, and means “unregulated” or “lawless”.

This line is a quotation from Psalm 45. Paul quotes the Septuagint (Greek) version of this verse, which uses the word *anomia* which means “lawless.”

Even though the human mind may sometimes entertain the things of the world, the redeemed spirit has irrevocably rejected lawlessness or an attitude of indifference to the law of God. John says in his first epistle, that the one who has been begotten of God cannot be lawless (I John 3:9). In 3:4, John defines his use of the word “sin” as *anomia*—lawlessness. If one has Christ in one’s spirit, one can never again be indifferent to the law of God, even though one may break that law in a moment of carelessness. Herein lies the difference between the criminal and the law breaker. The criminal is indifferent to the law and lives a life of crime. The lawbreaker is generally respectful of the law but has a momentary lapse.

The essence of the matter is that when one elects to follow Christ, one *de facto* elects rightness and rejects lawlessness, even though human feelings are not always purged of their affection for human folly. Following God inevitably puts us on the path of righteousness.

“The oil of Gladness.” This is a Hebrew expression (*semen shashon*) which really means the “firstling” or “best” oil—that which was used at royal feasts to anoint the highest personage present. The phrase in Hebrews 1 shows rather the act of God in identifying Christ as the peerless King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

WITH CHRIST IN OUR SPIRITS, WE ARE ONE WITH THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE MONARCH OF THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE KINGDOM ON THE HIGHEST PATHWAY OF RIGHTNESS.

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