

PRECIOUS THINGS

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. The word “precious” is often used in both OT. and N.T. with reference to several different things.
2. It’s from an original Hebrew and/or Greek term sometimes translated by the words “reputation,” “honorable,” “dear,” “much set by,” “splendid,” “glorious;” but more often by the word “precious.”
3. “Precious” is a word used in both O.T. and N.T. in application to things:
 - a. Of substantial importance.
 - b. Of considerable dignity or magnitude.
 - c. Of rare and costly value.
 - d. Of majesty, splendor and beauty.
 - e. Held dear, beloved, and precious.
4. It is used in both O.T. and N.T. to refer to an describe things that, depending on the context, are regarded by either God or man, or by both God and man, as dear unto them, had in reputation, held in high esteem, of great value, honorable or precious.
5. Since the Bible so often speaks of such a wide variety of precious things of such importance, dignity, majesty, splendor, and value; and since, according to Phil.1:9,10, “in order that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ” (v.10b), we are admonished to “abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, in order that ye may approve (examine, test, try, distinguish) the things that are excellent,” i.e.:
 - a. The things that differ;
 - b. Have a proper sense of what is vital, or of more value;
 - c. Learn to prize what is of value;
 - d. Distinguish good from evil. (See Heb.5:13,14)
6. It is therefore in order that we consider some of these things the Bible identifies are precious; i.e., of great value, honorable, and to be held in high esteem.

II. DISCUSSION

A. SPIRITUAL WISDOM OR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IS PRECIOUS, Prov.3:13-18; 4:7; 8:10,11; 20:15; 1:7,29-33; 9:10; Cf. Job 28:28; Psa.111:10.

1. The ultimate end of Solomon in the book of Proverbs is to teach, not secular or political wisdom, but the knowledge of God, which makes one wise unto salvation which is in Christ Jesus, is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, and thoroughly furnishes the man of God unto all good works, Prov.1:1-7; 2Tim.3:15-17.
2. The glowing privileges and blessings of this precious wisdom are set forth in Prov.3:13-18.
3. The importance of acquiring this wisdom is pressed upon us with intense earnestness in Prov.4:5-9,13, as “the principle thing,” as our very “life.”
4. Instruction is the means of gaining it. We are directed to perceive the words of understanding; to receive the instruction as a complete rule of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity, every good path, and keep you from the ways of darkness and crookedness, Prov.1:1-7; 2:1-15.
 - a. In view of this, consider how we acquire what James instructs us to seek through prayer, Jas.1:5,6; Cf. Col.1:9,10,27,28; 3:16.
5. After having gone the whole circuit in his search; after having considered all the possibilities; his conclusion of the whole matter is summed up in the truth that “the fear of God,” in its practical exercise, “is the whole of man,” Eccl.12:13.
6. Truly, “the fear of the Lord is the beginning (the principal part; the first in place, order or rank, chief, principal thing) of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”
 - a. Of all knowledge, the knowledge of God is the principal part. No one can ever be or become truly wise who does not begin with God.
 - b. There is no true knowledge without godliness.
 - c. All heathen wisdom in but folly.
 - d. Cf. Job 28:12-28; Rom.1:18-22,23ff; 1Cor.1:18-25.
 - e. The implied contrast within our verses in Prov. is that the “foolish” do not “fear” God and, therefore, “despise wisdom and instruction.”

- f. Those who do not fear God come to despise. 2Pet.2:10 shows this: "...despise dominion..." See Prov.23:9; Mt.7:6; Psa.14:1; 10:4; Cf. Gen.6:5; Rom.1:21,22ff.
- 7. The "fear of the Lord" which "is the principal part of knowledge," is that affectionate reverence, by which the person bends himself and his will humbly and willingly to God's will – Jesus being the perfect example we are admonished to follow.
- 8. Such wisdom is more precious than rubies, Prov.3:13-15; 8:10,11,19; 16:16
- 9. Prov.20:15: "There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel."
 - a. In this wisdom one has found a true treasure; a treasure above all others.
 - b. This treasure is not the standard of the world and the worldly wise. Their gold and rubies are far above the "lips of knowledge" here said to be "a precious jewel."
 - c. For "gold, and a multitude of rubies" are the wisdom, hope and confidence of the worldly wise; and ultimately its ruin!
 - d. In reality, as suggested here, such is nothing compared to "the lips of knowledge" here said to be "a more precious jewel."
 - e. Of course, it's Divine knowledge only that stands out in this high preeminence.
 - f. Human wisdom may captivate the imagination, and furnish its measure of useful information. But its fruit, not matter how useful, does not feed the heart, nor save the soul.
 - g. Even if they should be "goodly pearls," they are not "the pearl of great price" – that precious jewel, which dims the luster of earth's most splendid treasures. Cf. Mt.13:44-46.
- 10. How precious a jewel are the lips of knowledge when the gospel messenger "brings glad tidings of great joy" to those imprisoned in sin! Rom.10:9-17.
- 11. In view of the fact that "the knowledge of God is the principal of all knowledge," consider what John says it means to know God and who it is that knows him, 1Jno.2:3-6

B. POINTING TO FUTURE DELIVERANCE GOD IN ISA.28:16 IN REFERENCE TO CHRIST DECLARED THAT JESUS CHRIST AND HIS SHED BLOOD ARE PRECIOUS. Cf. 1Pet.2:1-8; 1:18-20 (A decree determined in eternity and accomplished in time)

1. According to Isa.28:16, prophetically referring to Jesus Christ, Jehovah God said:
 - a. “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone”
 - (1) This foundation is the one sure “Rock” on which complete dependence may be placed. Cf. 1Cor.10:4.
 - (2) This foundation was firm. It was the eternal Rock, with its roots in God’s own everlasting nature and holy character.
 - (3) The Foundation was not created; it was laid by God himself.
 - (4) This foundation, that of the Son of God, is laid deep in toil, in suffering, in tears, in humility and indignity; it is laid in the agony of the cross.
 - (5) Yet there is none can move it. Other foundations can no man lay. Cf. 1Cor.3:11.
 - b. It s “a stone, a tried stone.”
 - (1) A stone of proof, of testing; one that can be relied upon.
 - (2) “i.e., of proved stability, so as to be suitable for the foundation of a building.” – Gesenius’ Hebrew-Chaldee Lexicon of the O.T., p.111.
 - (3) “tried” – “to put to the test, tempt...it denotes examining to determine essential qualities, especially integrity.” –Theological Wordbook of the O.T., Vol. 1, p.100.
 - (4) Jesus was a tried stone, flawless, tested, proved genuine; and it therefore the firm, immovable, and permanent foundation of salvation and safety. Cf. Heb.5:8,9; Mt.4:1-10; Heb.2:9-18; 4:14,15; 12:1-3; 1Pet.2:21-23; Rom.8:1-3.
 - c. “A precious corner stone”

- (1) A fixed foundation; can't be moved; a stone of great value, of unequalled importance; precious, of great spiritual and moral value.
- (2) The imagery is, no doubt, drawn from the practice of Oriental kings, and notably Solomon, to employ foundation-stones of enormous size and weight at the corners of buildings weighing a hundred ton or more as weight bearers for the building of great importance in binding together the sides of the building.
- (3) W.E. Vine, I., 241, observes that "they were laid so as to give strength to the two walls which they connected."
- (4) In Isa.28:16, with reference to Christ, he is said to be "a precious corner stone;" in Psa.118:22, "the head stone of the corner;" in 1Pet.2:6, "a chief corner stone, elect, precious;" in Ac.4:10-12, "the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other..."
- (5) As the corner stone of the building was of necessity considered to be of great importance, the phrase "corner stone":
 - (a) Is sometimes used symbolically to denote any principle person, as were the princes of Egypt in Isa.19:13 ("stay," marg. "corners")
 - (b) Is thus applied to Jesus Christ, who, having been once rejected, was afterward set in the highest honor, Mt.21:42 (Mk.12:10; Lk.20:17); Psa.118:22; Ac.4:10-12; Eph.2:20,21.
- (6) Jesus Christ is called "a precious corner stone"
 - (a) In reference to his being the foundation of the faith, the N.T. system of faith, the gospel system of salvation by faith for both Jew and Gentile.
 - (b) As the chief corner stone, elect, precious, he unites Jews and Gentiles in one body, the church, the house of God, Eph.2:11-21.

- (c) In reference to the “precious”, the absolute important, honorable, valuable, glorious, indispensable place he occupies in the divine plan of human redemption, 1Pet.2:1-6; Jno.8:24; Jno.3:14-18; Heb.5:8,9; Ac.4:10-12.
 - (d) We might say he unites time/eternity; deity/humanity; O.T./N.T.; mercy/justice; etc.
 - (e) Precious in himself, as holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; precious in the eyes of believers, 1Pet.2:7.
- d. “A sure foundation”
 - (1) “Sure” – certain, unfailing, firm, stable, reliable; capable of being depended upon without fear of failure; worthy of confidence.
 - (2) “Foundation,” the basis of groundwork of anything; that on which anything stands and by which it is supported.”
 - (3) In Mt.16:18 he said to be the “builder”—building upon the “rock”, the solid rock of the truth Peter had confessed concerning him and his identity.
 - (4) While in 1Cor.3:11 he himself is said to be the foundation which is laid.
 - (5) Then in Eph.2:20 he, himself, is said to be “the chief corner stone” of the building, of the foundation laid by the preaching of the apostles and prophets.
 - (6) Without a doubt, then, we can know in whom we believe, and in what we believe, and in why we believe it, with the assurance that God is pleased, and Christ’s authority is respected!
- 2. How precious, how glorious, how magnificent, it is to have this assurance procured by his precious blood by means of the gospel of Jesus Christ, his “worded grace,” Mk.16:15,16; Tit.3:4-7; Ac.20:32.
- 3. The believer who builds on this stone, this foundation, this precious corner stone, shall never be put to shame, Isa.28:16; 1Pet.2:6; Rom.10:9-11.
- 4. How does one build on this foundation? Mt.7:21-27; Lk.6:46; Heb.5:8,9; Mk.16:15,16; 1Pet.4:17,18; 2Th.1:7-10.

C. PROMISES GIVEN TO THOSE OF LIKE PRECIOUS FAITH ARE EXCEEDING GREAT AND PRECIOUS, 2Pet.1:1-4.

1. The fact of this readily appears when and if we consider their source, their author – God, who, according to his divine power, hath given them to us.
 - a. They derive their greatness and preciousness from the holiness of God in all its glory, from his justice in all its inflexibility, from his infinite love, benevolence and mercy in which they originated, of which they are the magnificent expression, and all the resources of which they open (i.e., all things that pertain to life and godliness), and made possible by his Almighty Power.
 - b. Is there not an important sense, then, in which these promises are as precious and as great as God is glorious?
 - c. Those, therefore, who neglect these great and precious promises of God, or seek them through the wrong medium, despise Jehovah himself who promises them conditionally according to his will.
2. The fact of the exceeding greatness and preciousness of these God-given promises is manifested when we consider the ones to whom they are made, and the medium through which they have been made, or the way in which they are secured and or conferred.
 - a. “His divine power has given them to us,” according to V.3.
 - b. But the “us” of V.3 is the “them that have obtained like precious faith with us” of V.1 to whom Peter is writing the Epistle.
 - c. The “us” of V.1 is Peter and the other apostles of Jesus Christ who had obtained the “precious faith.”
 - d. Therefore, the great and precious promises are given by the divine power of God to the apostles of Christ and to all those who “have obtained the like precious faith” with them.
 - e. The medium or the way through which these great and precious promises are secured or conferred upon us is “through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ...through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,” Vv.1-3,4b.

- (1) That is through Jesus Christ by means of the gospel of Christ by which God makes men righteous or justifies them.
 - (2) See Rom.1:16,17; 3:9-26; 10:1-4; Gal.2:16; 2Cor.5:18-21.
3. The exceeding greatness and preciousness of these God-given promises are also evident when we consider their immutability to the faithful, according to Rom.8:28-39, where the “all things” therein are obviously the “all things” of 2Pet.1:1-4.
4. What are these “exceeding great and precious promises,” or how inclusive are they?
 - a. Answer: “All things that pertain unto life and godliness.”
 - b. “All spiritual blessings in Christ”
 - c. That would include our initial forgiveness of past sins in obeying the gospel and on through our life-time of faith and obedience, including repentance, confession, and forgiveness when we sin as a child of God, and finally eternal life in heaven.
 - d. Therefore, redemption of the soul is said to be “precious” in Psa.49:8. And no wonder, for “the precious blood of Christ” is the purchase price of our redemption, 1Pet.1:18-20; Ac.20:28; Rom.5:8-11; Eph.1:7; Col.1:14; Heb.9:15,26-28.

D. THE DEATH OF THE SAINTS IS PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF JEHOVAH GOD, Psa.116:15.

1. Remember the meaning of “precious”.
 - a. It is used in both the O.T. and N.T. to refer to and describe things that, depending on the context, are regarded by either God or man, or by both God and man, as things dear unto them, things had in reputation, things held in high esteem, things of great value, things honorable or precious.”
 - b. In this text, it is used of God with reference to the value he places upon the death of his saints.
 - c. He does not regard their death as a loss or a dread; nr death as a great robber.
2. Being precious in the sight of the Lord, the death of his saints is a thing:

- a. Of substantial importance to God.
 - b. Of considerable dignity or magnitude.
 - c. Of great value.
 - d. Of majesty, splendor and beauty.
 - e. Held dear, beloved and precious.
3. Being precious in the sight of the Lord, he gives them a fitting reward, 2Tim.4:6-8. Cf. Phil.1:21,23; Heb.2:9-18; 1Th.4:13-18.
 4. How different it is with those who die in sin! Mt.25:46; Jno.5:28,29; 2Th.1:6-10.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Indeed, among the many precious things spoken of in the Bible are the ones we have considered in this series of lessons:
 - a. Spiritual wisdom or knowledge of God is precious.
 - b. Jesus Christ and his shed blood are precious.
 - c. God-given promises to those of like precious faith are exceeding great and precious.
 - d. Precious in the sight of God is the death of his saints.
2. In your present spiritual condition or state, can you rightly lay claim to the blessings of these precious things?
3. If so, God bless you! If not, why not act in faith and obedience now to lay claim to them?