

Series: Questions

Title: Why Transgress So That You Cannot Prosper?

Text: 2 Chronicles 24: 1-27

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2 Chronicles 24: 20: And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.

Under the old covenant of works, *the commandments of the LORD* to true believers were to come to the LORD through the blood of a lamb offered for them by the high priest—a type of faith in Christ. They were to worship only the LORD and have nothing to do with idols. They were to worship only in the LORD's house and have nothing to do with the groves and the idols of the heathen. This was true love to their brethren.

Under the new covenant of grace, the commandments of the LORD to the believer are the same. We are to come to the LORD through faith in Christ—our Lamb and our great High Priest. And we are to love our brethren. That means, we too, are to worship only the LORD, only with the Lord's people (his house) and we are to have nothing to do with idols and will-workers.

Proposition: The person that turns from Christ cannot prosper, only that person that perseveres trusting Christ unto the end shall be prospered by the Lord.

We have this truth illustrated for us in two men in this text: 1) Jehoiada the priest and 2) king Joash

JEHOIADA THE PRIEST

2 Chronicles 24: 2 And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

Jehoiada the priest was a man whom God gave a new heart to believe the Lord. "Jehoiada" means "*Jehovah knows or one who knows Jehovah.*" If his son, Zacharias, is the prophet Christ spoke of then Christ called him Barachias which means *blessed of Jehovah.*

Jehoiada was a sinner like all God's elect. So the only reason Jehoiada had a truly pious character is because of the work of the Holy Spirit in his heart. His mind and heart were turned to cast all his care on Christ by the Spirit of God. His heart was to worship Jehovah in his house with his people promoting his glory due to the work of the Lord upon his heart. Everything Jehoiada did was motivated by this one sure foundation by the grace of God.

The first thing Jehoiada did was establish the priests and the king telling them how they should serve aright—**2 Chronicles 23: 2: And they went about in Judah, and gathered the Levites out of all the cities of Judah, and the chief of the fathers of Israel, and they came to Jerusalem. 3: And all the congregation made a covenant with the king in the house of God. And he said unto them, Behold, the king's son shall reign, as the LORD hath said of the sons of David...8: So the Levites and all Judah did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest had commanded,...**

Christ our High Priest makes his people kings and priests unto God.

Revelation 1: 5...Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6: And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

So through faith in Christ Jehoiada honored Christ our King and High Priest. Therefore, God prospered him so he could honor Christ more.

The second thing Jehoiada did was declare that God graciously remembers his covenant—**2 Chronicles 23: 16: And Jehoiada made a covenant between him, and between all the people, and between the king, that they should be the LORD’S people.**

When Christ establishes true worship in the heart, he makes with us an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure.

Luke 1: 68: Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, 69: And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; 70: As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: 71: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; 72: To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73: The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, 74: That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear 75: In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

2 Corinthians 1: 20: For all the promises of God in [Christ] *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.

So Jehoiada honored Christ our Covenant. Therefore, God prospered him so he could honor Christ more.

Then Jehoiada destroyed Baal and his images—**2 Chronicles 23: 17: Then all the people went to the house of Baal, and brake it down, and brake his altars and his images in pieces, and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altars.**

When Christ accomplished purging his elect of our sin through death, it was the death of Satan’s power! Therefore, in regeneration, the Spirit convinces us “*Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*” (Jn 16: 11) When Christ turns the heart of his child to him, he destroys our idolatry, making us love him and hate his enemies.

Psalm 119: 128:...I esteem all *thy* precepts *concerning* all *things to be* right; *and* I hate every false way.

Psalm 139: 21: Do not I hate them, O LORD, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? 22: I hate them with perfect hatred: I count them mine enemies.

So Jehoida worshipped the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Therefore, God prospered Jehoiada so that even the nation’s government was brought into order. The problem today with corrupt governments is the result of idolatrous will-worshippers, who claim worship Christ. Only when God establishes true religion in God’s people is the nation truly happy and blessed.

Psalm 144: 15: Happy *is that* people, that is in such a case: *yea, happy is that* people, whose God *is* the LORD.

Our Savior's kingdom of righteousness and peace is established forever.

Isaiah 9: 7: Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

God even honored Jehoiada in death. His body was laid to rest among the kings in Jerusalem. So was Zechariah his son. He was martyred for Christ! Every believer who perseveres in faith unto the end shall be raised by Christ to rest among his faithful kings in heavenly Jerusalem.

James 1:12: Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown, of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

So when you see God raise up Jehoiada behold Christ who God raised up. All this is what Christ works in his people for his people.

Psalm 110: 3: Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness...

We see in Jehoiada a man who Christ made to prosper in that he was saved by Christ and prospered in righteousness and true holiness by Christ. And by giving him a new motive to honor the Lord in all that he did, God made him prosper as his priest and made the nation prosper because of his faithfulness. Those prospered by Christ in righteousness, honor Christ through faith and God prospers us more so we can honor Christ more. That is the prosperity in our text. God says "*them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.*" (1 Sam 2: 30) So "*Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper?*"

KING JOASH

2 Chronicles 24: 2 And Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest.

We see in king Joash that no man who forsakes the LORD can prosper.

All the days of Jehoiada the priest, king Joash did that which was right in the sight of the LORD. He ordered the repair of the house of the Lord. He made a proclamation for all the people to bring a willing offering to pay for the work and they did so gladly. And he hired the men to do the work out of what they brought—**2 Chronicles 24: 13: So the workmen wrought, and the work was perfected by them, and they set the house of God in his state, and strengthened it. 14: And when they had finished it, they brought the rest of the money before the king and Jehoiada, whereof were made vessels for the house of the LORD, even vessels to minister, and to offer *withal*, and spoons, and vessels of gold and silver. And they offered burnt offerings in the house of the LORD continually all the days of Jehoiada.**

Yet, Joash stands as a warning to us all. He is a sad illustration of the deceitfulness of man's natural heart. He bears witness to the truth that unless a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God. Though he renewed the temple of God, his own heart was never renewed by God. Though he led the way in restoring the worship of God, he never worshiped God in his heart. Only Christ can renew his holy temple. Christ's temple is his people, "*his body, the church, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*"

Joash was outwardly a very good king. He appeared thoroughly devoted to God outwardly until he lost the influence of Jehoiada's good life. Then it was manifest that there was rottenness in his soul. Then it was manifest that everything he did he did for Joash with no regard for God, his honor, or his Word.

Joah was manifest to be reprobate by three things:

One, as easily as he was influenced for good by Jehoiada when it was profitable for himself, he was influenced for evil by wicked men when profitable for himself—**2 Chronicles 24: 17: Now after the death of Jehoiada came the princes of Judah, and made obeisance to the king. Then the king hearkened unto them.** The princes of Judah flattered him by *making obeisance to the king*—bowed down to him and owned him to be their superior. And because they had flattered him so, **Then the king hearkened unto them. 18: And they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served groves and idols: and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass.**

The first step to apostasy is to give ear to unregenerate men who turn you from true worship and your true ministry. These wicked flatterers come in many forms: the sceptic calling your faith into question, asking, “What is truth?”; the idler who coaxes the preacher from his study; the worldling who says, “You are free, let’s eat, drink and be merry.”; the business man who flatters with a business proposition for great gains; the harlot who tempts; the conspirator commending his ingenious doctrines of men. When Joash hearkens, away he goes, departing from the faith he once professed. Let every believer take heed to this: the first step to apostasy comes by giving ear to unregenerate men who turn you from the singleness of Christ to vain doctrines of men. Thus your ministry is ruined.

The second thing that manifest Joash was reprobate is that while he hearkened to wicked men, he would no longer hearken to God’s true prophets sent by God to reprove him—**2 Chronicles 24: 19: Yet he sent prophets to them, to bring them again unto the LORD; and they testified against them: but they would not give ear.**

The haughtiness of the natural heart resents rebuke from the Lord’s messenger who he once rejoiced in. To resent and reject the rebuke of the Lord is to inflict upon ourselves the most serious, and often mortal, injury. Then comes a very rapid spiritual decline from bad to worse; from hearkening to unbelievers to hostility and a deaf ear towards God’s true ambassadors; from wrongness of attitude to iniquity in action.

So the third thing that manifest that Joash had a corrupt heart was that next he killed God’s messengers—**2 Chronicles 24: 20: And the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, which stood above the people, and said unto them, Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you. 21: And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD. 22: Thus Joash the king remembered not the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but slew his son. And when he died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it.**

They slew God’s prophet in the Lord’s house. Men who reject Christ have no reverence for God’s house, that is, his preachers or his people. They may not actually commit murder but by hard speeches they murder in the heart. They remember not the kindness but murder faithful father’s in the gospel who did them good.

In Joash we see how far men will go in their form of religion when it in their best interest, while all along their heart is dead. How is it that many seem to follow Christ for a time then turn back and walk no more with him? The Holy Spirit says they “*went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us*” (1 John 2:19).

Can a man prosper who rejects Christ and rebels against the sovereign God of glory? No way!—**2 Chronicles 24: 18:...wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this their trespass...20:...because ye have forsaken the LORD, he hath also forsaken you.**

The man who rejects Christ for his vanity shall be rejected by God. Joash suffered humiliating defeat in battle—**v24: For the army of the Syrians came with a small company of men, and the LORD delivered a very great host into their hand, because they had forsaken the LORD God of their fathers. So they executed judgment against Joash.**

Then bodily disease—**v25: And when they were departed from him, (for they left him in great diseases,)**

Then his own friends turned on him—**v25...his own servants conspired against him for the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest, and slew him on his bed, and he died:** [to add dishonor, God executed him by the hand of an Ammonite and a Moabite.]

Then a dishonorable burial—**v25:...and they buried him in the city of David, but they buried him not in the sepulchres of the kings.**

After this the judgment. When Zechariah “**died, he said, The LORD look upon it, and require it.**” Christ promised to those who reject him and his messengers—*Matthew 23: 35: That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36: Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.*

So we see two men: a faithful man who persevered in faith who God honored and a man who turned away from Christ and who could not prosper. So “*Thus saith God, Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper?*”

Christ keeps those who keep his commandments:

1 John 3:23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

John 15:10 [Christ said] If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.

But those who turn from the holy commandment prove they never were regenerated and therefore they cannot prosper.

2 Peter 2: 20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. 21: For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

Those the Spirit of God regenerates and gives faith, persevere in faith one way: *1 Peter 1: 5: [we] are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.* Christ was forsaken of God in place of his people, so Christ promises, “*I will never leave you nor forsake you.*” Therefore, our prosperity is in righteousness and faith by the Lord himself. Therefore, we shall never fall away.

But never let a believer *presume* that we shall *never* fall—to do so is to be full of pride.

Proverbs 16:18: Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

2 Peter 1: 10: Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen!