

## Devotional Thoughts :: MANY sons unto GLORY

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Robert Wurtz II

What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. (Psalm 8:4,5)

Perhaps you may have wondered, what *is* Eternal Life? Is it to be saved from the wrath of God? Is it a promise of blessings in this life and the next? Is it streets of gold and mansions bright? Jesus answers the question in John 17, As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Men don't mind religion so much, because religion is essentially *worship in the absence of God*. The Jews knew such religion and they knew it well. God had been silent for 400 years leading up unto John the Baptist. The LORD had left off, but the Jews religion kept on. It is as if they wist not that the LORD had departed. They built buildings for God. Isn't that what so many want to do? - To build *something lasting* for God.

This is the crux of the message Steven preached in Acts 7. Israel had built a lot of things in their history, but God desired to go beyond the Wilderness Tabernacle and the Majestic Temples and simply draw *near* to his people. He desired to rule and reign preparing them for even greater glory as time went on. This would climax in in Acts 2. But yet, many of the Jews could not handle even a slight nearness to God.

Do people really want God? Do they..., *really*? Many say they do. Many have carried on as if that were their motive. Yet history often proves otherwise. For example, it is a sad commentary, but common among men, that they used the hypocrisy of Samuel's sons as an excuse to usher in a king in Israel. If a people really wanted God they would have greatly withstood the challenges, but they did not.

This would mark God's ongoing departure from Israel. He laments this fact in conversation with the prophet in I Samuel 8. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee.

God was trying to draw near and the people were pushing Him away. Yet they still wanted to retain their identity as His people. They wanted to be known as the people of the book, but God wanted them to be *the people of the God of the book*. There is a great difference. They were OK so long as God stayed in the Tabernacle or the Temple, but when Christ came walking the earth as the living Temple of God they rose up to destroy that Temple. And this is the tragedy of the human condition, men and women do not like to retain God in their knowledge. They resist God on every hand even under the pretense of serving Him.

Steven quoted directly from Isaiah 66:1,2 and put his finger on the point of controversy God had with those religious people. God was not interested in dwelling in a Temple. What fellowship has God with the gold and wood that those places were built from? Had not His hand made all of those things? Was not heaven His throne and the earth His footstool? He created the raw materials that were used in the Temple. His hands made the Temple He desired to live in back in the Garden - when He reached down into the dust and formed man in His image and likeness.

Has not my hands made all these things?, The LORD asked. God did not fellowship with the raw materials of silver and gold when they were in the ground and He did not fellowship with them once man fashioned them into a dwelling place for Him.

*To this man will I look*, God said. This is what Acts 2 is all about. God was taking up residence in those that were willing to

o turn to Christ in sincere repentance and faith; and to cease striving with the Holy Ghost so He could come in to them and *rest*.