

# Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXV

October 25, 2015

No. 43

## Thinking With God And Man

(Jerry Fite)

**W**e know from Scripture that God’s thoughts are not man’s thoughts, and God’s ways and thoughts are higher than man’s (*Isaiah 55:8-9*). But this does not mean that man’s thoughts and ways never harmonize with God’s. Sometimes the thoughts we are to think and the ways God would have us to walk are acknowledged by man as being honorable.

For example, Paul was earnest in gathering funds from churches to minister to the needs of needy saints in Judea (*I Corinthians 16:1-2, 2 Corinthians 8-9*). Paul instructed the individual congregations giving money to choose those who would accompany the ones delivering the funds. Paul would be one to accompany them only “*if suitable*” or fitting (*I Corinthians 16:3-4, 2 Cor. 8:19*).

Why take these measures? Paul writes, “*...avoiding this, that any man should blame us in the matter of this bounty which is ministered by us...*” (*2 Corinthians 8:20*). If Paul or just one individual were taking all the mon-

ey collected by the churches, then problems might arise regarding money and honesty. But the individual churches chose the men they entrusted with their contribution; Paul went with them only if suitable; checks and balances were in place to avoid impropriety. Paul sums it up by adding, “*...for we take thought for things honorable, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men*” (*2 Corinthians 8:21*).

Paul lived honorably in God’s sight. But he thought also about what is honorable in the sight of men. Even men know stealing is wrong, especially when it is their money that is being pilfered. Here is an example where man is in tune with God’s thoughts. Paul is thoughtful to make sure that honorable honesty prevails in the sight of God, and also in the sight of men.

There is a tendency to “get even” when we have “been wronged”. But God directs us not to retaliate with evil. “*Render to no man evil for evil. Take thought for things honorable in the sight of all men*” (*Romans 12:17*).

We cannot control what others do to us, but God’s ways are clear in how we are to react. Since vengeance belongs to God, acknowledging His sovereignty, we “*avenge not ourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God*” (*Romans 12:19*). God will take care of all evil. We leave it in his hands. Knowing justice will eventually prevail, we can now pray for God’s blessings upon the one who did the evil to us (*Matthew 5:44, Romans 12:14*). Doing things beneficial for our persecutor, instead of hurting the one who hurt us rounds out our response to overcoming evil (*I Thessalonians 5:15, Romans 12:20*).

There are some reactions to evil that even men consider to be wrong. Would men consider hitting a woman who has just cursed them out in public to be honorable? So, when cursed out by a woman in public, we should consider what is honorable before men when tempted to get even.

Living as a Christian is right, and acknowledged many times in man’s conscience.