

The Incredible Power of the Individual

An invisible speck on a small planet, amidst a universe billions of light years across: that is how big you are. An observer on a hilltop looking at you in a valley might think you were an ant, or something less.

Here on earth you are one of about seven billion people, a soul lost in a sea of humanity seething across the globe. How is it possible that any one person can wield a significant influence within this sea?

These disconcerting thoughts can easily haunt any of us if we let them, making us feel unworthy and unfit to exist on this planet ... and there are few other ideals that we see worth embracing than worth itself. To find value in the self is the most necessary quality of life that keeps us going. Without it there is no hope, and without hope there can be no life.

Perhaps we should step back and view this issue of one's person value. As Christians we understand that Elohim made us, and made us in His very own image. We are like Him in physical appearance, and have His qualities of mind. These factors are monumental truths that should encourage us all, to know that we are patterned after the Author of the entire universe, and the Maker of everything we see here on earth, in particular the life patterns and systems present throughout the earth's biosphere.

Moreover, as the elect we also understand that our futures are incredibly brilliant with the promise of the resurrection from the dead to become Gods, even as Jesus Christ is God, sitting on the right hand of the Father. "Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has entered into the heart of man the things that God has prepared for those that love Him ...", and we love Him because He made us ... and frankly we have nowhere else to turn but to the One who has given us His spirit. This is the same spirit — the power of His life itself — that made all that is ... living within us.

Those simple and basic truths are phenomenal beyond imagination, but they still do not of themselves answer the question of worth. Even the creations of God can be of 'little worth', as Solomon

wrote concerning the wicked. Christ made clear that an evil heart brings forth evil words, even as a pure heart grants good words.

"Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks." Matthew 12:33-35.

The Power to do Good or Evil

Once again we are thrust back to the beginning of this civilization, to the time of the recreation of the earth and the placement of Adam and Eve on it. Not much time passed before the serpent — Satan the devil — subtly coaxed Eve into eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam followed in this sin. As

we well know, from that point on the descendants of Adam chose evil as often as good, following the call of the human spirit rather than



God's. The result of these choices attests to the great power of individuals throughout human history. Whether motivated by good to build up people and nations, or by evil to enslave populations and persecute the creations of God, the power of the individual has been at work throughout history ... those tiny, insignificant specks on the face of the earth.

Leaders Throughout History

It is unfortunate for mankind that his insistent tendencies towards evil have granted him villainous leaders. Our Creator prophesied that the "basest" of men would rule, using the word *shefal*, or "low", coming from the Hebrew root *shiphah*, meaning to

“abase, humble, put down, or subdue”. Such is the state of the “great” rulers of civilizations supported by Satan the devil, who rule out of a spirit of fear, force, and tyranny, running roughshod over populations of God’s “imagers.”



“And He said to them, ‘The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those who exercise authority over them are called benefactors.’”

Amongst leaders of old of whom we have good records, we can examine the Caesars of the Roman Empire who were often noted for their despotism and excesses. One such Caesar, Nero, ruled from 54 to 68 A.D., his chief contender to office probably poisoned, and he killed his own mother Agrippina II. Later he killed his wife Octavia and married another woman named Poppaea Sabina. Together this pair conspired to burn Rome and blamed the disaster on Christians, many of whom they then put to death. The city was rebuilt, along with a magnificent palace to himself, and to help pay for the costs he taxed the provinces heavily and killed a number of wealthy men, and confiscated their property. He further persecuted Christians during his reign. This one person did an incredible amount of evil.

Within the religious world, the Catholic popes have wielded immense power, much of it for evil as during the Inquisition. Instituted by Pope Innocent III in response to the Reformation to try and reclaim territory and adherents, this diabolical institution required everyone to inform against heretics (those

who disagreed with the Roman Catholic Church), who were then arrested and often tortured by church officials, tried in secret, and sentenced, then turned over to civil authorities for either life imprisonment or burning. The victim’s property was confiscated and its value divided between the church and the government. During the 30 years of 1540 to 1570, at least 9000,000 Protestants were killed in the campaign to exterminate the Waldenses. Countless other tens of thousands were tortured and killed by the popes’ orders over the few hundred years of Inquisition, such that Henry Halley in his well-known Bible handbook stated,

“Think of monks and priests, in holy garments, directly, with heartless cruelty and inhumane brutality, doing the work of torturing and burning alive innocent men and women, and doing it in the name of Christ, by the direct order of the ‘Vicar of Christ’. The Inquisition was the most infamous and devilish thing in human history. It was devised by popes, and used by them for 500 years, to maintain their power. For its record, none of the subsequent line of ‘holy’ and ‘infallible’ popes have ever apologized.”



One person in one position of authority — the pope — has held countless millions of people in fear of loss of salvation over 1,000 years, and caused the agonizing deaths of millions of innocent people.

That brings us to another person who, though only one in number, triggered the debacle of World

War II, which killed and injured more soldiers and civilians than all wars before it put together. The person is Adolf Hitler, who came to power in Germany



in 1933 and was finally killed in 1945. During those 12 years that he was “Der Fuehrer”, he helped build the Nazi (National Socialist) Party and all aspects of the Third Reich, including the world’s most modern and mobile army, allowing him to first annex Austria, and then overtake part of Czechoslovakia and all of Poland. Before he was done, in alliance with Italy he had overrun France, Belgium, Holland, Norway, and other European countries, and had bombed Britain mercilessly. The total casualties of the war were astronomical: 50 to 80 million killed and 38 to 55 million injured. which includes deaths for war related disease and famine. These horrendous totals constitute between 2 and 3% of the worldwide population, but some countries such as Germany, China, and Russia lost a much higher percentage. The carnage wreaked upon cities and town, farmlands and shipping, and the rapine and family disruptions and suffering are incalculable. One person with one grand vision of Aryan supremacy turned the world into a bloodbath ... one tiny speck of humanity on the immense globe of the earth.

Not all political leaders have marred the world with death and bloodshed, but even those whom we consider good have fought wars to gain freedoms for others. Take, for instance, the leader of the American Revolution — George Washington. As general of the

revolutionary army he defeated the British, and together with statesmen such as Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and James Madison formulated the foundational documents for the United States, the greatest nation in modern history in terms of material might and constitutional guarantees of personal freedom. Just a few dedicated people dramatically changed the course of history.

One might examine other individuals in other areas of life who have massively changed the world, for better or worse. Nikola Tesla, a Croatian who worked mostly in the United States, developed alternating current in 1888 which has become the main means of powering civilization throughout the world. Moreover, he developed much of the theory behind modern radio and telephone transmission that is the means by which all modern communication is conducted. Thomas Edison, a great American inventor, worked about the same time as Tesla, and in the 1870s developed the electric light, the phonograph, and the motion picture camera that gave rise to giant industries such as electric utilities, recording companies, and the movie industry which have wielded great influence upon society worldwide ... and continues to do so. Edison also designed the electric power distribution system, insuring that the electrical



energy would be metered and not sent in a wireless fashion as Tesla had envisioned.

Henry Ford in the early 1900s, after two failures at forming automotive companies, built the Ford

Motor Company that became the first major industry to use assembly-line construction, to bring costs down, making possible the construction of affordable automobiles. This innovation has spread around the world and is applied to many industries as in clothing manufacturing, computer and electronics assembly, and the building of machinery of all types. While



bringing costs down, the innovation also made possible the moving of production and assembly plants to developing countries where cheap labor maximizes profits ... but meager wages are paid to workers in countries like China, Bangladesh, Mexico, and Pakistan. At the same time, jobs are lost in the United States. Individuals made in God's image, working with wisdom and persistence, have massively influenced the entire world.

Heroes of the Bible

Instigators of change are especially common within the pages of Scripture. Perhaps we forget that Jesus Christ is the greatest single personality who has ever lived on earth, who has influenced more minds and hearts than anyone else. True, He was — and is — the Son of God, but even so He was human. As a living flesh and blood human being He did far more to change the world in a positive direction, to give people hope and a future, than anyone else. Sinless, the world's leaders could not cope with His goodness and killed Him in their jealousy. Even then Jesus

could not be restrained by the tomb, and on the third day was raised incorruptible, and ascended to the Father.

Of course, we cannot place ourselves equal with Christ whose life was sinless, but we can view His life and see what made Him so effective that His legacy lives on to this very day, even as He is the God of the Old Testament and the One who inspired the very words of Scripture. By keeping sin far from Him, He could be the Living Sacrifice that paid the price for the sins of all mankind. His shed blood removes sins from us as far as the east is from the west, and His testimony in the word of God gives living, active evidence of how we are to live. With His spirit within us we are able to live without errors imputed against us, and anticipate the resurrection and life eternal in God's Kingdom ... all because of one man, the person Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Is this an unfair selection, to place Jesus as an individual like human beings to display the power of an individual to do good? Not really, because He was human, and He has commissioned us, His brothers and sisters, to follow in His footsteps, and to live the life He lived. Look at the similarities of our instructions to His life:

- *Preach the good news of the Kingdom of God throughout the earth
- *Heal the sick, cast out demons, and expose the works of Satan the devil
- *Forgive the sins of others who have hurt us in some way

If Jesus Christ is termed the “firstborn of many brethren”, then how can any of us minimize our calling to do what He did. He gave us, creations of Elohim and recipients of His spirit, reassurance that “... if you ask anything of the Father in My name, I will give it to you” ... and this promise was restated three times! Jesus Himself asked the Father to do whatever the Father wanted Him to do, and we, the elect, are granted the same privilege. Are we not to walk in His footsteps in all ways?

As Jesus Christ is the pioneer of our salvation, the firstborn from the dead, so we walk in the ways He has allotted for us. As followers of the One who made the heavens and the earth, was Israel's God throughout the Old Testament, and laid His life down for us, so we experience the incredible exploits that even one person can do in the flesh ... through the

power of His spirit.

Another individual from Old Testament times is Noah, who, with his wife and three sons and their



wives, lived aboard the ark for several months, and disembarked to populate a new world. Noah was “perfect in his generations”, apparently unlike any other person on earth at the time, unpolluted

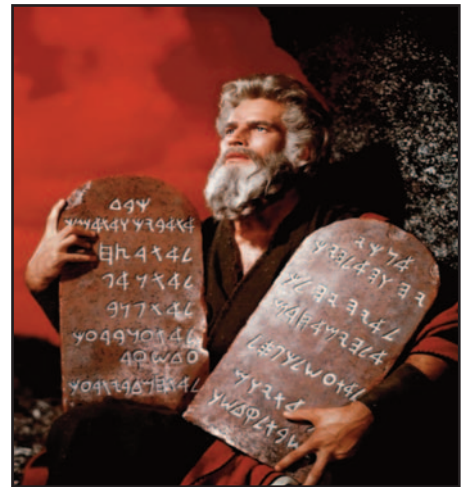
with genes from the sons of god that had tainted the DNA of everyone else. A righteous man, he was the individual who repopulated the entire earth after its utter devastation during the great Flood. One man and his wife were responsible for the repopulation of the world ... a couple with a unique task who displayed the power that one person can wield.

Later many centuries, Moses was selected by Yahweh to deliver Israel out of bondage in Egypt. The entire nation of Israel depended upon one individual — a very humble person — to confront the Pharaoh and pronounce God’s punishment upon the sinful, harsh Egyptians and demand deliverance from bondage. Then mere days later, he stood before the Red Sea and touched the waters with his staff, and that night the sea parted to leave a wall of water on either side. The Israelites hastened across the corridor thus created and reached the other side, just as the waters crashed down upon the pursuing Egyptian army, annihilating it and saving God’s special nation. Because of one man an entire nation, one forecast to be great upon the earth and possess the sea-gates and wealth like no other, was saved from calamity. Because of this one man’s intervention in the affairs of men — or should we say God’s appointment of him — you and I exist, for we believe that most white Americans are descendants of Israel. Moreover,

Moses stepped in three times to save the nation from destruction because of God’s utter frustration with their rebellion.

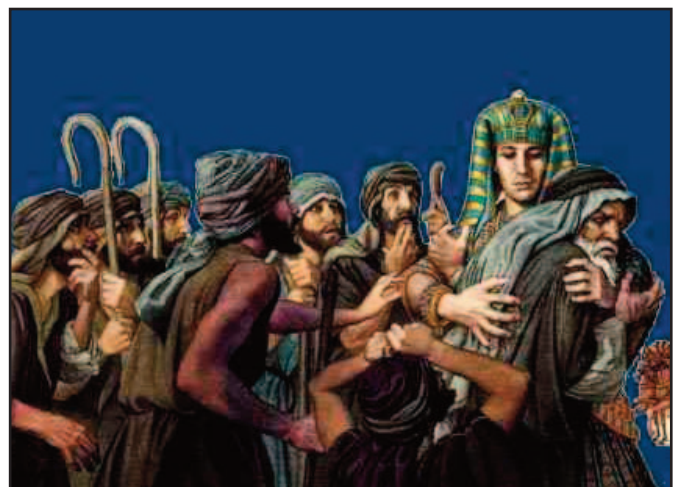
Towards the end of Judah's existence as a nation, Josiah was made king and ruled 31 years in Jerusalem. Josiah followed Manasseh and Amon, both evil kings, but despite this tainted legacy he rebuilt the temple, diligently heeded the book of Deuteronomy that was uncovered in the temple and encouraged the people to do likewise, got rid of idols, altars, groves, sodomites, witches, and pagan priests, and observed a

marvelous Passover. Even though God would not relent from His promise to cast off Jerusalem from His sight because of Manasseh’s sins before him, the Babylonian captivity



was not completed until Josiah had died. One person — a faithful king — staved off God’s punishment upon a sinful people.

While in Egypt, Joseph the son of Jacob was purchased as a slave by Potiphar, and after a period of imprisonment became second only to Pharaoh. In that position he was able to save not only the Egyptians from starvation during seven years of famine, but his own people Israel as well, and have them brought from the land of Canaan to the Land of



Goshen in the Nile delta. There they multiplied greatly until their period of slavery after Joseph's death. One person, in concert with Yahweh, saved the nation of Israel from probable annihilation.

Following the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ, twelve men who had been with Jesus and had witnessed

His resurrection were commissioned to spread the good news throughout the earth. These men — Peter, James, John,



Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Mattias (who replaced Judas), Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James — plus Paul, an apostle who came “out of season”, preached the truth far and wide, both in Palestine and also amongst far-flung gentile people. They established groups of fellowshiping saints wherever they went, from those the Father called in many nations. Those who were called formed the foundation of the early Church that has never died for the past 1,000 years, a Church that has turned the world of Satan's governance upside down wherever it went, and has changed the course of history as God has directed ... all because of thirteen individuals who allowed God's spirit to work through them. They totally changed the course of history.

No discussion of the power of the individual would be complete without speaking of Abraham. This man, from an idol-worshipping clan in Mesopotamia, left that culture and heeded Yahweh's command to travel with all that he had to Canaan. Not knowing where he was going or what his future would be, he believed God's promises and dwelled in that land, eventually having born to him through Sarah the son of promise, Isaac. Even though Sarah was too old to have children, they still believed God's prophecy and had a son as promised, whose name would be attached to most of the descendants of Israel to this very day: Anglo-Saxons, or “messengers of the sons of Isaac”. This man Abraham, the father

of the faithful, is described in Hebrews:

“By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. and he went out, not knowing where he was going. By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith Sarah herself also received strength to conceive seed, and she bore a child when

she was past the age, because she judged Him faithful who had promised. Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, where born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude — innumerable as the sand



which is by the seashore.”

The list could go on and on ... of those in God's word who personally made great changes in themselves, through the power of God's spirit, to influence this world's culture. In a real sense, each individual who has ever been called by the Father, and accepted the challenge to be His elect, should be listed as having exercised the Father's great power. The world's culture is a composite of influences of individuals, and like the disciples of old, the disciples of today

carry on the traditions of showing forth God's wisdom and truth, and are changing society continually ... with every contact they have with others. A word of encouragement here, a ray of light shed there, a smile without speaking or a face-to-face confrontation with evil. We, the elect, have incredible power as individuals, just as the saints have had throughout the centuries.

We will also have great influence during the coming days of trouble, for we are told to "*... sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear ...*" Those whom we meet under dire duress will take note of our bold patient, noble behavior.

"... having your conduct honest among the gentiles that, whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation [Greek episkope = 'inspection, oversight, visitation; of God,

visitation, interposition, whether in mercy or judgement']"

In times of trouble our lights will shine the most, contrasting intensely with the evil society around us. That witness will be noticed even if we are marginalized and isolated. We can be incredibly powerful in our influence by affecting even one individual, for as the Scriptures say, "*... let him know that he who turns a sinner from the errors of his way will save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins*".

The individual person can have incredible power! That influence can be towards good or towards evil. Let us use the power of God's spirit within us and be an unstoppable force towards good in this world, just as Christ said,

'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there', and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.'

Paul W. Syltie — December 26, 2013