

## A Look at the Least

The lyrics in a song say, "Little is much when God is in it." In this study, we will see how God took the inadequate and made it capable of greatness.

### The Least Judge

When the Lord called Gideon to save Israel .... he felt unworthy. Though he was **the least**, God promised to be with him, and give him victory:

**Judges 6:15-16** And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am **the least** in my father's house.

16 **And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee,** and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.

### The Least King

God prepared Samuel to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel:

**1 Sam 9:15-22, 27** Now the LORD had told Samuel in his ear a day before Saul came, saying,

16 To morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hand of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.

17 And when Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people.

Samuel asked Saul if he realized the desire of Israel was on him, and Saul felt insignificant. But Samuel gave him the best seat in the house. When he was leaving, Samuel taught God's word to Saul:

21 And Saul answered and said, **Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?** wherefore then speakest thou so to me?

22 And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons.

27 And as they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may shew thee the word of God.

## The Least City

King Herod questioned the wise men that had come from the east to worship Jesus, Who was born King of the Jews, and demanded they tell him where Christ was (Matt 2: 1-5). God chose the least city as the location:

**Matt 2:5-6** And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet,  
6 And thou **Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda:** for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

The prophet Micah described the city as **little**. The same Hebrew word <tsaiyr> translated 'least' was also translated 'little':

**Micah 5:2** But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, **though thou be little** among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

## The Least in the Kingdom

Jesus taught the greatness of one who is **the least**:

**Matt 11:9-11** But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. (in the context of John the Baptist)  
10 For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.  
11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding **he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater** than he.

**Luke 9:46-48** Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for **he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.**

## The Least Seed

Jesus used the example of a tiny mustard seed to demonstrate the growth God designed to spring forth from the small:

**Matt 13:31-32** Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a **grain of mustard seed**, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 Which indeed is **the least** of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is **the greatest** among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

Jesus applied the same principle to the issue of faith

**Luke 17:3-6** Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 And the Lord said, **If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed**, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. (also see 2 Thess 1:3)

'Mid-Acts-ers' **SINGLE-OUT PAUL** and separate him from the twelve apostles, claiming he had **DIFFERENT revelation** (even about salvation). Yet the writings God inspired PAUL to write **plainly testify** that the **gospel** he preached concerning Christ's death and resurrection was the **SAME** as the others, even though he did not receive it from them (Gal 1:11-12), as we will read next. 'Mid-Acts-ers' have a pre-conceived mindset that Paul's epistles are the only part of the Bible that is 'binding' or applicable today.

Though Paul himself claimed to be **the LEAST** of the apostles .... the 'mid-Acts-ers' believe he is **the ONLY** apostle for the church during the dispensation of grace. In the words of a 'mid-Acts' preacher, I quote, "I'm looking only to what Paul writes in 'Romans thru Philemon' .... period!"

When 'mid-Acts-ers' point to the actual verses where Paul DETAILS 'the gospel' by which we are saved .... they go to **1 Cor 15:3-4**. But they completely **IGNORE the CONTEXT** that shows

- PETER,
- the 12,
- over 500 brothers,
- James, and
- all the apostles

preached the same information about Christ, as Paul preached. Notice the sentence that **BEGINS** at verse 3 specifically telling the exact contents of the gospel, which was already in the scriptures, does not **END** until verse 6.

Then in verse 9, Paul is

### **The Least Apostle**

**1 Cor 15:1-11** Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

Though Paul said he was **the least** .... 'mid-Acts-ers' make him **the most**.

9 For I **am the least of the apostles**, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.

10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

**Verse 11 seals the issue. Paul and all the rest preached the same gospel:**

11 Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

Paul's writings actually rebuke 'mid-Acts' doctrine. They don't even listen to the very one they claim as THEIR apostle. Paul did not glory in himself .... but in his service. His ministry is what he honored:

**Rom 11:13** For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as **I am the apostle of the Gentiles**, I magnify mine **office**:

Not only did he say he was **the least** of the apostles .... but he went a big step further .... and said he was

**The Least Saint** of all:

**Eph 3:1-12** For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,

2 If ye have heard **of the dispensation (Greek <oikonomia> also translated 'stewardship' in Luke 16:2,3,4)** of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3 How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

4 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) (also see Col 2:2)

(The mystery of Christ was not made known in time past -- it does not stop there -- **as it is now revealed**. It was made known, but not like now. It was also revealed to MORE than just Paul. It was also revealed to the apostles and prophets -- NOT by Paul -- but by God's Spirit):

5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, **as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit**; (also see Rev 10:7)

What was the mystery? Here it is:

6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, (Fellowheirs with whom? Only each other? No! Who were already heirs? Believing Israel! PAUL said so in **Acts 26:18** "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and **inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.**")

and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: (Remember PAUL said in the context of **Israel being an example to us** - 1 Cor 10:1-18 - in **1 Cor 10:17** "For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.")

(Eph 3:) 7 Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.

Paul taught "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Rom 12:3).

Paul taught "in honour preferring one another" (Rom 12:10-b).

Paul taught "in in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." (Phil 2:3-b).

Paul taught he was the chief of sinners (1 Tim 1:15).

Thus, it is no surprise that Paul thought of himself lower than the lowest of all believers:

8 **Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints**, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

9 And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:

10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.

God put Paul on the low road ....

but 'mid-Acts-ers' put him on the high one.

*This is David Dowell, saying, "Think about it!"*