

Comparisons Made By God

By Charles Box

Our society is accustomed to all kinds of comparisons being made. One says Ford is better than Chevrolet. Another says this Doctor is a better doctor than that doctor. One says Bayer is better than Motrin. These comparisons may or may not be true. However, God has made some comparisons which are eternal in nature. Let us observe:

It is better to obey than to make a sacrifice. As the children of Israel came out of Egypt Amalek came out and fought against them. (5) God said to Moses, "Write this for a memorial in the book and recount it in the hearing of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." (*Exodus 17:14*) The time came for God to keep this promise. His command to Saul was simple, "Go and attack Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and do not spare them. But kill both man and woman, infant and nursing child, ox and sheep, camel and donkey." (*1 Samuel 15:3*) For some unknown reason Saul disobey. He blamed the people. (*1 Samuel 15:9-15*) God spoke to Saul through Samuel with one of the great Bible statements, "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams." (*1 Samuel 15:22*) Even as important as sacrifices it was not to be allowed to interfere with obedience to some positive command of God.

Some advice is better than other advice. Counsel or advice comes from many directions. Some counsel, "Go out and have fun while you are young. There is plenty of time for God later." Some advise, "Leave that husband/wife if you do not love them anymore. I do not think God intended you to be miserable." Religious counselors say, "Find a church which suites you and join it." Let us remember, some counsel is better than other. In fact, some counsel is right and some is wrong. *2 Samuel 17:14* tells of two counselors, Hushai and Ahithophel. "So Absalom and all the men of Israel said, The advice of Hushai the Archite is better than the advice of Ahithophel. For the Lord had purposed to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring disaster on Absalom." Not all counselors give good advice! Some is good counsel or advice and some is bad. Ahithophel's counsel would have been good for Absalom, but bad for God. Much counsel is the same way today; it is bad for our relationship with God.

Some men are better than others. Through Solomon God compared Joab to Abner and Amasa. "King Solomon was told, Joab has fled to the tabernacle of the Lord; there he is, by the altar. Then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, Go, strike him down. So Benaiah went to the tabernacle of the Lord, and said to him, Thus says the king, Come out! And he said, No, but I will die here. And Benaiah brought back word to the king, saying, Thus said Joab, and thus he answered me. Then the king said to him, Do as he has said, and strike him down and bury him, that you may take away from me and from the house of my father the innocent blood which Joab shed. So the Lord will return his blood on his head, because he struck down two men more righteous and better than he, and killed them with the sword - Abner the son of Ner, the commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, the commander of the army of Judah - though my father David did not know it." (*1 Kings 2:29-32*) Abner and Amasa were "more righteous and better" than Joab. God reminds us that some men are better than others by saying, "The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray." (*Proverbs 12:26*) It is still true, "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits." (*1 Corinthians 15:33*)

Some rivers are better than others. Naaman was a great man in Syria. He was troubled with leprosy. Through a series of events he was directed to Elisha, the prophet of God. Naaman was told to dip in Jordan seven times to be cleansed. "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored to you, and you shall be clean." (*2 Kings 5:10*) Naaman was furious. He said, "Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turned and went away in a rage." (*2 Kings 5:12*) The Abanah and Pharpar are larger, more beautiful rivers than the Jordan, but not better. The Jordan was better because it was specified by God. When Naaman obey he was cleansed. "So he went down and dipped seven times in the Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God; and his flesh was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." (*2 Kings 5:14*) We are also freed or cleansed from sin when we obey our Lord in baptism. (*Acts 2:36-41*)

A righteous man's little is better than great riches of the wicked. The Bible says, "A little that a righteous man has is better than the riches of many wicked." (Psalm 37:16) His little is better because: (a) He obtained it honestly, (b) He will use it properly, and (c) He will appreciate what he has more. Solomon, said, "Better is a little with the fear of the Lord, Than great treasure with trouble." (Proverbs 15:16) The righteous find joy in many things which would seem dull to the rich. "Better is a little with righteousness, Than vast revenues without justice." (Proverbs 16:8)

It is better to dwell in the corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman. Solomon had about 1,000 women. Some of them must have been contentious. "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." (Proverbs 21:9) This is not a blanket condemnation of the attitude of woman as a whole, but why are so many American women so unhappy when we are truly a blessed people? Solomon said, "Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, Than a fatted calf with hatred." (Proverbs 15:17) He said, "Better to dwell in the wilderness, Than with a contentious and angry woman." (Proverbs 21:19) He also wrote, "It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, Than in a house shared with a contentious woman." (Proverbs 25:24)

A poor man is better than a liar. Solomon said, "What is desired in a man is kindness, And a poor man is better than a liar." (Proverbs 19:22) Kindness is a very desirable quality Christians should offer to others. "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32) A poor man who is kind is better than one who is wealthy but untruthful. "Better is the poor who walks in his integrity Than one perverse in his ways, though he be rich." (Proverbs 28:6)

There are many things which are "better." Mary chose the good part. (Luke 10:42) Let us do the same. To become a Christian hear the word (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus (John 8:24), repent of sins (Acts 17:30-31), confess Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9-10) and be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). "For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness." (Psalm 84:10)