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First Way (2 Ch 17:3-4)

There was a king whom God was with and his name was, Jehoshaphat. While the Lord was with him, his family prospered, his kingdom ruled over all, and Jehoshaphat became more and more powerful (2 Ch 17:5,10,12). In all things he sought the Lord and taught his people about the law of the Lord (2 Ch 17:9).

One who has the heart of God teaches the will of God. In God's eyes, Jehoshaphat walked the first way. 2 Ch 17:3 tells us that *the Lord was with Jehoshaphat because in his early years he walked in the ways his father David had followed* and sought the Lord.

Notice that in this verse the New International Version (NIV) has it "*the ways*" while the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) has it "*earlier ways,*" and the King James Version (KJV) has it "*first ways.*"

We will get back to this in a bit, but first, who was David? David was one who had the heart of God as written in Ac 13:22 - "*I have found David son of Jesse a man after my own heart.*" So, what does the *first way* of he who has the heart of God signify?

(1) The word for "*first*" in Hebrew is *rishon*. It is derived from the Hebrew word for "head" which is *rosh* meaning "former; foremost; first; chief."

(2) The word for "*way*" in Hebrew is *derek* which does mean path but also has a variety of other meanings including "direction; manner; conduct". Thus the *first path* can be considered as the best way, one with the best conduct, and the greatest acts.

(3) The first way of David was the way of the image of God. The Bible tells us that Jesus Christ was the firstborn over all creation. "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation*" (Col 1:15).

Jesus Christ is the image of God who is invisible to us. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God was in the face of the Lord, and He had shone that light to us (1 Cor 4:4,6). The image of God has uprightness (Gen 1:27, Ecc 7:29). It is pure and sincere.

(4) The first way of David is a path of love. It is also the way of the first born. The path of love is one that does not contain the lusts and desires of man as the ones described in 1 Jn 2:16, nor does it boast of this present life. Indeed, the spiritual first born exercises spiritual love.

That is why the firstborn has the blessing of receiving a double share (Dt 21:15-17). The power of double portion is the power of God (1 Ki 2:9). That is because the firstborns are God's. All firstborns, whether they are man or animal, it is God's (Num 3:13).

Starting with the power of God is the privilege of the firstborn (Gen 49:3). God looked more favorably upon Abel than Cain because Abel had offered his first (Gen 4:4). The firstborn offers the first of his everything. That is why the way of the firstborn is the best way. It is a way where your love is for God only.

The first way is a way in the Lord. It is the path where you fight the good fight and keep your faith. It is the path where all things are done through the Lord of faith, Jesus Christ. It is the path where you give only your best and your precious.

But, you cannot have or become the best without sacrifice. That is why the way of David required him to give all of his heart, all of his strength, and even all of his life to teach us of this path of love.

Beloved friends, even though we study the Bible and say we know the word, what would be the best attitude for the faithful? How do we best conduct ourselves and act in the greatest way possible? Through love! There is nothing that is superior to love (Rom 8:38-39).

Love is the best! There is no act that can outdo love. This is why Rom 13:10 tells us that *"love is the fulfillment of the law."* Love does *not* spare anything. So why was God with Jehoshaphat? Because he served God with wholehearted sincerity and loyalty without sparing anything. That is love.

Consider the love described in 1 Cor 13:4-6: *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth."*

Dearest friends, the first way is the path that wins over the beasts. Who are the beasts? Those who do not have the image of God (Gen 2:7, Ps 49:20). Have faith that the spiritual firstborn can overcome the beasts! That is why the *firstborn is one who has matured*. He has grown through God's love thru discipline. The mature eat solid food and who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil (Heb 5:14).

The first way is a path where good and evil are distinguished from one another. It is way to overcome the number of the beast (Rev 13:18, 15:2). Put your energy into giving a spiritual worship of thanksgiving and sacrifice.

We must walk this first way until we hear the sound of the last trumpet (1 Cor 15:51, Rev 2:5). He who overcomes the beast is he who hears the sounds of the trumpets. I pray in the Lord's name that until the day we are transfigured inside out we walk only in the path of love, the first way!