

# **“Stonewall Jackson and the Wellsprings of His Faith”**

The Human Scene, Riverside Presbyterian Church,  
Sunday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011

First Bull Run/First Manassas  
(from roughly 9:30 am to 5:00 pm,  
Sunday, July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1861)

Brigadier General Barnard Bee to the men of his brigade (the 3<sup>rd</sup> South Carolina) on Henry House Hill as the battle was turning: “There stands Jackson like a stone wall! Rally behind the Virginians (Jackson’s 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia Brigade!)” The battle turned at least four times, resulting in what both Southern troops and newspapers called “The Great Skedaddle” by the Federal forces. Jackson never accepted the nickname for himself; he wanted it applied to the 1<sup>st</sup> Virginia.

- Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1824, Thomas Jackson is born in Clarksburg, Virginia (now West Virginia), to Jonathan and Julia Neale Jackson (third child).
- on March 6<sup>th</sup>, 1826, at the age of two, his older sister Elizabeth dies of typhoid fever.
- Three weeks later, on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1826, Jackson’s father also dies of typhus.
- On December 4<sup>th</sup>, 1831, one month short of his eighth birthday, Jackson’s mother, Julia Neale Jackson Woodson (by this time she had remarried, and with whom Jackson was very close) dies of dysentery and “consumption (known today as tuberculosis).”
- Jackson was taken in by his uncle, Cummins Jackson, and stayed with the family for most of the next ten years.
- In wanting to educate himself, Jackson settled on the US Military Academy (the best place to get a free higher education for someone not otherwise bound for a college or university, plus, the military offered the chance of a career). Getting into West Point became the focus of his life. He received many recommendations from family and neighbors which led him to his congressman, Samuel Hays. Hays slotted him into the spot of Gibson Jackson Butcher (no relation), who had lasted only one day at the Academy before heading for home.

- Wednesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1842, Jackson passes the West Point entrance exams. After the first year, he was near the bottom of his class, BUT,
- In mid-June, 1846, Jackson graduates 17<sup>th</sup>, out of 59 in a class notable for, among others, George B. McClellan (2<sup>nd</sup> in the class which annoyed McClellan no end), future Union cavalry commander George R. Stoneman, future Union Major General Darius Couch, Jesse Reno (for whom Reno, Nevada is named), future Confederate Lieut. General Ambrose Powell Hill (commonly referred to as “A.P.”) and George Pickett (last in the class, known at the time as being the class “Immortal”).
- Between 1846 and the end of May, 1848, Jackson serves with various artillery companies in the Mexican War. He distinguishes himself in the Battle of Chapultepec.
- While on temporary duty in New York, Jackson is baptized at St. John’s Episcopal Church, Long Island on Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>, 1849 (at the age of 25).
- From an early age, Tom Jackson believed that what happened today was not important if something tomorrow held a greater meaning in life. Jackson came to understand that both his early life and the deaths of his parents and siblings were all part of a higher purpose. Turning to God because, as an orphan, he had nowhere else to go, Jackson took to heart Romans Chapter 8, Verse 28: “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called to His purpose.”
- In early 1851, while stationed in Florida, Jackson gets a letter from the Virginia Military Institute saying he has been recommended to fill the post of Professor of Natural and Experimental Philosophy (then, a mixture of physics, astronomy and mechanics).
- In late March, 1851, Jackson is elected to the professorship by the 11-man VMI Board of Visitors.
- On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1851, five months after arriving in Lexington, VA (home of VMI), Jackson is examined and accepted to full membership in Lexington Presbyterian Church.

- On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1853, Jackson marries Ellie Junkin (whom he had met the previous year while both were teaching Sunday school at Lexington Presbyterian).
- On Sunday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1854, Ellie gives birth to either a stillborn son or daughter (historians disagree), but appears fine otherwise. One hour later she dies of a sever hemorrhage. Jackson is inconsolable and nearly suicidal. By Jackson's use of several methods, including underlining and highlighting of passages in his personal Bible, historians generally accept that he used Revelation Chapter 21, Verse 4 for consolation in times of personal tragedy: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
- In the fall of 1855, Jackson begins teaching a Sunday school class for local slaves and freedmen (at precisely 2:45 pm).
- In mid-December, 1856, Jackson is engaged to Mary Anna Morrison, whom he had been introduced to by mutual friends. They are married on Thursday, July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1857. He calls her both "Anna" and "my esposa," a term of endearment he learned while in Mexico.
- On Friday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 1858, Anna gives birth to daughter Mary Graham Jackson.
- Less than a month later, on May 25<sup>th</sup>, Jackson's daughter dies of a liver disorder.
- Approximately July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1858, Jackson's sister-in-law, Eugenia Morrison Barringer, dies of typhus.
- From November 25<sup>th</sup> to December 9<sup>th</sup>, 1859, Jackson and a contingent of cadets from VMI travel to Charlestown, VA to participate in the hanging of John Brown.
- Friday, April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1861, Fort Sumter
- Wednesday, April 17<sup>th</sup>, 1861, Virginia secedes from the United States.

- According to the historian John Keegan: “Jackson succeeded (in war) because he was utterly without fear or self-doubt. Jackson was Calvinist in his outlook, both as an individual and as a military commander, since preordination influenced all his judgments. When slightly but painfully wounded (in the hand) at First Bull Run, he revealed to a subordinate (who was sympathizing with him about his injury but also questioning him about the basis of his evident courage) that he refused to fuss about the risks he ran in the presence of the enemy because he said the time of his death was fixed by God and that there was therefore no point in feeling fear. *He said he felt no more fear on the battlefield than he did settling to sleep in his own bed*, and that all men should feel the same, in which case all would be equally courageous. Jackson’s supreme lack of anxiety, both under fire and in decision-making, assured him a unique place among Civil War generals, indeed among generals of any army or nationality.”
- While undertaking a personal, night reconnaissance toward the end of The Battle of Chancellorsville, on Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1863, Jackson was fired on by soldiers of a North Carolina unit. He was struck in the left arm and hand. To stop both the flow of blood and the very real possibility of gangrene, the attending surgeons amputated his arm. Jackson’s health was improving until, during the next week, he came down with pneumonia. He steadily worsened until, on Sunday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, his doctors said they could do no more for him and that the end was near. After that morning’s service at army headquarters, Robert E. Lee said to Beverly Tucker Lacy, chaplain of the II Corps (who had been at Jackson’s bedside earlier), “When you return, I trust you will find him better. When a suitable occasion offers, tell him that I prayed for him last night as I *never prayed*, I believe, *for myself*.” Lacy later said that Lee turned away, overcome by emotion. A little while later, by Jackson’s bed, one of his aides, Major Alexander “Sandie” Pendleton, said to Jackson, “The whole army is praying for you, General.” Jackson said, “Thank God. They are very kind.” Then, after a pause, “It is the Lord’s day. My wish is fulfilled. I have always desired to die on Sunday.” At 3:15 pm, Jackson was going in and out of delirium. By his bed at that moment, were his wife, Anna, Dr. Hunter McQuire (Jackson’s staff surgeon) and another of his aides, Lt. James Power Smith. Jackson rallied for a moment, and said, before passing away, “Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees.” Thomas Jackson had gone home.