

Unfolding Unveiling: Studies of Christ Revealed in the Types of Joshua, David, and Solomon

Part Four: Samuel

Chapter Ten: An End and a Beginning

This man of war (cf. Ex. 15:3) and the war that we need to learn to fight (cf. Jud. 3:2) are spiritual in nature. It is not a natural man on the earth but a spiritual one in the heavenlies, and it is not just a carnal war. This war is fought from our heavenly place in Christ, not from a point on the earth. This is the war Israel fought and won under Joshua, and it is the war that they needed to learn during the period of the Judges. It is also the kind of war David learned and all those under him.

Keep in mind while reading I Samuel that the Philistines were left in the Land to deal with Israel's heart and to teach them war. That Israel did not know this war is evident in I Samuel chapter four (such an important chapter!) where Israel brought the Ark of God out of the tabernacle to fight the Philistines. What a terrible mistake! Their own words betray where they were living: "Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies." What a contrast to the life that Samuel chose to live! He sought in the place where the Lord could be found. Israel was living in the natural realm, trying to get the spiritual reality to work for them there.

This is not how the Lord Who is this man of war functions. This man of war is a corporate, risen body which lives IN Christ, not on the earth. They live there, and they fight from that position. The fight is not against circumstances, problems, sins, or faults but to apprehend Christ, and to live in Him by faith.

Israel thought that the war was taking place in their circumstances. Their mistake was trying to get the spiritual reality to work for them in a realm whose laws were contrary to God's ways. They tried to fix their problems in the natural realm instead of relating to the Lord by the means which He had already provided, which was His full mind and intent placed in a vessel, typified by the ark. This is how the man of war wields his victory. He knows that the law of the Spirit of life is in Christ, and nowhere else (cf. Rom. 8:2). This life is ours by being partakers of the resurrection; it does not function in the natural realm or for natural purposes, which is why Israel suffered such a terrible defeat to the Philistines. The man of war knows where the law of the Spirit of life functions and does not move from there, which effects certain victory.

The expression of the reality as it is found in the ark is bound up in the people to whom the Lord has joined Himself. I Samuel four shows in the capture of the ark the true spiritual state of Israel at that time. The people tried to bring the heart, reality, and mind of God down into the natural realm. They were trying to use what was of the spiritual

realm in the natural realm instead of leaving the things of the spiritual realm in their own reality. The loss of the ark in battle signified the barren spiritual state of Israel. They were so after the natural realm, their heart was so far from God, that there was no place for the ark in their way of life.

In reality, IN Christ is untouchable by this realm and cannot be defiled by it. On the other hand, God is to be expressed through His people. Israel was living such a natural existence that their bondage was affecting how God's plan would go forth in the earth. If we do not live according to God's reality, then we are in bondage. If we are in bondage, then the ark, too, is bound in a sense, in that God's glory will fail to be manifested. That which is true in Christ only works in Christ; attempting to utilize spiritual victory in the natural realm will always have disastrous consequences.

The End of the Religious System

In I Samuel 4:1-22, the ark of God is taken, and an entire generation of priests is cut off. This was God's doing, and it is that of which He spoke to Hannah, Eli, and Samuel in previous chapters. It was He who had the priests killed. It was He who had the ark taken from Israel, for where He begins, He also makes an end (cf. I Sam. 3:12).

Christ cannot be revealed as David to the Israel of God until man-made religion has been taken out of the way, which system had sprung up during the time of the Judges. Christ is never seen by the teaching of men (cf. Gal. 1:12); in fact, man-made religion not only cannot reveal Christ, it actually is a hindrance to the Holy Spirit. In order to give the Holy Spirit free place to teach and reveal, the man-made religion must be put away entirely. This is exactly what happened in I Samuel chapter four. Here we see man-made religion come to an end so that the Holy Spirit can work unhindered. We cannot see David except He be revealed.

The priesthood was put to death when the ark was taken. There was a death to the old mix in the priesthood so that it could be brought back into proper order in Solomon's time at the building of the temple. When the ark was taken, it was God's signal of the death of a wandering tabernacle, a people who were neither established nor built together. It was the death of an order that was supposed to be doing God's purposes in the earth but was maintained by the religious system of the day instead of by the revelation of Christ. It was death to a system where those who were to expedite the law were using the law for personal gain.

What is man-made religion, exactly? It is a system of beliefs that knows the eternal things of God after the flesh, after human understanding. As we saw with Israel's journey in the wilderness, attempting to view Christ, our spiritual reality, from an earthly, fleshly viewpoint always results in a wrong view of the Lord and very serious misunderstandings. I Corinthians 2:9-10 says,
“...eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.”

We cannot see the Lord with our natural eyes or hear him with our natural ears. That most of us know already. Yet most of the church does not seem to understand that we are equally unable to conceive of Him in our heart. Any ideas about the Lord that come from ourselves will be wrong, and not only wrong, but against a true view of Christ.

Remember, the people did not go into the Land of the Philistines, only the ark did. The ark took the bondage that was Israel's in reality. On the other hand, man-made understanding cannot keep the full and complete thought of God. It will lose it every time.

The religious system hinders vision (revelation) and makes the flesh fat. Its backbone is the use of the things of God for one's own benefit. When God cursed Eli's house and saw to it that the ark was taken, He was pronouncing judgment on this very system. He did not want His ark mistaken for being part of it. God told Samuel that Eli's iniquity would never be purged with sacrifice or offerings (cf. I Sam. 3:14). God does not redeem any part of the religious system for His own use. He curses it and utterly rejects it. There is nothing in it that He can salvage because it is based upon a self-centered viewpoint and rooted in the natural realm which is passed away. We can be redeemed. We as God's people can get our sins forgiven. But the religious system that has come about from the heart of man was put to death and buried. It stayed in the grave when Jesus was raised from the dead. Not only will it never be accepted by God, it is also dead and buried! It has no place in the new creation!

With the ark gone (cf. I Sam. 4:17), what purpose did the priesthood serve? Their ministry pertained to the ark. In the absence of the ark, all that they did was just ritual and outward show, for the ark was the reason for the priesthood to begin with. If God is to dwell with man, there must be a mediator. However, if through the selfishness that mediatorship becomes autonomous, if it begins to simply act on its own without relating to the One who demands a mediator, then that office has nullified itself. It has removed its purpose and usefulness. Why shouldn't God allow the ark to be taken, if this is the case? It is important for us to remember that if a ministry can be maintained and kept running after the ark is removed, then that ministry was already rejected by God as not useful for His purposes.

A New Beginning

Eli's ministry ended, and Samuel's began. Samuel's ministry to Israel continued through I Samuel chapter 25 during David's time in the wilderness. What came of the bondage of the ark was a Spirit-led ministry personified in Samuel that pointed to David. Israel's certain defeat and the loss of the ark put away their wrong ideas about the ark, as well as the fleshly contribution to religion that brought the ark into the natural realm, where it never should have been.

With the old religion brought to an end, Samuel comes forth out of Shiloh and begins in earnest his ministry to the Lord's people. He seems to operate as a type of the Holy Spirit in several ways:

- 1) He was the mouthpiece of God. He was the voice of the Lord to God's people in that day just as the Holy Spirit is for us today.
- 2) He convicted of sin. He was used on many occasions to bring to light the sin of the people (cf. I Sam. 12:16-19, 15:12-28).
- 3) He anointed and revealed God's elect (cf. I Sam. 16:12-13). This is just like the Holy Spirit, whose job it is to reveal Christ (cf. Jn. 1:29-34, Jn. 16:7-15).

Samuel proceeded from the tabernacle in Shiloh, where the Word of the Lord was revealed. It was from this place where the full and complete thought of God, the eternal now, that he ministered, though he ministered in the very carnal realm of linear living. His ministry was much like the Holy Spirit Who was sent from the Father to us in order to reveal and lift up Christ. Samuel was never a governor such as a king would be, but he provided the kind of leadership the people could follow until they could enter in to something greater than their natural way of life.

No Identity

We now have the end of everything Israel knows of how to relate to the Lord. Because the ark is gone, the presence of God is gone. The priesthood is dead, and these were the people who mediated on behalf of Israel before the Lord. Now they are in the position of not knowing what to do or how to relate to the Lord. What would they do now? Everything that made them different from everybody else was gone. Of course, they had been living just like everybody else at the time, so it was more of a wake-up call for them than it was an actual change in their reality as they had been living apart from the ark and the priesthood for a long time.

The Lord said in I Samuel 3:12, "Where I begin I will also make an end." He brought this wrong way of relating to the Lord – this religious system – completely to an end. When the ark was taken, there was no more meaning for the Tabernacle because it was the reason for the Tabernacle. It was the reason for the Tabernacle's elaborate way of approaching the Lord, for the Lord dwelt there. If God is no longer there, then there is no need for a priesthood, or to try to relate to Him through the Tabernacle anymore.

Phineas' wife delivered a child the same day that he died in battle, and she named the child Ichabod, saying that the glory is gone, the glory is taken. This is a parable of this fleshly relating to God that relates to the Lord to benefit yourself like these priests were doing. The fruit that came forth from their labors was no glory. This was the final statement on God's part. Here comes the fruit of the priests: their offspring is No Glory. It is the final judgment in God's eyes, and it is as if He were saying, "I have rejected this kind of relating to me. I do not accept a ministry that relates to me in darkness. I do not accept a ministry that relates to me based on building one's own personal kingdom and taking from God's people."

If the priesthood had been ministering from the viewpoint of the Lord, which was the ark of the covenant, they never would have stolen from the offering of Israel and used what

was for the Lord for themselves. They never would have set up a system that could continue to function on its own apart from the approval of the Lord. They sowed to the flesh and reaped destruction (cf. Gal. 6:8). They were supposed to bear the seed, and the only thing that they could bear was No Glory because of their union with the natural realm. They were supposed to be the channel of God's glory into the earth, and they could not be that in their present state.

We see that the Lord raises up Samuel for this very purpose, to be a harbinger or a forerunner of that which is going to be the salvation of Israel. David is going to be the salvation of Israel. The Scriptures even declare Him to be so. But for right now, we are still living in the period of the judges, and it is a very dark time. Remember that everything discussed in the book of Judges applies to us.

We return to our question: What is Israel supposed to do now? Everyone is still doing that which is right in their own eyes, everyone is living their own separate life. This way of life has now come to a culmination and has brought forth the fruit of No Glory, and God has judged it and brought an end to it. They have no ark, they have no priesthood. This was what their national life was supposed to revolve around. That must have been a very confusing and devastating thing. Israel was certain that the Ark was going to bring them sure victory over the Philistines, and not only did they have to bend their knee to the enemy, now they did not even have an ark or a priesthood to mediate, and they had no way to approach the Lord.

God is not on speaking terms with this mode of existence. God is not talking to the earthly realm. He was not going to bless it. He was not going to encourage it. He just took everything away. He is taking away the old so that He can bring in the new. He cares about His people, and He has a plan. He has to bring something forth, but He will not get any help from the people. He will have to do it Himself. He will have to position them properly so that His plan will go forward. Part of the Lord bringing forth the new is that the old has to come to an end first. We see it first and foremost at the Cross. Jesus had to take out the old man, the world system, the devil's authority, and the entire old creation before He could be raised up as a whole new creation.

On the one hand, it is a very sad time in Israel because we see that God is rejecting them. But we do know from I Samuel 3:21 that Lord is appearing again. This is a sign of things to come. So we have movement from the Lord, but the circumstances are looking bad.

From the two different leaders in Israel, Eli and Samuel, there were two different reactions to the taking of the Ark. Eli just fell over dead. For him, it was the end of everything. His time was over, and all hope was lost. From Samuel, we do not see such a reaction; his ministry never changed. He continued where the Lord had him. He had seen enough of the real because the Lord had appeared to Him. He was living in that reality, and so whatever God was doing in the circumstances did not affect him. He was living in the place where these circumstances have no bearing, in the constant place of God's blessing: "He whose it is" – Shiloh. He was living in the place where God's people are accepted all the time, where there is no condemnation, where the plan is complete in the heart and mind of God. This is the place from which He ministered.

When this whole devastation came on Israel with the taking of the ark and the death of the priesthood, Samuel was able to continue. He was not drawing from good circumstances or being discouraged by bad ones. He lived where the Lord appeared. Because of that, we do not see him growing distressed because the ark was taken. He had seen the real and was living there. He was living in the place of completion, where the Lord is full and complete, where His people are complete. Colossians 2:9-10 says, "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him."

He has seen that God and His people have been made One by the Cross and the resurrection, and that His people can only be seen where the Lord is, and vice versa. They are forever inseparable, and what God has put together, let no man put asunder. This is how he is relating to the people. So as long as the Lord is appearing, there is hope.

We do not know how God's plans will work out in the earth. We have to live in this place of completion because things that look this bad can be the best thing for you. The taking of the ark and the end of the priesthood was one of the best things that could have happened to Israel because it was setting them up for a whole new way of relating to the Lord in a greater knowledge of Himself.

We are not going to see the ark in its proper place until David reigns in Jerusalem over the entire nation of Israel. We will not see the priests begin to minister in their true place before the Lord until the ark is taken up to Jerusalem. Until then, the Lord was going to have to start Israel from the beginning: at relating to the Lord by the Holy Spirit only. That is where Samuel comes in. Samuel, representing the Holy Spirit, is about to begin to teach Israel how to relate properly to the Lord.