

WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER

Monthly Letter #230 June, 2017; Teacher Clifton A. Emahiser
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THOSE TO WHOM THE COVENANT BELONGS

This is my two hundred and thirtieth monthly teaching letter and continues my twentieth year of publication. I have resolved to do a series of lessons providing clarifying criticism of Howard B. Rand's books, tracts and articles published in his *Destiny Magazine*. I will continue # XI "The Ark Captured And Restored" & # XII, "Israel Demands A King", for November & December, 1949 (and editing will be necessary):

"The Ark Captured And Restored:

"ISRAEL'S FIGHTING MEN went out to meet the Philistines who had come against them to battle at Aphek, and the hosts of Israel were routed before their enemies. Four thousand Israelites fell in one day upon the field of battle. When the army returned to their fortified camp, the elders of Israel sought the reason why Yahweh had allowed His people to be smitten before their enemies.

"Ark Brought Into Camp

"It was decided to send to Shiloh and have the Ark of the Covenant brought into the camp of Israel so that its presence might rescue them from the Philistines and assure victory over their enemies. With the Ark came Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, who were very wicked in the sight of Yahweh. Actually, the people themselves had turned away from Yahweh and were worshipping idols, refusing to obey the Almighty's commandments and keep His statutes. Herein lay the real reason why they had been defeated, for they had lost full contact with Yahweh their Almighty by their failure to walk in the paths of righteousness. Now they were seeking to compel Yahweh to protect them by bringing the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh into the midst of the battle. They could not conceive of Yahweh allowing the uncircumcised Philistines to gain possession of their most sacred thing, the Ark of the Covenant with its Mercy Seat, where the Almighty's people met with Yahweh.

"Condition for Victory

"What the elders in Israel and the people were failing to recognize was that Yahweh could protect the Ark, even though it might be necessary to allow it to be captured by the Philistines because of sin in the camp of Israel. Subsequent events clearly demonstrate the accuracy of this assertion. Even the presence of the Ark of the Covenant could not assure victory to a sinful nation. Yahweh had declared Israel must keep His Sabbaths and reverence His sanctuary, and then He said:

"If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them ... ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword.' (Lev. 26:3-8.)

“But if Israel persisted in despising His statutes and abhorring His judgments, refusing to obey all His commandments, and so breaking His [*marriage*] Covenant, among the things to be visited upon them was the following:

“‘... **I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant ...**’ (Lev. 26:25.)

“It is certain that the two sons of Eli were far from righteous, yet the Ark of the Covenant in the camp of Israel was in their charge. Not only had these two young men refused to revere the statutes of Yahweh and keep His commandments, but the spiritual life of all Israel at that time was at such a low ebb that they were also under judgment for their sins and unable to stand before their enemies. This was to be expected, for Moses taught that as a result of their refusal to hearken to the voice of Yahweh, the punitive clauses of the [*marriage*] Covenant would operate against them:

“‘**Yahweh shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them.**’ (Deut. 28:25.)

[Critical note by Clifton A Emahiser: It is paramount to grasp that only Israel was under the Law, and no one else, and without the Law, there can be no sin “imputed”, such as:

Rom. 5:13: “**For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law ...**”

Psalms 147:19-20: “¹⁹ **He showeth his word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments to Israel.** ²⁰ **He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them.**”] – Back to Rand.

“Philistines Afraid

“Israel was failing to take this into consideration, so they were relying upon the presence of the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh to save them even though they were an unrighteous people. When the Ark of Yahweh arrived in the camp of Israel there was such a mighty shout that the earth resounded with it and the Philistines heard the noise of the cheering. When they learned the cause they were afraid, for they felt they knew what the outcome would be:

“‘**God is come into the camp. And they said ... Woe unto us! ... who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.**’ (1 Sam. 4: 7-8.)

“The Philistines were acquainted with the history of the terrible and total defeat of the Egyptians at the Red Sea and the part that the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh played in the crossing of the Jordan. So they were understandably upset upon hearing that the Ark of the Covenant had come into the camp of Israel. The leaders of the Philistines sternly counseled their army to be strong and quit themselves like men. The alternative was that they surely would become the servants of Israel in the same way that Israel was then serving them. Thus strengthened for the battle, the Philistines fought against Israel and there was a great slaughter, for thirty thousand footmen in Israel’s army fell in the conflict.

“The Ark Captured

“The Ark of Yahweh was taken and the two sons of Eli were slain. Thus was fulfilled a previous pronouncement that the death of Eli’s two sons in one day would be a sign of the certainty of the judgment that was to come upon the house of Eli because of his refusal to discipline and restrain his sons.

“Eli’s Death

“A man of Benjamin’s tribe fled from the field of battle and came to Shiloh with the news of the great catastrophe. When he arrived in the city Eli was sitting on a seat beside the gate of the Temple watching the road, for he was greatly troubled for the safety of the Ark of Yahweh. It is very likely that he was unable to keep his sons from taking the Ark into battle for, because of his leniency with them through the years, his authority to compel obedience had dwindled, while their power over their father had grown stronger. Eventually he could not prevent them from doing anything they decided to do. As he trembled in fear for the Ark he heard the noise of the outcry as the Benjamite told the people what had happened. Eli demanded to know the meaning of the uproar and the man came to report to him. Eli was ninety-eight years old when this occurred and he was nearly blind:

“‘And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army, and I fled to day out of the army. And he said, What is there done, my son? And the messenger answered and said, Israel is fled before the Philistines, and there hath been also a great slaughter among the people, and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of Yahweh is taken.’ (1 Sam. 4:16-17.)

“When the messenger mentioned the fate of the Ark of Yahweh, the shock of the news was so great that Eli fell backward off his seat, his neck was broken and he died. He had judged Israel for forty years. His daughter-in-law, Phinehas’ wife, was soon to give birth to a child and when the news of her husband’s death and the death of her father-in-law was told to her, it brought about the immediate birth of a son. As she was dying she named her child Ichabod, *i.e.*, ‘Where is the Glory?’ The explanation given for the choice of name was:

“‘... The glory is departed from Israel: because the ark of Yahweh was taken, and because of her father-in-law and her husband.’ (1 Sam. 4:21.)

“Trouble for Dagon

“The Philistines took the captured Ark of Yahweh and carried it into the house of their god Dagon at Ashdod where they placed it beside the image of Dagon. When the men of Ashdod arose the next morning and went into the temple, they found their god flat on his face on the ground in front of the Ark of Yahweh. They lifted Dagon up and put him back in his place, but the next morning they found their god flat on his face again in front of the Ark. This time, however, the head and both of the hands were severed from the body of the idol and these lay on the threshold of the temple. Because of this, always after that the priests of Dagon and all who entered the temple did not step on the threshold but jumped over it.

“Emerods or Tumors

“Yahweh laid a heavy hand upon the inhabitants of Ashdod because the Ark was in their possession:

“But the hand of Yahweh was heavy upon them of Ashdod, and he destroyed them, and smote them with emerods, even Ashdod and the coasts thereof.” (1 Sam. 5:6.)

“According to one authority the following definition of what ensued is given: *‘Emerods: An old English spelling of modern Haemorrhoids, or piles. Written ‘posteriors’ in Hebrew text, but read tumours.] (Companion Bible, footnote, page 276.)*”

“Some scholars state, however, that *‘emerods* was a species of epidemic accompanied with ulcers, the precise nature of which is not described.’ Whatever the exact form of the affliction was, its severity caused the men of Ashdod to refuse to allow the Ark of Yahweh to remain any longer in their city, for they began to realize that there was a connection between their physical troubles and the fact that the Ark of Yahweh was among them. All the lords of the Philistines assembled to decide what was to be done with the Ark of Yahweh of Israel. Because of the objection of the citizenry of Ashdod to its remaining in their city, it was taken to Gath. But great confusion arose in Gath and the city was in a panic, for Yahweh struck the men, both young and old, with the disease. The Ark was next sent to Ekron but the people of Ekron protested, exclaiming:

“Why do you send the Ark of the God of Israel to us, to kill us and our people?” (1 Sam. 5:10, *F. F. Trans.*)

“Philistines Sorely Afflicted

“Because of all these objections, the lords of the Philistines again assembled to devise ways and means of getting the Ark of Yahweh of Israel back to its own place again, for there was deadly suffering among the Philistines. Even the people who were not killed were terribly afflicted with the disease and the wailing and shrieking of the people ascended to heaven. The disease increased in virulence apparently as it advanced and evidently became a destructive fever in the nature of a plague.

“Men have questioned why this type of affliction was visited upon the Philistines because the Ark of Yahweh was present in their land. But it must be remembered that the rituals and worship of heathen deities were accompanied by licentious practices beyond description. The afflicted people could not carry out the required rituals; in fact, to undertake to do so evidently increased their suffering and contributed to fatalities among them. Therefore, the people knew that the hand of Yahweh rested heavily upon them and upon their gods.

“Ark Returned

“For seven months the Ark of Yahweh had been with the Philistines. Then the lords of the Philistines summoned their priests and magicians to enquire of them how they could return the Ark to its original resting place. In giving this instruction these heathen [profane] leaders wisely counseled the Philistine lords not to harden their hearts as the Egyptians had done, making fools of themselves, but they were to return the Ark forthwith. Neither were they to send it back empty, for they must present to

Yahweh, the Almighty of Israel, a trespass offering. Images of the emerods were made out of gold and five gold images of mice, representing the five lords of the Philistines, were also included with the trespass offering to the Almighty of Israel. A new cart was made upon which the Ark was placed. Two young calves that had not yet been weaned were hitched to the cart. The Philistines reasoned that if the cart did go up to the land of Israel, they would then know that Yahweh had brought the evil upon them. But if the two calves refused to depart and returned instead to their mothers, then they would know what had occurred was merely a happenstance and their troubles had nothing to do with the presence of the Ark of Yahweh in their midst.

“Trespass Against Ark

“Humanly speaking, the unweaned calves would never have left their mothers and gone along the road toward the land of Israel. The test made by the Philistines could not have been more appropriate for such a demonstration. Nevertheless, the two calves went along the highway toward the land of Israel, lowing as they went. The Philistines followed to see what would happen but the calves turned neither to the right hand nor to the left hand as they went toward Beth-shemesh. This was one of the cities of the Priests (Jos. 21:16) and it was on the way to Shiloh. The men of this city were reaping in the field when they looked up and saw the Ark of Yahweh coming toward them on the cart. They dropped their implements and went joyfully out to meet it. The calves brought the cart with the Ark into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite. When the lords of the Philistines saw all this they returned to Ekron. Some of the Beth-shemites looked into the Ark and they died as a result of this trespass. Israel was forbidden to touch the Ark, as the priests alone were allowed to handle it, and they were required to carefully follow certain instructions in doing so.

“Upon the restoration of the Ark to Israel, the Levites took the Ark from the cart and, building an altar, they slew the calves to offer them up as a sacrifice, using the wood of the cart for fuel. The inhabitants of Beth-shemesh were afraid to have the Ark remain with them, so they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, telling them to come and get it. Because of the men of Bethshemesh who had been slain for looking into the Ark, they said:

“Who is able to stand before this sacred Yahweh Almighty?” (1 Sam. 6:20.)

“The men of Kirjath-jearim came and took the Ark into the house of Abinadab where it remained for twenty years. Eleazar, the son of Abinadab, was set apart, *i.e.*, sanctified, to become the custodian of the Ark.”

“Revival in Israel

“Samuel then spoke to all the House of Israel, saying that if they would repent and return to Yahweh, and put away the foreign gods from their midst, Yahweh would deliver them from the Philistines. This was a call for a revival of true worship and reverence in Israel. Evidently the knowledge of what had happened to the Philistines and their gods because of the presence of the Ark of Yahweh in their cities made a profound impression upon all Israel. Samuel used these facts to impress upon the people the powerlessness of heathen gods and their impotency before the Almighty of Israel.

“As a result of the call to righteousness, the children of Israel put away Baal and Ashtaroth and served Yahweh only. Samuel then called upon Israel to gather at Mizpeh where he said he would pray for them. The people gathered as requested and there they fasted and made their confession, ‘We have sinned against Yahweh.’

“When the Philistines heard that Israel had gathered at Mizpeh, their lords gathered their fighting forces together and went up against Israel to battle. Evidently such a gathering of people was considered by the Philistines to be a challenge to their authority over them. When the people with Samuel heard that the Philistines were coming they were greatly afraid and pleaded with Samuel to intercede for them with Yahweh so that they might be saved from their enemies.

“Yahweh Intervenes

“Samuel offered a burnt offering to Yahweh and he cried out to Yahweh in behalf of His people. Yahweh answered him, for when the Philistines approached to fight against Israel, just as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering, ‘Yahweh thundered with a great thunder upon the Philistines,’ defeating and routing them before Israel. Here we have a reference to a terrific electrical storm used by Yahweh to discomfit Israel’s enemies. The lightning evidently killed many in the army of the Philistines and this destruction can be easily understood since the warriors of that time were dressed in armor, carrying swords and shields, all of which were excellent conductors of electricity. Every man thus equipped would become a target for a stroke of lightning to hit and many were killed in this manner. Israel pursued the Philistines, defeating them and chasing them until they came to Beth-car.

“Samuel then took a stone and set it up between Mizpeh and Shen and named it Ebenezer, saying, ‘Hitherto hath Yahweh helped us.’

“Philistines Subdued

“The Philistines were fully subdued and did not invade the land of Israel again while Samuel lived. The cities that the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored and peace was also established between Israel and the Amorites during this period of Samuel’s judgeship.

“Reviewing this period in Israel’s history, we note a most interesting contrast between the people who went out to battle when the Ark was captured and the same people who gathered with Samuel to fast and confess their sins. Israel thought to defeat the Philistines by bringing the Ark of Yahweh into the battle, but they found out to their sorrow that the mere presence of the Ark in their midst was no protection for a sinful people, for the Philistines were even able to capture the Ark. Only by turning from their evil ways and returning to Yahweh could they expect to have the fulfillment of the promise of Divine protection. When they finally did turn to Yahweh with all their hearts, He brought forth from His arsenal weapons of His indignation and, through thunder and lightning, He routed the Philistines. Thus, it was fully demonstrated that only in righteousness could Israel be established and her enemies defeated.

“Samuel judged Israel during his whole lifetime. He traveled continually year after year in a circuit, holding court in Beth-el, Gilgal and Mizpeh, administering justice in all these districts. After completing each circuit he would return to Ramah where he had

established his home, and where also he had built an altar to Yahweh. This is the end of chapter #XI "The Ark Captured And Restored". Now **"The Book Of The Kingdom"**, chapter XII, Destiny, December, 1949:

"Israel Demands A King:

"WHEN SAMUEL BECAME OLD he appointed his sons as judges in Israel. His eldest son was Joel, the name of his second son was Abiah and they both ruled at Beer-sheba. But his sons did not follow in Samuel's footsteps; they were greedy and turned aside for money. They took bribes, which perverted justice, and because of this the Elders of Israel assembled together and went to Ramah to see Samuel. There they made a demand:

"... Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.' (1 Sam. 8:5.)

"Rejecting Yahweh

"The proposal was displeasing to Samuel because they demanded a king to rule over them, so he prayed to Yahweh. Yahweh's response was:

"... Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.' (1 Sam. 8:7.)

"In the providence of Yahweh it was destined that a king would ultimately be given to Israel. This fact is made clear in the blessing given to Judah by his father Jacob who said to him:

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come ...' (Gen. 49:10.)

"The People's Sin

"What, then, was the sin of the people in asking for a king, and how was it a rejection of Yahweh? The promise had been made that a king was to be given of the line of Judah and that promise was well known to the people. But they were impatient and unwilling to await the time when Yahweh would make arrangements for them to have a king. On His part Yahweh was compelled to wait until a certain generation was reached before He could choose a man from the line of Judah to reign over His people. It must not be forgotten that Yahweh is obedient to His own laws and Judah's two sons by Tamar, Pharez and Zarah, were both born out of wedlock (see Gen. 38). Under the Law of Yahweh the descendants of one born out of wedlock cannot enter the congregation of Yahweh until the tenth generation."

"The Tenth Generation

"All Israel was aware of this law and of the circumstances surrounding the birth of Judah's two sons. They also realized that the tenth generation had not yet come, but even while knowing all this, they were, nevertheless, demanding a king."

[Note: Judah's two sons by Tamar, Pharez and Zarah, were **NOT** born out of wedlock. The modern concept of marriage is novel. Tamar's marriages with Er and Onan were not consummated, and she was entitled to receive seed from Judah, who

had withheld Shelah. The tenth generation has nothing to do with this subject, causing only confusion. C.A.E.] – Back to Rand.

“Yahweh could not yet give them a king in accordance with His plans, so the people, by their unwillingness to wait any longer, manifested their rejection of Yahweh and His purposes concerning them. If they had waited just one more generation, a king would have been given to them without all the difficulties and trouble that followed their demanding a king before the time had come for that form of government to be established in Israel. David was of the next generation and he was also the tenth in generation* from Pharez. Before David’s generation no man of the line of Judah could exercise authority over His people or stand before Yahweh. (*see note above)

“The People Warned

“Yahweh reminded Samuel that, just as the people had rejected Him and served other gods, so now they were rejecting Samuel. Nevertheless, Yahweh told Samuel to listen to the demands of the people, although he was to warn them of the consequences by solemnly protesting and at the same time explaining to them the methods used by the king ruling over them.

“Samuel related to the people all that Yahweh had told him and then informed the Elders and people concerning what a king would demand of them. In the first place he would be a military ruler, taking their sons for his chariots and horsemen to run before him. He would also appoint colonels and captains and would take men to be mechanics in his workshops to make weapons for his soldiers and to reap his harvests. Their daughters, Samuel declared, he would take for confectioners, cooks and bakers. He would also take their animals and other possessions and give them to his ministers and he would collect tithes of all their possessions. Samuel then warned them:

“‘Then you will cry out on account of the king whom you have chosen for yourselves, but the Eternal will not answer you then.’ (1 Sam. 8:18, *Moffatt Trans.*)

“People Demand a King

“The Elders and the people refused to listen to Samuel’s advice but declared they wanted a king who would only be a leader over them to organize them and fight their battles. Samuel reported their specific request to Yahweh who instructed him:

“‘... Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king ...’ (1 Sam. 8:22.)

“Samuel then ordered the men who had assembled to demand a king to return to their own cities. Evidently this was for the purpose of giving Samuel the time and the opportunity to anoint the one whom Yahweh would select to rule over Israel.

“Saul, the Son of Kish

“The Record goes on to state that there was a man of the tribe of Benjamin whose name was Kish, a man of wealth and power. He had a son named Saul, in the prime of life and a stalwart young man. There was not a man in Israel as fine looking, for he was a head taller than any of the people.

“Kish had lost some asses from among his livestock so he sent Saul with a servant to hunt for them. Saul and his servant covered a great deal of territory without finding the animals, but their search brought them into the vicinity of the city where

Samuel was about to offer a sacrifice. Saul questioned the advisability of continuing the hunt, saying that his father would cease to worry about the animals and become concerned over him and the servant. But the servant informed Saul that there was a man of Yahweh in that town, one who was highly respected. His counsel was sure to be wise, so the servant suggested that they go to him, for he could tell them the way to go. Saul questioned the wisdom of such a conference since they had nothing to give the man, for even their stock of bread was exhausted. But his servant said he had a fourth part of a shekel of silver which he would give the Prophet to tell them the way to go.

“Saul Meets Samuel

“This was not paying for advice, but rather was in the nature of an offering, for no man in eastern countries ever approaches a superior without a present. So Saul and his servant went into the city where Samuel was at the time. As they were climbing the ascent into the town they met some young girls coming out to draw water and they asked if the Seer was in the city. The girls said that he was for he had come there to sacrifice for the people. In fact, the girls added, if they would go straight into the village immediately, they would meet him going to the place of sacrifice. Saul and his servant made their way to the center of the village and saw Samuel coming toward them.

“The day before Yahweh had told Samuel:

“‘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 ...’ (1 Sam. 9:16.)

“When Samuel saw Saul Yahweh made it clear to him that this was the man of whom He had spoken who was to wield authority over His people. Saul asked Samuel to direct him to the Seer’s house but Samuel replied that he was the Seer. He invited Saul to precede him to the sacrifice where he would eat with him that day. He said that in the morning he would tell Saul all that was in his mind. As for his father’s asses, Samuel told Saul not to worry about them for they had already been found.

“Samuel’s Message

“By informing Saul of his thoughts and allaying his anxiety about the straying animals by revealing that they had been found, Samuel convinced Saul of his right as a prophet, to whom it would be well for him to listen. Samuel went right to the point in his conversation with Saul: **‘... And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father’s house?’** (1 Sam. 9:20.)

“The import of Samuel’s words came as a surprise to Saul who countered:

“‘Am I not a Benjaminite, – of the smallest tribe in Israel? And of a clan less distinguished than any of the clans of the tribe of Benjamin? So why do you speak to me of such an honour?’ (1 Sam. 9:21, *F. F. Trans.*)

“This was true for Benjamin had been reduced to only 360 men as a result of a terrible sin committed. Now the tribe was small compared with the other Israel tribes. Saul also pointed out that his father’s house was one of the least important in Benjamin.

“Saul Anointed King

“Samuel invited Saul and his servant to the feast and gave them the chief seats among the thirty who had gathered there as guests of Samuel. Saul spent that night in

the house with Samuel, who awakened him early the next morning and went with him and his servant to the outskirts of the city. The servant was then sent on ahead so that Samuel could talk privately with Saul and show him Yahweh's command. Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it on Saul's head. Then he kissed him saying:

"... Yahweh hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance.' (1 Sam. 10:1.)

"Samuel Instructs Saul

"Before leaving Saul, Samuel gave him instructions concerning experiences he would have on his journey home. He told him he would meet two men by Rachel's sepulchre. They would inform him that the asses that had strayed away had been found but that his father was now worried about him. After this he would meet three men going up to the House of Yahweh at Bethel, taking sacrifices with them. One would be carrying three kids, another three loaves of bread and the third man a bottle of wine. They would salute him and give him two loaves of bread which Saul was to take. Later, Samuel said, Saul would come to the hill of Yahweh where a garrison of the Philistines was encamped. There he would meet a company of prophets coming down from the top of the hill and, advancing before them, minstrels would be playing music while they prophesied. Yahweh would then inspire Saul and he would prophesy along with the prophets. Thereafter Saul would be a different man; that is, the heart of the peasant would be changed into the heart of a king. Samuel's concluding bit of advice was also in a sense a warning to Saul:

"And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serve thee; for Yahweh is with thee.' (1 Sam. 10:7.)" [Chapter XII continued in the next lesson, WTL #231.]