

BABYLONISH GARMENTS

by Elder Bob Allgood

“And the Lord said --- Israel hath sinned --- Therefore the children of Israel can not stand before their enemies --- neither will I be with you any more, except --- O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you.” Joshua 7:10-13

The year is about 1493 BC. The children of Israel had been delivered from their 400 plus years of Egyptian bondage forty (40) years earlier, but had been wandering in the Wilderness for those forty (40) years because of Unbelief. When they had come to the borders of Canaan, which is a type of the Church of God, they were convinced by a hand full of unbelieving liberals that “the land of milk and honey” was not worth fighting for. Instead of “Obeying God” they said, “We be not able to go up against the people – and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers”. With the exception of a FEW, the whole congregation said, “Would to God that we had died in the land of Egypt ! or would to God we had died in this wilderness”, And they said, “Let us make us a captain, and let us return into Egypt”. Be careful what you ask for, GOD GRANTED THEIR WISH !

Likewise, Moses and Aaron had been denied entrance into Canaan because of Unbelief. Instead of speaking to the Rock as God told him, Moses smote the Rock twice, and failed to sanctify the Lord in the eyes of the people (Num. 20:8-12). Moses, the servant of the Lord, was allowed to go to the top of Mt. Pisgah and view Canaan, but he was not allowed to enter. We need to be careful not to teach or sing about Canaan as a type of heaven. Moses and Aaron did not make it into Canaan, but they surely are IN heaven.

Joshua has been appointed to take the place of Moses as leader of the children of Israel.. God told Joshua to “Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whither so ever thou goest”. God told Joshua, “This book of the law shall not

depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then shalt thou have good success". God told Joshua, "I will be with thee, I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5-9). Notice that this timely promise is based on obedience to God's commandments.

Joshua told the people to PREPARE - "for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it". PREPARE - "for ye have not passed this way heretofore". This was not to be a "new direction" of more rebellion, but a "straight and narrow path of righteousness". The river Jordan was flooded as it, "overfloweth all his banks all the time of harvest". The people were told to follow after the Ark of the Covenant by a space of 2,000 cubits. When the soles of the feet of the priest carrying the Ark were in the brim of the water, "the waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap - and those that came down toward the sea of the plain - failed, and were cut off: and the people passed over right against Jericho".

Jericho was to be the first stronghold to fall by the hand of God. The first trophy to be given to the children of Israel. This is the first mention of Jericho in the Scriptures. The city represents "wickedness and accursed things" even as the Lord said, "the city shall be accursed" (Jos. 6:17). So wicked was this city that Joshua said, "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up buildeth this city Jericho -" (Jos. 6:26). This can be compared to the CURSE Paul pronounced on them that "preach another gospel" (Gal. 1:8-9).

The children of Israel encamped in Gilgal after Joshua had circumcised all those who were born in the wilderness during their 40 years of wandering. No male Israelite gets into the land of Canaan without being circumcised. No one should be allowed to join the Church of God without first giving evidence that they have been circumcised in the heart, "the circumcision made without hands - the operation of God" (Col. 2:11-13). Only then are they fit subjects for Scriptural water baptism ! The children of Israel "kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho, forty years to the day after being delivered from Egypt (Ex. 12, w/ Jos. 5:10). Jericho is about to fall to the children of Israel. The blessings of God was to be theirs for obedience to his commandments.

The Captain of the host of the Lord was there, Jesus Christ our King. "It came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword in his hand: and Joshua went up to him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries ?". Beloved it is very important to know whether or not you are on the Lord's side in a battle. "If God be for us, who can be against us ?" The man answered, "Nay; but as Captain (i.e. Prince) of the host of the Lord am I now come". And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and did worship, and said unto him, "What saith my lord unto his servant"? Should we not cry out, even as Paul did, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do ?". Should we not pray, Lord Jesus give thy servants marching orders, less we attack the Jerichos in our own strength. When we undertake to do things on our own

because we think it is a “good idea” or because the “church needs help” – when we undertake to move in “new directions” contrary to the Word and Will of The Captain of the host of the Lord - we will surely fail and bring disgrace to his name.

The Captain of the Lord’s host said unto Joshua, “Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy”. And Joshua did as he was told. Moses his predecessor had once had a similar experience. “The Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush - the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And God called unto him – Moses, Moses, -- Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground” (Ex. 3:2-5). Can anyone deny the Divinity of the Captain of the Lord’s host ? Can anyone deny that we should not likewise bow in humble adoration of our great God and Savior who will give us victory in the battle against spiritual wickedness in high places if we will “Obey God rather than men”.

Jericho was straitly shut up because of the children of Israel, and none went in or out. The wall kept the children of Israel out, and the children of Israel kept the city shut up. The Lord said to Joshua, “See, I have given into thine hand Jericho”. The men of war were told to go around the city once a day for six days. Then on the seventh day they were to go around the city seven times. Seven priest were to make a long blast on seven trumpets of ram’s horn, and the people were to shout, and when they did the wall of the city would fall down flat. Not topple over, but fall down flat. Mighty Jericho would fall.

BUT God said, “The city shall be accursed - and all that are therein”. The gold and silver and vessels of brass and iron were to be consecrated unto the Lord, and delivered into the treasury of the Lord, but the children of Israel were not to take any SPOILS from the accursed City of Jericho. No one was to take anything from the city for their personal benefit. Just as those who preach another gospel are to be accursed, and God’s people should not be a participant with, nor benefit from, those who preach another gospel. So the men of war marched around the city, the priest blew the trumpets, the people shouted and the wall fell down flat. The warriors went into the city and utterly destroyed “all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword”. Only Rahab the harlot and her father’s household were spared.

But ONE MAN, named Achan, “took of the accursed thing; and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel” (Joshua 7:1). Solomon wrote, “Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good”. ONE MAN saw a Babylonish Garment that was appealing to his lustful eyes, and took it, with some silver and a wedge of gold, and hid them among his stuff. ONE MAN can cause much trouble for Zion. ONE MAN can bring hurt to thousands of God’s people. ONE MAN can gather a following of rebellious sinners and cause division among the family of God. Korah did ! Jeroboam did ! Ahab did ! Achan did ! After defeating Jericho, tiny Ai was next in line. It was so small that it was recommended that Joshua send only a small force. But Israel was DEFEATED ! (Jos. 7:2-5). WHY ? Because ONE MAN had hid a Babylonish Garment in the camp !

ONE MAN had interrupted the blessings of God from the whole congregation, from the entire nation of Israel. God held the entire nation, **ALL** of the children of Israel responsible for the **SIN** of **ONE MAN**. God said, “Israel hath sinned -- Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies – neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed thing from among you. -- O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, **UNTIL** ye take away the accursed thing from among you” (Jos. 7:11-13). Now some may say “That is not fair”, God promised not to leave or forsake Joshua. Remember that timely promise was based upon timely obedience, **AND** it is the same today. Jesus said, “**IF** ye love me, keep my commandments. – **IF** ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love” (John 14:15, 15:10). Many like to talk about “Loving God” while they do as they please. That is hypocrisy ! John says, “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (I John 5:3).

But now the children of Israel were probably asking themselves, “How do you define **UNTIL**”. They needed to know “**WHO**” did this thing and how they were going to find him. Achan was hiding in the midst of the multitude, and the Babylonish Garment was hid among his stuff. “Be sure that your sin will find you out”. God has a way to identify the ones who have left “the old paths”. Allow me to paraphrase this. The Lord said, We are going to have a **Line-Up**. Israel shall come by tribes, and the tribe I pick shall come by families, and the family I pick shall come by household, and the household I pick shall come man by man. In effect, the Lord said, we will narrow this thing down to **THE MAN** that is responsible for all the trouble. Beloved in my humble opinion the Old Baptists ought to have a **Line-Up** and examined - man by man - according to sound doctrine and practice to find **THE MAN** that is causing trouble in Zion today.

Achan was identified as the guilty party and confess to Joshua, “Indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel – When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, -- and silver and a wedge of gold – I coveted them, and took them; --“ (Jos. 7:20-21). This Babylonish Garment symbolizes every form of idolatry known to man. This Babylonish Garment speaks of **MYSTERY BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH**. This Babylonish Garment represents every departure from “the old paths” and the rebellious attitude of them that say “we will not walk therein”. This Babylonish Garment represents every man made invention and innovation ever brought into the Church of God. Achan was also guilty of taking silver and gold that was to be consecrated unto the Lord and delivered to the Lord’s treasury. I am reminded how that Ananias and Sapphira were put to death for lying to God about their gifts to the Church treasury (Acts 5:1-9).

God said, “And it shall be, that he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire, he and all that he hath: because he had transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and because he hath wrought folly (i.e. wickedness) in Israel” (Jos. 7:15). This punishment was handed out in a literal fashion in the Old Testament days. Achan was taken, along with his sons and daughters, and stoned to death, then all the bodies and all of his possessions were burned with fire, and they raised over him a great heap of stones that

remain until this day in the Valley of Achor (Jos. 7:24-26). Some may say “how un-loving and unkind”. NOT SO - Achan had troubled Israel. Achan had caused the presence of the Lord to depart from Israel. Achan had caused the anger of the Lord to be upon Israel. The discipline was carried out for the love of God and the love of God’s people.

Do we carry out discipline in this manner today ? NO - But we are taught to separate ourselves from heresy and disorder. We are not taught to tolerate them in the name of love and forgiveness. We are taught to put away the Babylonish Garments that come into the Church of the living God. Babylonish Garments can take on many appearances. They can come in the form of a Man Made Missions Movement or a Seminar for Ministerial Training or Youth Camps under the guise of Christian Training or Ecumenical Endeavors with other orders or New (unsound) Doctrine or New Interpretation of Scripture or Lower Standards for Church membership or New Directions for Excitement and Activities instead of Walking in the Old Paths. When ever God’s people depart from the faith, from the Biblical New Testament pattern of the Church, they can be assured the Lord will say, “O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, UNTIL ye take away the accursed thing from among you”. May God help us to put away all of the Babylonish Garments that prevent God’s blessings upon the Church of Jesus Christ. (BA)