

David - The Turning Tide and Waiting - Part Six

by Charles E. Wigg

The Tide Turns

While all this was taking place, Saul was reaching the end of his reign and his life. He had sinned away his opportunity to draw near to the God who had shown him such favour. So he turned to witchcraft. What a warning! Once we turn away from God, who can tell to what depths we will sink? Saul was desperate, so he sought the aid of a woman who was possessed by an evil, a familiar spirit. He wished to contact Samuel, who was long dead, and God allowed the familiar spirit to impersonate Samuel, and used that demon to convey His message to Saul.

That was a message of doom, and the demon told Saul that Jehovah would deliver the host & people of Israel into the hands of the Philistines, and that on that day Saul and his sons would be with him. This could mean that Saul and his sons would die, or it could mean that they would be with the demon in the abode of Satan, Hell.

Some think that the apparition was actually Samuel, but no medium has the power to disturb the eternal rest of the righteous. Familiar spirits, are spirits that are familiar with the departed, and are able to impersonate them. They appear in the same clothes, and speak with the same voice, even have scars or warts that the deceased had on their person during the lifetime. This explains the so-called appearances of what is claimed to be the "Virgin Mary". It is not that person at all but a spirit that is familiar with her during her lifetime.

While David was seeking to restore the ruins of Ziklag, God was executing His judgement on Saul and his sons on Mount Gilboa. The story of Saul's end is very sad, because he was slain by the sword of an Amalekite, the very people that he had spared. Let this be a warning to us! Amalek represents the principle of sin in the flesh. This principle seeks to lay its hand on the throne of God, (the believer's heart). God will never share that throne with another, but declared through Mose, "The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation. Ex. 17:16. Saul spared the best, to offer as a sacrifice to Jehovah, and he even spared the king of Amalek, Agag. But Amalek did not spare Saul, as the story reveals. There is nothing else for it, either we side with God in judging the flesh, or it will destroy us and our testimony here.

When the Amalekite brought the sad news to David, he thought that he would receive some reward. But instead he came under judgement too. In this instance David shines as an example for us. He did not rejoice in the slaughter of one who had sought to murder him on several occasions. Instead he mourned that one who had such potential, should come to so ignominious end. On this occasion he wrote a beautiful song of lamentation, a song that expressed the feelings of his heart. He praised all that he could in the lives of Saul and Jonathan, and desired that the matter of their death, and its shame be kept in as small a circle as possible. "Tell it not in Gath". This proves to us how completely David had been restored after his fall. This was the very place to which he had resorted for shelter. These were the very people on whom he relied for safety and succour. However though in a backslidden condition, during his time in that very place, he won the hearts of Ittai and his band of six hundred. He also won the hearts of the Cherethites and the Pelethites, all of whom were Philistines, and he chose them to be his bodyguard. Even while in such a state, they saw the beauty of his character were drawn to him, and became his loyal followers.

First David inquired of the Lord as to what he should do, he had learned that he could trust himself no longer. Though he needed the Lord, His help and guidance while in exile, he would need Him all the more now, that he was about to become king. He then obeyed God's direction, and went up and settled in the villages of Hebron. Next he sent messages commending the men of Jabesh-Gilead, for their courage, and kindness. They had risked their lives in rescuing the remains of the fallen king and his sons, from shameful exposure, and had given them an honourable burial. At the same time, he informed them that Judah had anointed him to be their king.

Seven Years of Waiting

David was accepted readily by his own tribe, but seven and one half years were to elapse before he was anointed king over all Israel. These were years of sorrow for him, yet he was a type of Him that is called the "Lion of the

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tribe of Judah" Satan sought to continue the dynasty of Saul, and incited the rest of Israel to anoint Ishbosheth as king of Israel. It is interesting to discover that the meaning of his name is 'Man of shame'. Often the meaning of a person's name in the Old Testament, sheds light on that person's character, or their importance in typical teaching.

Abner the son of Ner, was his General, and a man that David regarded as a prince. However this is a warning to us, and shows that even good men can be misguided, and support the wrong person, or the wrong cause. David's General, was Joab, his own nephew, and he was a very clever soldier, a gifted man, but a very hard man. Several times David had to say, "You sons of Zeruiah are too hard for me". (Zeruiah was David's sister). In chapter 3 of 2Sam. we see a confrontation, and a test of strength between David's army, and that of Ishbosheth. It is sad to see how that those of the same nation regarded slaughter as a matter of sport. Thus begun a war that was to last for years, and result in the needless death of many of the people of God. All tis came about, because of supporting the wrong man.

In the history of Christianity, we have witnessed many sad conflicts, and these also have come about because of men, (often good men), who have supported those who are rival to Christ. God has decreed " that in all things He might, (must) have the pre-eminence". Col. 1:18.

At last after the needless death of Asahel, Joab's brother, and 360 of Abner's men, and 20 of David's men including Asahel. His death is a warning to us. He was a fast runner and ran ahead of his brethren, pursuing Abner, even though he was unarmed. Abner told him to turn aside, to arm himself, so that the fight might be equal, but Asahel refused, and paid for his folly with his life. Let this also be a warning to us, lest any of us think that we are ahead of our brethren. We need patience and humility, and we are warned Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

It was Abner who at last drew attention to the hopelessness of the conflict. His words, "Shall the sword devour forever? knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the end?" called an end to the conflict. These are words that many of our brethren would well to take heed to. How often conflicts are carried on between brethren. Often the cause of the division was caused by men who have long since died, yet still it is kept alive. To their shame, and the injury of the testimony.

At last after more than seven years of bitterness and conflict, and the needless loss of many valuable lives, (including that of Abner, who was slain by Joab, in revenge for his foolish brother's death), David was anointed king over all Israel. God had sent Samuel to anoint David king many years before, and it reminds us of what is said of the Lord Jesus. (1 Corinthians 15:25) For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

The Lord Jesus, Great David's greater son, sits at the right hand of the majesty on high, waiting until His enemies are made the footstool of His feet. What a wonderful day that will be, when the proclamation will be fulfilled, "The kingdoms of this world, are become the Kingdoms of the Lord and of His Christ"! Rev. 11:15.