1 Chronicles - Commentaries by Charles Henry Mackintosh

The Scriptures, Scriptures, The: Part 6

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When David set forth to bring up the ark of the Lord from Kirjath-jearim, because he did not follow the due order, according to the word of the Lord, it was attended with disastrous consequences—Uzzah was smitten and died. Instead of the ark being brought up to the city of David, they carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. But when David found from Scripture that "none ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites" and thus acted, then they brought up the ark of God with great gladness and rejoicing. (2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 15.) Can any instance more strikingly show God's jealousy for the authority of His own word than this?

In tracing further the solemn way in which God dealt with those who despised the authority of His own word, whether written or spoken by His servants, we notice His interference on account of the idolatry of His people. The children of Israel "served idols, whereof the Lord had said, ye shall not do this thing." They would not hear His prophets, but hardened their necks and rejected His statutes and His covenant. "They left all the commandments of the Lord their God, and made them molten images... and worshiped all the host of heaven, and served Baal.... Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight: there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.... The Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria." 2 Kings 17:16, 18, 23.

The Ten Tribes

Where the ten tribes are, no one knows with certainty to this day; hence, they are sometimes spoken of as the lost tribes. However, the scripture must be fulfilled that they will yet be gathered back to their own land according to the word of the prophet Ezekiel and other servants of the Lord.

The Two Tribes

Notwithstanding the solemn warning in God's removing these ten tribes out of His sight because of their transgression, scarcely a century had elapsed before the commandment of the Lord came to remove Judah also out of His sight, because of the sins of Manasseh. Besides, the Lord God sent to them by His messengers rising up continually and carefully, but they mocked His messengers, despised His words, and misused His prophets until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, so that there was no remedy. So "the king of Babylon.... carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land." 2 Kings 24:12-14.

“The king of the Chaldees,... slew their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age." The people were in captivity for seventy years, "to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbaths: for as long as she lay desolate she kept Sabbath, to fulfill threescore and ten years." 2 Chron. 36:17, 21. What a solemn thing it is to turn away from God and not to hearken to His Word! How offensive to Him to profess to be His people, and yet not be obedient to His will according as He has caused it to be written for our learning and comfort!

Examples of Blessing

The cases in the Old Testament we have thus far looked at, have been for the most part showing the dreadful consequences of despising the Word of God. We will now turn to a few examples of God's remarkable blessing and honor on those who, in times of great darkness, have stood at all costs for the claims and divine authority of the Scriptures. We shall always find whether in the times of the Judges or of the Kings, even when they had for a long season been without the true God, that when they turned to the Lord God of Israel in their trouble, He was found of them. (Judg. 2:16-18; 3:9-15; 4:3-7; 2 Chron. 15:4.)

We are told that Jehoshaphat walked in the commandments of the Lord God of his father, and not after the doings of Israel. (2 Chron. 17:3, 4.) This was boldly standing against his own people for the authority of God, and His Word. But more than this, he taught the people by the Levites, who had the book of the law of the Lord with them, and went about throughout all the cities of Judah and taught the people. God was with Jehoshaphat therefore in a remarkable way, for "the fear of the Lord fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat." v. 10. So truly did he hold the authority of Scripture that the king's motto seems to have been: “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chron. 20:20.

Authority of Scripture

When Hezekiah came to the throne, he found that the doors of the temple had been shut up, the lamps put out, and neither incense burnt nor sacrifice offered according to the Scriptures, in the holy place to the Lord God of Israel, but filthiness was in the holy place. The people had forsaken the Lord and turned their backs upon the Lord; they had burnt incense to other gods and made altars in every corner of Jerusalem. Sensitive to these fearful evils, the king brought in the priests and the Levites, opened the doors, cleansed the house, offered a sin offering, and made reconciliation with the blood upon the altar for all Israel. Afterward he utterly destroyed all the images and groves. This was according to the law of the Lord.

Moreover, they found they had not kept the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel for a long time in such sort as it is written. So the king sent to all Israel and Judah that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, to keep the Passover unto the Lord God of Israel. This was

heartily responded to. "So there was great joy in Jerusalem: for since the time of Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel [nearly three hundred years] there was not the like in Jerusalem." 2 Chron. 30:26.

Not many years had passed before the sin of Judah became very great again, helped on by the great wickedness of King Manasseh. So when young Josiah came to the throne, carved images, molten images, groves and the altars of Baalim were very abundant in Judah. The young king destroyed these and set to work to repair the house of the Lord. In it the priest found "a book of the law of the Lord" given by Moses. This book was read before the king. "And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes." 2 Chron. 34:19. He saw they were all justly exposed to God’s wrath. So weighty was the authority of the Word of God to the king's soul that he read it to all the people great and small, "and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord." v. 30.

Josiah

Josiah and the children of Israel kept the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. "And there was no Passover like to that kept in Israel from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a Passover as Josiah kept, and the priests, and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem." 2 Chron. 35:18. Great was the blessing and joy of those who so acted on the Word of God.

From these few examples which we have selected from the ancient scriptures, it is clear that a divine revelation was recognized by the faithful from the time of Moses, as that which had proceeded out of the mouth of God. Can we fail to notice when these sacred writings were despised, how markedly God's displeasure was manifested, and what misery the people had to undergo before any were awakened to their state, and they turned again to the living and true God? On the other hand, when what God had said was hearkened to, and the people acted upon it, what remarkable blessing and comfort always followed! Could there be more striking proofs given of the scriptures of the Old Testament being a divine revelation? C. H. Mackintosh

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