

June 3, 2001

## 1 Samuel 7

As we know, Israel had taken the ark into their battle against the Philistines. They viewed it as not much more than a lucky charm, feeling that it would deliver to them a great victory. Rather than a victory, the Israelites were defeated, and the ark taken captive by the Philistines. The God of the ark plagued the Philistines so badly that the Philistines sent it back.

The ark came back to Beth-shemesh. Beth-shemesh was a city of priests. The people were glad to see the ark, and curiosity overcame them. So many people looked in the ark out of curiosity. What they did was contrary to the law of God, so God smote 50,070 men who looked into the ark. And there was great sorrow.

However, rather than the people repenting of their sin of ignoring the word of God and looking into the ark, they said, *Who is able to stand before this holy LORD God?* But the question was asked with **no desire** for an answer.

The men of Beth-shemesh knew that the people did not just die, but they died as an act of justice on the Lord's part. They knew that the 50,070 men died because of sin, and they knew the sin for which they died. So rather than confess and deal with the sin, they wanted to get away from the Lord of justice.

Then they asked, *and to whom shall he go up from us?* In other words, We don't want the Lord among us, for He **requires holiness**, and we don't want such a requirement upon us. So how can we get Him away from us?

The Lord demands holiness. And rather than the people of Beth-shemesh **SANCTIFIED** themselves from the world so the Lord could dwell among them, they sent messengers to the people of Kirjath-jearim (city of forests), and asked them to come get the ark.

**Sanctify** means to be holy, **set apart** from the world, and dedicated to serving God. Notice here that the men of the city of the priests refused to **sanctify** themselves, but the non-priests willingly sanctified themselves.

This is a very common occurrence: People **will separate from the Lord** rather than separate from the world. People will **even separate from churches** that preach and require holy living rather than separate from the world.

I have met those who **will quite serving** the Lord rather than bring their lives into conformity to the word of God, so they can serve Him.

The men of Kirjath-jearim came and got the ark.

They were willing to do what the men of Beth-shemesh were unwilling to do — that is, line up with the word of God, so the Lord could dwell among them.

They **removed the known sins**, sanctified themselves, and God blessed them.

Do we want God to dwell among us?

Do we want His blessings upon us?

Do we want His blessings upon our church?

Do we want his blessings upon our homes?

Then we must sanctify ourselves — **ask God to reveal sin through His word**, remove that sin, and line up with the word of God.

It is interesting that Beth-shemesh was a city of priests, yet they let the ark sit outside on a stone, and looked into the ark. On the other hand, Kirjath-jearim was a city of ordinary Israelites, and they prepared a place for the ark inside a house, and appointed someone to care for the ark.

They appointed Abinadab's son, Eleazar, to care for the ark. There is no evidence of Eleazar being of the priestly line.

More than a few times I have seen non-clergy Christians with a far **better testimony** than clergy.

I remember when I was working for Bob Crist. The largest churches in the 60s were Baptist churches, and most of them bought church busses from Bob. I well remember delivering a buss into Cincinnati on a weekend, so I stayed in a Prophet's chamber over the weekend so I could go to that church on Sunday. It was probably the second or third largest church in the US at the time. I went to breakfast at a local restaurant I believe on a **Saturday morning** with the pastor and several of his staff members.

I don't remember the exchange that the pastor had with the waitress, but I do remember it was so vulgar that I was embarrassed to be seen with the men.

My experience there with that pastor was not unusual.

I heard a **second hand report** from a man who was with him of another pastor of a large Baptist church. This pastor was high up in the Moral Majority. I know both men. It has been some years ago when the Moral Majority was big the pastor asked the driver of the car they were in to stop so he could get a Playboy magazine.

And we wonder why Baptist churches are no longer the largest churches.

In 1 Samuel 7, we see a higher standard among the non-clergy than among the clergy in chapter 6.

Notice here that folks expect certain things from the pastor, the pastor's wife and his family, things that they themselves are not necessarily willing to follow. But in this passage, we see that the non-clergy Israelites willingly and gladly met a standard that the priests were unwilling to meet.

However, I **do not see two standards** in Scripture: one for pastors and their families and one for the laymen and their families.

SS teachers stand before their students representing God the same as does the pastor. Therefore, the teachers should have at least as high a standard as is expected of the pastor.

Laymen and their families meet far more people throughout the week than does the pastor. Thus, their standard should be at least as high as they expect of their pastors.

All of His people should realize and see the Lord's holiness daily.

**Isaiah 6:1** ¶ *In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. 2 Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3 And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.** 4 And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. 5 ¶ Then said I, *Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.* 6 Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: 7 And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, *Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.* 8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, *Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?* Then said I, *Here am I; send me.**

**Revelation 5:8** ¶ *And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. 9 And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, 10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.*

We do not see God as He is, or we would be crying out to Him to **sanctify** us. We would want to be **sanctified**

so He could **dwel** among us and **bles** us according to His good pleasure.

**2 Corinthians 4:6** *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

It is God who must command the light of His word to shine into our hearts. He must reveal sin, and He must show us the answer to that sin. If we could catch a glimpse of the holiness of God, we would plead with Him to **command the light to shine in the darkness of our heart. We would realize that we are fallen sinners; we would not trust ourselves, for we would be continually reminded that we are more often than not controlled by our fallen nature.**

My wife, Miss Bettie, called my attention to an article in the *Chalcedon Report*. It is good enough to quote to you a few points:

**Revivals produce emotions. Conviction** of sin, thoughts of eternity without God, the **offer of grace** in Jesus Christ – can I truly grasp these realities and not have my emotions stirred? Am I going to stand in the presence of God and say, My...isn't this interesting.

The Holy Spirit most certainly **gives emotions**. Those emotions stir the conscience, and make us **broken hearted** before God over the uncontrolled and unconfessed sins in our lives.

**Romans 6:13** *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

**Colossians 3:10** *And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

**1 Corinthians 6:19** *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

**Sanctification** means we **want to remove** sin and line up with the word of God.

**Sanctification** means we **diligently search** the word of God.

**Sanctification** means we continually pray for the Lord to **command the light to shine** into our hearts and reveal sin.

**Sanctification** means we continually compar our lives to His word.

**Sanctification** means we **catch a glimpse** of who God is and of His holiness, and we plead for God's grace which alone permits us to live up to the standard He has established for us in His word.

**Sanctification** means that we continue to try to reach God's standard, but we will never be perfect.

**Sanctification** means that though we will fail to reach the perfect standard established for us in God's word, we will continue to try to reach that standard of separation from the world.

**Sanctification** means that those who have no desire to remove sin and grow more in the Lord are in trouble with the Lord.

Job said:

**Job 42:5** *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. 6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*

Moses said:

**Psalms 90:8** *Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.*

David said:

**Psalms 19:12** *Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. 13 Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression.*

**Psalms 51:1** ¶ <<To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after

*he had gone in to Bathsheba.>> Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. 5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7 ¶ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. 10 **Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.** 11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. 12 Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. 13 Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. 14 ¶ Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. 15 O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. 16 For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. 17 **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.** 18 Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.*

Daniel said:

**Daniel 9:3** *And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: 4 ¶ And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; 5 We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments: 6 Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.*

Isaiah said:

**Isaiah 6:5** ¶ *Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*

Paul said:

**Philippians 3:12** *Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

If the great men of God continually saw their sinful condition before the Lord and were continually concerned about their sinfulness, then **why aren't we?** How is it that we are so smug, and why are we not crying out with David, *Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*

Quoting again from the article:

Consider. Moses sees God, kicks his shoes off, and starts stammering about how God should send Aaron. After conversing with the Law-Giver on the mountain, Moses returns to the people and they beg him to veil his face: the reflected glory is just too much for them to bear. Isaiah sees God, crawls under a church pew, and begins blubbing about how he needs his scummy mouth washed out. Jeremiah hears God and tells the Almighty that he's just a kid and not up for the rough and tumble life of a prophet. Paul hears God, is knocked off of his donkey, and blinded by the light of Glory. John is taken up into heaven and, upon meeting the angelic messenger, he falls on his face as dead. These are not pretty pictures. People see God and they are struck with terror. Holy God, plus sinful me, equals...dead me.

**We have not seen God,** nor do we know who He is, or we would be **crying out to Him** to reveal our sins and

our worldliness, and to sanctify us for Himself.

**Revival produces emotions. conviction of sin, thoughts of eternity without God, and offer of grace in Jesus Christ... Can we truly grasp the reality of God without our emotions being stirred??**

Quoting again:

Those who have been truly converted will **have a dedication to glorifying** God as God because He is God, regardless of what happens to the person. Holy people love holy things primarily because they are holy, not because these things will make the person healthy, wealthy and wise.

**Sanctification** means that the more we love Him, the more we want to love Him. The more we love Him, the more we want to be separate from the world and to the Lord. The more we see Him, the more we want to be like Him.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached the resurrected and exalted Lord. Peter's hearers got a glimpse of who the Lord is; Peter's hearers got a glimpse of the Lord's holiness. Notice what they said:

**Acts 2:29** *Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. 30 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; 31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. 32 This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. 34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, 35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool. 36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. 37 ¶ Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?*

We claim to be Christians. We claim to love God. We claim to want to serve the Lord with all our hearts. Where, may I ask, is our question to the Lord, **what shall we do? Lord, what do you want me to do? Show me from your word, and then give me the strength and power to do it.**

**Hebrews 12:14** *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

1 Samuel 7:2, is an extremely sad commentary:

*And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjathjearim, that the time was long; for it was twenty years: and all the house of Israel lamented after the LORD.*

*The house of Israel* did not lament very much, because they still served the gods of this world, Baalim and Ashtaroth, v. 4.

The **Lord demands holiness** from His people. He **demands that they look and act** differently from the world. He demands that they **love** one another. He demands that we **serve one another** with love. He demands **humility** before Him. He demands we **study** His word and commune with Him in prayer.

We know what the Lord requires from His people. We know the promised blessings He has for His people who separate from the world and to Him. Yet rather than cry out to God that He would convict us of sins, rather than cry out to God that He would separate us from our worldly loves, ways and dress, we **lament** that we do not have His blessings.