

WATCHMAN'S TEACHING LETTER

Monthly Letter #231; July, 2017 By: Teacher Clifton A. Emahiser
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THOSE TO WHOM THE COVENANT BELONGS

This is my two hundred and thirty-first 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*. With this lesson I will continue a critical review of a series entitled "The Book Of The Kingdom" found in *Destiny* magazines from January, 1949 until April, 1952, in 24 chapters, by Howard B. Rand and I will continue with chapter XII, *Destiny* 1949, plus chapter XIII, "The Reign Of Saul", *Destiny*, January 1950 (and I will edit it out of necessity):

"The Ark Captured And Restored: ... "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.)

"After that Saul was to go to Gilgal and wait there until Samuel came and offer a burnt offering and a sacrifice. At that time he would receive specific instructions as to what he should do.

"All that Samuel had said came to pass and when the people saw Saul prophesying among the prophets they wondered about it and asked if Saul was also a prophet. After that it became a proverb in Israel, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'

"Saul Returns Home

"Upon returning home Saul's uncle asked him where he had been. Saul replied that he had hunted for his father's stray asses and when he could not find them he went to see Samuel. His uncle then asked him what Samuel had said to him and Saul informed him only of Samuel's statement to him that the asses had been found. Evidently Saul was content to let time answer concerning his other conversations with Samuel so he wisely held his own counsel on this occasion.

“Official Choice of Saul

“Samuel called all Israel together at Mizpeh and recited in their presence the history of Yahweh’s dealings with them, beginning with their deliverance from Egypt. He reminded them that Yahweh had also delivered them from the nations around them and had overthrown their oppressors. But he also pointed out that they had rejected Yahweh Almighty who had saved them from their enemies many times, finally demanding a king to rule over them.

“The people were then told to present themselves before him according to their tribes. When all the tribes had passed before Samuel, the tribe of Benjamin was selected. Then this tribe passed before him according to their families and the family of Kish was selected. Out of his family Saul was chosen. But when they looked for Saul, he could not be found.

“Shout of a King

“Inquiry was made of Yahweh to make sure Saul was the one to be selected to become king and Yahweh responded by disclosing the fact that Saul was hiding among the goods, or luggage. The men of Israel ran and brought Saul out from his hiding place and set him before the people. He was a head taller than anyone else among them. It is evident that Saul became suddenly frightened at the prospect of becoming king, so he hid to escape the honors he was to receive. But Yahweh had selected him for the place and when he finally stood in the midst of the people, all of them shouted, ‘Yahweh save the King!’ From that day to this the shout of a king has been in the midst of Israel as prophesied by Balaam:

“‘He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel: Yahweh his Almighty is with him, and the shout of a king is among them.’ (Num. 23:21.) [We should not accept this as a prophecy of Israel having an earthly king, as the subject of Num. 23:21 is Yahweh Himself, and He is being referred to as the king in the context of the passage.]

“The people were then sent away and Saul also went home, accompanied by a band of men whose hearts Yahweh had touched and who became his bodyguard. There were at the time some men of low character in Israel who were not impressed with Saul and they complained:

“‘... How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace.’ (1 Sam. 10:27.)

“Nahash, the Ammonite

“Nahash, the Ammonite, came against the city of Jabesh in Gilead to engage its men in war. The men at Jabesh said that they were willing to make a covenant with Nahash and serve him but Nahash answered that a covenant could be made with him on one condition only. That condition required that the people of Jabesh should come out to him and he would put out all their right eyes. This humiliation, he said, would be a reproach against all Israel.

“Jabesh Sends for Help

“The elders of Jabesh asked seven days grace before giving their answer and during that time they sent messengers throughout all Israel to see if there was anyone who could deliver them out of the hand of Nahash. If no one could, then they would have to submit to the terms laid down. It is evident that Nahash was sure in his own mind of complete victory over

any force Israel could send against him, so he readily consented to the seven-day truce. The messengers came to Gilead where Saul was at the time. The evil tidings were told to the people and when Saul came in from the field he inquired:

“... What *aileth* the people that they weep? And they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh.’ (1 Sam. 11:5.)

“It should be remembered that the Benjaminites were closely related to the people of Jabesh-gilead. A large portion of the tribe must have been descendants of the four hundred maidens who became wives for the men of Benjamin at the time this tribe was nearly exterminated. This no doubt accounts for the grief of the people of Gilead and Saul’s indignation.

“Saul Very Angry

“The Spirit of Yahweh came upon Saul when he heard the tidings and he was very angry. He took a yoke of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces throughout all the land of Israel by messengers who proclaimed:

“... Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of Yahweh fell on the people, and they came out with one consent [i.e., as one man].’ (1 Sam. 11:7.), [brackets not mine.]

“Israel and Judah

“It is stated that there were three hundred thousand Israelites and thirty thousand men of Judah. Here again is concrete evidence of the recognition of the distinction between Israel and Judah – a distinction that every student must recognize before he can even begin to understand the ABC’s of Bible exegesis. This distinction between Israel and Judah prevails throughout the Scriptures, and unless this is recognized, not only are the historical facts of the Bible misunderstood, but the utterances of the prophets become – a hopeless tangle. [However none of this pertains to modern Jews.]

“Ammonites Defeated

“A messenger was sent to the men of Jabesh, telling them help would come about noon the next day. The men of Jabesh were very glad and sent word to Nahash, the Ammonite, that they would come out to him the following day.

“Saul divided the people into three companies. In the early morning they attacked the Ammonites and slew them until noontime. The rest were scattered abroad. The people then demanded that those who had refused to have Saul reign over them be brought out and slain. Saul, however, forbade them to do this, saying:

“... There shall not a man be put to death this day: for to day Yahweh hath wrought salvation in Israel.’ (1 Sam. 11:13.)

“Samuel commanded the people to go to Gilgal and renew the national covenant with their King and acknowledge his appointment. There Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced together greatly in their new relationship which Yahweh had blessed.” [Although we cannot forget what Yahweh had said to Ephraim in Hosea 13:11 “I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took *him* away in my wrath.”]

This is the end of chapter XII, "Israel Demands A King", Destiny 1949 "The Ark Captured And Restored". I will now proceed with chapter XIII, "The Reign Of Saul", Destiny, January 1950:

"The Reign Of Saul

"**FOLLOWING THE FESTIVAL** during which the kingship of Saul was confirmed as a result of his victory over the Ammonites, Samuel addressed the people of Israel. In the course of his remarks he pointed out that he had hearkened to their voice and a king had been chosen to rule over them. Referring to himself, Samuel said that he was old and gray-headed and had served them long. He also mentioned his sons; no doubt the occasion reminded him of their misconduct. Because of their evil ways, the account indicates that Samuel had deprived them of holding any official position in Israel, reducing them to the common rank of the rest of the people.

"Eli's sin had been in allowing his sons to continue in public office after he became aware of their misconduct in public affairs. When Samuel was informed that his sons were taking bribes and misbehaving in office, he immediately removed them from their positions in the Israel commonwealth.

"Samuel's Challenge

"Continuing his address, Samuel declared that from childhood he had faithfully carried out all commitments placed in his charge. As a judge who had fulfilled the duties assigned to him, he was officially retiring from administering the affairs of state. He issued a challenge for anyone to speak up if at any time during his long tenure of office he had been dishonest in his dealings:

"Behold, here I am: witness against me before Yahweh, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I defrauded? Whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you.' (1 Sam. 12:3.)

"The people replied by giving a splendid testimony to Samuel's devotion to duty and honesty in all his dealings during the years of his judgeship. With one voice they declared he had never defrauded nor oppressed them, for he had not extorted anything whatever from anyone. Samuel then said that Yahweh was a witness, as well as Saul, their King, that no fault could be found with his administration. The people declared the witness to be true. Thereupon, Samuel legally relinquished the office of judge, leaving behind him an untarnished record of righteous performance as one of Israel's great statesmen. Saul was now to assume the office Samuel had relinquished and, as head of the Kingdom, would henceforth be charged with the administration of its affairs.

"Sound Counsel

"Following the ceremony of turning over to Saul the handling of the affairs of state, Samuel recited the history of Israel. He spoke of Yahweh's choosing of Moses and Aaron, declaring that they were raised up for the purpose of delivering the people from Egyptian bondage. He then reminded Israel that when they forgot Yahweh, they were sold into the hands of the nations around them. They became subject to those nations during the years of

disobedience and deliverance came only when they turned from their sinful ways and gave up their idolatrous practices.

“After giving a list of the names of men whom Yahweh had raised up from time to time to deliver His people from their oppressors, Samuel accused Israel of desiring a king to reign over them when the Yahweh, their Almighty, was their King. Nevertheless, they had the king they had desired. Israel’s sin was in the refusal to obey Yahweh their Almighty, at the same time declaring a willingness to obey the voice of a man whom they would serve as their king. Samuel then counselled:

“If ye will fear Yahweh, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of Yahweh, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following Yahweh your Almighty: But if ye will not obey the voice of Yahweh, but rebel against the commandment of Yahweh, then shall the hand of Yahweh be against you, as it was against your fathers.’ (1 Sam. 12:14-15.) (1 Sam. 12:14-15.) [Once again, note Hosea 13:11.]

“Throne of Yahweh

“Yahweh never relinquished His Kingship over His people. Later David was anointed King, but the throne itself in Israel was declared to be the throne of Yahweh, a fact which becomes clear as we study the history of His Kingdom people. When Solomon became King the statement is made:

“Then Solomon sat on the throne of Yahweh as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him.’ (1 Chron. 29:23.)

“At the time Saul was assuming office and Samuel was relinquishing his position as judge in Israel, it was the season of the wheat harvest. Electric storms were very rare at that time of the year, but Samuel declared that such a storm would come as a sign that the people had been evil in the sight of Yahweh. So Samuel called upon Yahweh and He sent thunder, lightning and rain. The people were in great fear and they asked Samuel to pray for them. He told them not to fear for, though they had acted wickedly, yet, if they would serve Yahweh and not follow after vain things which cannot profit, Yahweh would not forsake them for His great Name’s sake.

“Samuel declared he would continue to pray for the people. He also promised to continue to instruct them in righteousness so that they might know the good and right way. But if they persisted in sin, Samuel warned them that they and their King would be destroyed.

“Standing Army

“After a reign of two years Saul chose three thousand men to serve as a standing army. This is the first historical record of a standing army as distinct from general military service. Two thousand men of this standing army remained in Bethel with Saul and one thousand were with Jonathan, the son of Saul, in Gibeah of Benjamin.

“Philistines Stirred Up

“Jonathan attacked a Philistine garrison in Geba with the result that, when the principal forces of the Philistines heard of it, they gathered for battle against Israel. Saul summoned the people to prepare to meet the threat of war, for the Philistines held Israel in contempt. The

Philistines came up against Israel with a great army of fighting men besides thirty thousand chariots and six thousand horsemen.

“The men of Israel were fearful and the people hid in holes and caves, on the cliffs and in the bushes to escape from their enemies. Some even crossed over the Jordan to the country of Gad and Gilead in their flight from the Philistines. But Saul continued on to Gilgal and all his army trembled as they followed him. It was hardly a prepossessing state of affairs for Saul as he moved to meet the enemy.

“Saul’s Impatience

“Apparently aware of the precarious situation, Saul had sent for Samuel to come to him. Samuel had evidently sent word that he would come in seven days. Saul waited but the Prophet failed to appear on the seventh day. Because of the odds against them, many men in Saul’s army began to desert the King and Saul’s forces were materially depleted. In his desperation Saul issued instructions that the burnt offering and the peace offering were to be brought to him and he thereupon made the offering in place of Samuel. As soon as Saul had finished making the offering, Samuel arrived and he asked Saul what he had done. The King confessed that he had made the offering, declaring that because Samuel had delayed in coming to him, many of his army were deserting. The Philistines had gathered at Michmash and would soon be upon him at Gilgal and he had not entreated Yahweh. He told Samuel, ‘I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering.’

“Judgment Passed

“Saul had waited until the seventh day, but he did not wait seven full days. Samuel came at the end of seven days as promised, but Saul was impatient and when the seventh day arrived and Samuel was not there he had proceeded to make the offering himself. It was a test of Saul’s character and his impatience lost him a great inheritance. Samuel informed the King:

“... Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of Yahweh thy Almighty, which he commanded thee [Note: only a priest was qualified to officiate at the altar, H.B. Rand.]: for now would Yahweh have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: Yahweh hath sought him a man after his own heart, and Yahweh hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which Yahweh commanded thee.’ (1 Sam. 13:13-14.)

“Samuel left Saul and went from Gilgal to Gibeah of Benjamin.

“Desertions

“Saul numbered the forces that remained with him and they comprised about six hundred men. The rest of Israel had deserted the King. It is very likely that Samuel’s denunciation of Saul’s conduct contributed to increase the desertions, for many would be doubly apprehensive of the outcome of a conflict with the Philistines after Samuel had turned away from the King. Saul and his son Jonathan, with the six hundred men still loyal to them, retreated to Gibeah. Meantime, the Philistines, who were encamped at Michmash, sent out three different bands to harass and plunder the land of Israel.

“Israel Disarmed

“The result of unpreparedness was clearly in evidence in Israel’s state of disarmament, for the Philistines had previously succeeded in disarming Israel. No smith was allowed to carry on his trade within the land. Israel’s enemies reasoned, ‘Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears’ (1 Sam. 13:19). Every man in Israel consequently had to go to the land of the Philistines to repair his axe, chisel or ploughshare. Now, with the coming of war, Israel was totally unprepared for armed conflict. Even the men with Saul had no swords or spears. Saul and Jonathan alone had possession of these weapons of war. The very fact that Saul, with his son Jonathan, possessed such weapons made them outlaws in the eyes of the Philistines.

“To disarm a people and prevent the citizens of a nation from possessing arms invites disaster. Israel was easily invaded by the Philistines because not only the army of the nation but the citizens themselves were without means of defense. The bands of plunderers were free to go throughout the land, robbing and stealing because the people could not successfully resist their enemies. Under such conditions Israel was in complete subjection to the Philistines whom they served. Here was an example that disarmament did not bring peace but meant misery and suffering for the nation.

“Preparedness Essential

“When people are unable to defend themselves against an aggressor, they cannot maintain their liberty or secure their freedom and exploiters soon gain control over them. History has continually repeated itself throughout the ages as men of good will, desiring peace, forget to be vigilant and prepare to repel any evil aggressor who may come against them. Whenever a people, for whatever reason, become so careless about their future well-being that they neglect or discard their means of defense, it is only a matter of time when they fall prey to an aggressor.

“Because Yahweh recognized this to be true, He commanded that every man in Israel 20 years old and upward was to be numbered for war. National preparedness to meet and repel an invader is Yahweh’s kingdom law of security for His people when they are faithfully serving Him.

“But national preparedness alone would not be sufficient, for in order to be assured of victory over the enemy, Israel needs Yahweh’s blessing upon her armies. Essential to the defeat of an aggressive foe is spiritual as well as physical preparation. Israel’s history is a marked demonstration of this. Only when obedient to Yahweh was Israel courageous and assured of victory over all her enemies.

“Israel had departed from observing the Law of Yahweh. Because of their sins, and through intrigue and treachery, they had become helpless and were timid and fearful before the invading enemy. When the nation was confronted with this crisis only six hundred men were loyal enough to the King to remain with him to meet the invading foes; all the rest had deserted Saul.

“Jonathan’s Courage

“Jonathan, Saul’s son, was a man of courage and, evidently wearying of the situation and becoming tired of hiding from the Philistines who were plundering the land, he said to his armor-bearer:

“‘Come on, let us cross over to the Philistine garrison on the other side.’ (1 Sam. 14:1, *Moffatt Trans.*)

“However, he did not tell Saul of his plan, for the King was back behind the hills among the caverns, hiding there with his six hundred men. Neither Saul nor his army knew that Jonathan had left the camp to go to the other side of Luz. The pass through which Jonathan must go was walled by high rocks on both sides. Beyond this pass, on the heights, was the Philistine garrison. Jonathan reasoned:

“‘... it may be that Yahweh will work for us: for *there is* no restraint to Yahweh to save by many or by few.’ (1 Sam. 14:6.)

“Jonathan not only displayed his courage, but he also manifested remarkable faith in the Almighty of Israel to deliver His people in time of need. He realized that if Yahweh was with him and selected him for service, he could be used to defeat the foes of his people. However, Jonathan proposed a test to his armor-bearer to guide him so that he might know Yahweh’s will. He said that if, after they showed themselves to the Philistines, the men of the garrison challenged them to wait and they would come down to them, then he and his armorbearer would not attack but would retreat. If instead, however, the Philistines invited them to come up, then they would ascend, for Yahweh would deliver the spoils into their hands. Following their agreement about the proposed test, Jonathan and his armor-bearer disclosed their presence to the Philistine garrison. Immediately the Philistines scoffed derisively: ‘Behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves.’ Then they shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer:

“‘... Come up to us, and we will shew you a thing ...’ (1 Sam. 14:12.)

“Garrison Defeated

“Jonathan and his armor-bearer began to ascend the pass and, pouncing upon the Philistines, they slew the entire garrison of twenty men. The account tells us that as each Philistine fell before Jonathan, his armor-bearer slew him while Jonathan engaged the next Philistine in battle.

“At first thought it might seem as though Yahweh had led Jonathan on to certain defeat to indicate to him that the two men should attempt to climb the pass in the very face of the enemy. But the secret of the strategy lay in the fact that the Philistines held all the Israelites in contempt because of the past actions of King Saul’s feeble army. Thus, they apparently paid little attention to the two who were climbing up toward their garrison. No doubt there was much carousing and a complete lack of preparedness on their part. On the other hand, if they had decided to go down to engage Jonathan and his armor-bearer, they would have donned their armor and come forth in full battle array. The death of the two Israelites would have been a certainty if this had happened. Jonathan had trusted in Yahweh and the Almighty kept His promise:

“And 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. 26:7-8.)

“Because Jonathan had trusted in Yahweh, the Almighty now intervened in behalf of Israel for, following the slaughter of this Philistine garrison:

“A panic spread in the camp, over the open country and among all the troops, till both the garrison and the raiders were panic-stricken.” (1 Sam. 14:15, *Moffatt Trans.*)

“A Great Earthquake

“Following Jonathan’s personal victory, there was a great earthquake in the land. It was so great that both the armies of the Philistines and of Israel staggered as though they were in a dream. Accompanying the earthquake was a great roar and rumbling. Because Jonathan had exercised his faith in Yahweh, the Almighty was moving to deliver His people from the Philistines.

“Again and again Yahweh has used natural forces to assist Him in His defense of His people. This has not only been true in the past history of His people, but prophetically Yahweh has declared that the titanic forces of nature in the earth below and from the heavens above are yet to be used to bring overwhelming defeat in the battle of the coming great day of Yahweh’s wrath when He will deliver His Kingdom people from destruction.

“Saul recognized in the earthquake that Yahweh was moving to defend His people. Evidently aware that someone among his forces had moved against the enemy, he immediately numbered his army to ascertain if any were absent. Jonathan and his armor-bearer were found to be missing. Instructions were given to the priest who was in the camp with Saul to go near to the Ark and make inquiry of Yahweh. While Saul was speaking to the priest a great uproar was heard coming from the camp of the Philistines. Saul and his troops advanced toward their camp, for Yahweh had used the earthquake to bring about great consternation among them, causing a disastrous panic. This had resulted in the Philistines becoming so confused that they were fighting one another, while the Hebrews who were serving among them as soldiers mutinied and rejoined the forces of Israel under Saul and Jonathan. When the men that had hidden on Mount Ephraim heard of the rout of the Philistines, they also advanced to battle and Yahweh delivered Israel, saving them from their enemies that day.

“But King Saul prevented a complete victory over the Philistines by foolishly binding his army by a hasty oath, saying:

“... Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies ...’ (1 Sam. 14:24.)

“Though Saul’s army was in distress from lack of food as they pursued the Philistines, yet none dared violate the King’s oath. This is a good example of the leader of the nation failing to use good judgment and carefully consider the effects of restrictions imposed upon his army as they fought against the foe. Saul had acted in haste and thus he defeated his own objective – the complete defeat of the Philistines.

“As the men of Israel pursued the retreating Philistines they passed through a wooded area where there was honey in abundance, but no man ate of the honey for fear of the curse.

Jonathan, however, had not been informed of the oath sworn by his father, so he ate some of the honey and, as stated in the account, 'his eyes were enlightened.' It is clear that, along with the rest of the men of Israel, Jonathan was near exhaustion, but the honey revived him. Actually, because he was faint, his eyes had grown dim and he was having a hard time struggling along, but when he began to revive from the fainting condition his sight improved.

"After Jonathan had partaken of the honey a man informed him of the oath his father had taken, but Jonathan denounced the lack of wisdom on the part of his father in doing so. He said the army was exhausted for lack of food and, had they been allowed to eat of the food left behind by the Philistines in their flight, Israel would have completely defeated their enemies.

"When evening came the time limit set for the curse expired and the hungry army seized portions of the spoil, killing oxen and sheep and eating the raw flesh with the blood. Saul's oath had caused so much physical distress among his fighting men that it led to a direct violation of the Law of Yahweh which specifically instructs Israel in the eating of meat:

"Only be sure that thou eat not the blood: for the blood *is* the life; and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh.' (Deut. 12:23)

"Saul was informed of what the people were doing and he immediately issued a command that they cease violating the law. Then he gave instructions that all the cattle to be prepared for food were to be brought to him and prepared according to the requirements of the law. After this the King offered a sacrifice to Yahweh and the people satisfied their hunger.

"Results of a Rash Oath

"Saul then issued orders that the army was to pursue the Philistines all that night, assail them at dawn and leave not a man alive. The captains of his hosts, as well as the men themselves, assented, but the priest with Saul informed him it would be better for him to make inquiry of Yahweh before carrying out this order. The King did as suggested and inquired of Yahweh if he was to pursue the enemy that night, but he received no answer to his question. Saul immediately recognized that there was sin in his camp because Yahweh refused to be inquired of concerning his campaign." [Continued in WTL #232]