

THE SPIRIT OF ACHAN

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I just returned from ministering in Tulsa at Ministry of Reconciliation Church (if you're ever in Tulsa then I recommend you attend their services because the Spirit was there and that is God's stamp of approval) and during the worship Tuesday evening the Spirit of the Lord came upon me and as I went up to the pulpit to minister I began to prophesy about "the spirit of Achan being loose in Tulsa and in the land."

Now I knew who Achan was but I'd never heard anyone talk about the *spirit* of Achan but from the prophecy it's obvious what the Lord meant because He said that there should have been the sound of swords and sword sharpening in the camp and there should have been the sound of victory in the camp from taking the Promised Land but instead He heard the sound of *clinking* and *clanking* of money.

Now it's always important when the Lord says something for us to meditate on it and look for *all* the meanings because normally there is much more than meets the eye. In the case of Achan, I knew that he had "taken of the accursed thing" when Israel destroyed Jericho and I knew that his sin had caused the death of others from his family and other men in the army but that was about all I knew. A couple at the church remarked the next day that they had stayed up 'til 5 in the morning talking about the spirit of Achan and I told the brother: "Well, you're ahead of me on this then."

The testimony of Achan is found in Joshua so it definitely applies to the *Joshua Generation*—those who are supposed to take the Promised Land. It is those who are destined for war! I've written and preached

for many decades that the Church is *spiritual* Israel and we can learn much from the history of Israel in the Old Testament. Many Bible scholars say, “Watch Israel,” meaning modern Israel for the fulfillment of prophecy and that is true because Jesus Himself said that every word must be fulfilled but I’ve learned that we can learn much about the journey ahead if we possess *The Eye of the Eagle* and can see from the physical in the Old Testament what Israel went through and translate that to the spiritual for the Church. Remember, and this is so very important, you cannot inherit the Promised Land God has given to you unless you *take it by force*. Israel had to “take” and “possess” the Promised Land by physical force; we the Church must “take” or “possess” our Promised Land by spiritual force! The devil is not going to go quietly without a fight—he has controlled your promised land for centuries and he’s not going to give it up easily. This is a grave error that too many churches and Christians make. Jesus Himself made a startling statement in Matthew 11:12:

“And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”

This has been a difficult scripture for most to interpret but what is the Lord saying? First, He’s giving us a time period that began with “the days of John the Baptist” and extended to the time Jesus was speaking (“until now”). Many ministers, including many I have respected and learned from such as Kenneth E. Hagin, have taught that Jesus was the last prophet to minister under the Old Covenant but that is not the case. Again, what does the word say? The Word says that the Gospel of the Kingdom began to be proclaimed with John so Malachi was the last prophet to prophesy under the Old Covenant (*cf.* Mt. 11:13, Lk. 16:16, Acts 1:22). After 400 years of silence, John comes on the scene for what purpose? He came in the *spirit of Elijah* as prophesied by Malachi to forerun the First Coming of the Messiah Jesus. And what was his dominant message? Repent!!! It’s still the dominant message for this Kingdom Age we are living in because even though we are living in the Seventh and last Church Age—that of the lukewarm Church—we need to live holy lives and be quick to repent of any sin in our lives.

Now my trip to Tulsa was a fulfillment of the Word of Wisdom because the Lord had given me a vision in Oregon back in 2006 and in the vision I was ministering in Tulsa and yet it didn't occur for 7 years—the number of completion. Tulsa is an interesting city for those who possess the *Eye of the Eagle*. We used to call Tulsa “Mecca” back in the '70s and '80s meaning that it was the dominant city in the USA for ministry and Christianity. And yet this city—despite all of the churches and Mega-churches and the ORU University that used to train people for Christian service—is similar to all others we have ministered in over the years. Again, as the Lord showed us in Alabama back in 2011—with all of these churches in Tulsa, why is the devil still in control of the city? Why hasn't the Church *taken* the Promised Land?

Well, the answer is so obvious that even a blind man can see it in a minute. Many of these once great ministries like ORU have become secularized and we know something about that because the leadership had contacted us in Montana back in early 2000's and the Lord showed me 7 things that they needed to change—one of those was the preoccupation with money and how they were handling the finances.

The Lord sent us to Alabama back in 2010 to dedicate a house of prayer and worship and at that time the Lord had me minister on ministry models from the Bible. You see, most of the ministry models coming out of America are wrong. Yes, it costs money to operate a ministry but, frankly, as I shared in these messages—money really has absolutely nothing to do with ministry! Now that may sound foreign to you but just consider Elijah's ministry model. When the Lord told him to go to Zaraphath to a widow there he didn't respond with: “Well, I'll go if you give me \$1,000?”

When the apostles Paul and Barnabas—who were not apostles at this time in Acts 13 but were either/and/or “prophets and teachers”—received their commission as apostles from the Church of Antioch you don't find in Acts where either of them said, “Well, we'll go if you give us \$500 to pay our expenses?”

And you see that is how we must train those in ministry under us and that is one reason why at Christ Church International we operate our ministry differently. In *The High Calling of God* I wrote chapter 2 titled: *Qualifications for Ministry*. Frankly, I don't know of any Bible school or seminary that teaches this but the fact is that you must qualify yourself for ministry and you must *remain qualified* or like King Saul you will lose your ministry and the anointing. The messages the Lord gave me titled: *Secrets of Successful Ministry* that I ministered in Akure, Nigeria, in December, 1989, are just as true today as they were then and they cover this fact. The night before I taught this message the Lord said to me: "Many are called but few are chosen and the reason they are not chosen is because they are not willing to pay the price."

That "price" my brothers and sisters is the price of qualification! You must *qualify* yourself (*cf. 2 Timothy 2:20-21*) in: sanctification, holiness, the Fruit of the Spirit (character), live by the Spirit and not the flesh, give respect and be a doer of the Word and not just a hearer only and many other things I mentioned in this chapter. And don't forget one of those is "free from the love of money (p. 37, *The High Calling of God*)." Such a person is an idolater. In the year 1999 the Lord spoke with me almost the whole year about idolatry in the Church and the main area of idolatry He said was toward money. One reason for this has been the teaching of a *false gospel* titled The Prosperity Gospel. We've written and preached much about this and it's made a good many people angry at us because they follow many big name ministries who only preach about money.

Yes, there is a *true* prosperity gospel but that's not what's being preached. The Holy Spirit showed me in 1998 that the Church doesn't really understand God's system of prosperity. He said, "The highest form of prosperity is to be in the presence of God."

But back to ministry and those we train for ministry—money is a minor factor. In fact, we teach our young pastors and other Five-fold ministers to never make a decision based on money or the devil will stop you dead in your tracks every time. The reason is because most genuine ministries and churches are always under attack in the area

of finances because Satan controls the finances of the world through the Power known as Mammon and one of his chief goals is to keep finances out of your hand if you want to do something for the Kingdom. You must persevere in prayer and spiritual warfare to serve the Lord and do what He's commanded you to do but the first thing you must do is find out: what is the will of the Lord? We tell young ministers, especially overseas because we generally minister in poor African or Asian countries, "don't ever make a decision just because you don't have the money to go. First determine what the will of the Lord is and if it's for you to go then pray, take authority and demand that the devil take his hands off of your finances.

Because we do not ask for money, for about the first 20 years of CCI we only had an income of about \$25 a month from freewill offerings! We financed the ministry mostly ourselves with our own money and also using credit cards. We supported ourselves with secular jobs from time to time as the Lord provided these but we didn't allow money to control the ministry. We even had occasions where we spent a lot of money to go and minister to people who were wealthy and offered to pay our airfare, hotel and other expenses but the Lord would not allow us to accept anything from them! I had learned this lesson from 2 Kings 5 while ministering in Akure, Nigeria, i.e., *why* Elisha would not accept the gifts amounting to \$5-10 Million from Namaan the Syrian. At that time I thought, "I don't know of any ministry today that would not somehow *rationalize* why they should accept this large "offering."

But you see I learned back then *why* Elisha did not accept the gifts even though he had little money and was overseeing several (probably 4) "sons of the prophets" schools where he was training young prophets of the Lord. We learn much from the Bible and I've learned a lot from 2 Kings 5, probably more than any other chapter in the Bible. At that time I was studying the prophet's office and I had been given an anointed and obviously genuine prophecy about "raising up a school for prophets, apostles, pastors, teachers and evangelists." So at that time I was *focused* on this and although I knew that Elisha would not accept that money for himself I thought, "Why wouldn't he accept it to pay for his schools of the prophets?"

As I meditated on this I learned that the reason he wouldn't accept this large sum of money is simply because the Lord told him not to! In fact that is why he says what he does later when he pronounces judgment on his servant, Gehazi, who lost his ministry because of this sin. Notice what Elisha said to him:

**“Was it a *time* to accept money and garments, olive orchards and vineyards, sheep and oxen, male servants and female servants?”
Ω 2 Kings 5:26 (italics added for emphasis)**

You see, the Lord had told Elisha not to accept anything for a reason! It's okay to accept offerings, etc., that people give as long as they are “freely given” and not coerced by Balaam spirited ministers or churches because the Lord said, “Freely you have received, freely give.” So we are to minister “free” expecting God to meet our own financial needs but if others “freely give” finances to us then that is okay as long as the Lord does not tell you not to accept it and He's done that with us a number of times just like He did Elisha and I want to discuss *why* the Lord said that to Elisha because it's another lesson from 2 Kings 5.

The reason the Lord told Elisha not to accept the large sum of money and clothing is partially answered in Elisha's response to Gehazi in v. 26 but notice that Namaan only brought a large sum of gold, silver and fancy clothes. Why did Elisha say also that it was not the *time* for “orchards, vineyards, sheep, oxen, male and female servants? Because Elisha had read Gehazi's mind and he knew that that is what Gehazi planned to do with all that money—buy himself some land for an orchard and vineyard along with some cattle and servants!

Oh what a lesson this should be for all those in ministry today! There would have come a *time* for Gehazi to receive had he not missed the timing of God and being disobedient but instead he lost both his ministry—he was being groomed to succeed Elisha—and his health!

The other and main reason God told Elisha not to accept the gifts was because He wanted Namaan to know that you cannot purchase the things of God—they are “freely given”—and God wanted Namaan to

know that the true God doesn't operate His kingdom based on earthly wealth and influence because it's obvious from Namaan's response in vv. 11-12 that this is the way he was thinking.

Ministers today I've found seem to pay little attention to the importance of *timing* in the Kingdom of God. We've experienced this when the Lord wanted us to minister at a specific church at a specific time yet those in ministry didn't think the dates mattered. Another important lesson to be learned from Namaan's experience is that God is a businessman. Many times we've been in very large churches or even medium size churches and had the Spirit say to us: "It's just business as usual." Too many churches today look at their mission statement like a business and they want to "get the money people into the church" as I was told by the chairman of the Board of Deacons in the largest Baptist Church in Austin, Texas, many years ago.

God is a businessman and His business is souls and these verses show that the soul of one man was worth more to God than millions of dollars that would have flowed into Elisha's ministry! You will never be very anointed or very influential for the Kingdom of God if you don't realize how important people are to God. Whenever I see a minister in the spirit with leprosy on their right arm I know that they "have touched the silver and the gold like Gehazi."

Now I felt the Lord wanted to show a connection between Achan and Gehazi so let us return to the spirit of Achan. Achan was not called to ministry like Elisha and Gehazi but he had some character flaws and it cost him, his family and 36 fighting men lost their lives as a result of it. And, again, it brings us back to *Qualifications for Ministry*—if you have personal prophecies for your life or you feel called to Five-fold ministry office then you must pass God's tests and the main test you must pass is that of obedience! You cannot *work* for God if you are not obedient—lives are at stake, often many lives. In the case of Israel, the whole plan of God was at stake and all the people—millions of them—had been given a charge by the Lord through Joshua:

“And the city shall be accursed, even it, and all who are therein, to the LORD ... But you, keep yourselves from the things devoted to

destruction, lest when you have devoted them you take any of the devoted things and make the camp of Israel a thing for destruction and bring trouble upon it. But all silver and gold, and every vessel of bronze and iron, are holy to the LORD; they shall go into the treasury of the LORD.” Ω Joshua 6:18-19

In addition, the people had been given an earlier command by the Lord, right? They were to go in and possess the Promised Land and destroy the evil inhabitants of the land. Now isn't it interesting that of all the millions of people only one sinned and “broke faith in regard to the devoted things” (7:1) and yet it cost Israel dearly. Are there any lessons in this for the Church today? I think so and we must ask the question: “Why do so many Christians treat sin with such a cavalier attitude?”

So we see that while Israel was victorious in battle against the much bigger and better fortified city of Jericho, when there was sin in the camp they were defeated by a much smaller group of people! Notice what the Lord said concerning Achan when He revealed the sin to Joshua:

“You cannot stand before your enemies until you take the devoted things from among you.” Ω Joshua 7:13

Now Achan did not “fess up”; he did not admit his sin until the Lord revealed who had sinned. Today in the Church you need to be quick to repent of sin and not bring any sins into the church building because there is coming a day real soon when people will begin to drop dead in churches as a result of unrepented sin. This will occur as we get closer to the end and mercy and judgment meet together.

Also, you cannot receive from God when there is sin in your life. Remember I've taught for years that there are only two things that can keep you from receiving from God—sin and unbelief. You should go to church sin-free and expecting to receive. At one of our services in Tulsa when the Spirit of God was moving the young man playing the keyboard stated that many people weren't receiving from God because “they are not expecting Him.” We need to live holy lives and be

blessed, holy people who *expect* to receive the blessings of the Lord when we go to worship Him on Sunday morning!

God is looking for a people who will be holy and be about His business which is capturing the Promised Land from Satan through spiritual warfare. To do this we must be faithful soldiers who place the interests of the Kingdom ahead of our own and not “take those things that are devoted to God” and partaking of those things that are cursed.

The spirit of Achan has no place in the Church today. We should see the spirit of Caleb instead who said: “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.”

In 1998 while I was reading the Word the Lord spoke to me and said, “When the Bride is ready the Bridegroom will appear.” Revelation 19:7 states that “his Bride has made herself ready.” Therefore, it would appear that we have delayed the appearance of the Bridegroom by not making ourselves ready. We should no longer tolerate the spirit of Achan in the Church; we should “kill” it by withholding finances from all those who are operating in this spirit and instead make ourselves ready for the return of the Bridegroom.

MARANATHA



2 CORINTHIANS 4:7