

Devotional Thoughts :: THE SWORD OF GOLLIATH: WRAPPED BEHIND THE EPHOD...PT III

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TEXT: 1SAMUEL 17:50-51 & 21:8-9

"So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him; but there was no sword in the hand of David. Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith. And when the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled."

"And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me."

The sword of Golliath was a symbol of victory and a monument that reminds the nation of Israel of the one time victory that forestall them from becoming slaves to the philistine. This sword foreshadows the cross of Jesus Christ, the symbol of our victory and a perpetual reminder of the colossal defeat of the devil over those who have believed. Such a thing is not supposed to be kept secret and hidden away. Because of its effect on the confidence level of the nation, it is supposed to be made open to any Israelite whose confidence on God is dwindling. A look at it should evoke faith in the power of God.

Let us then look at the error of the priest as it relates to the position of the sword and its relevant lessons for the new testament believers. If we must also be able ministers of the new testament, we do well if we pay attention to these matters! Scripture says it was "... wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod..." No man can see anything that is wrapped tankless when it is kept behind a pile of folded garments, the EPHOD.

Anybody that enters such a temple or tabernacle would not notice it at all: yet this was supposed to evoke godliness and trust in God. It was brought in for the purpose of provoking confidence and faith in God, but the priest ...wrapped it and kept it behind the priest's garments.

The message of the cross seems to have been wrapped in a linen in many congregations. The work of the cross has been wrapped and covered with the teachings of men, that emphasises the devil and his works. The cross has been kept away from men and what men see in our congregations now is the efforts of men and the projection of personality.

The cross that was meant to be encountered by men in our congregations is no longer preached and emphasised. Christ and Him crucified has been wrapped in the linen and kept behind the EPHOD. The message of the death and resurrection of Jesus has been de-emphasised. The cutting effects of the cross is no longer felt in our assembly. Demons are more talked about and prayed about than the singular deeds of Christ that crushed the demons of hell. We need to make men see that the cross has crossed out the devil.

Men should be able to encounter the cross whenever they come to our assembly. The cross should be very visible to their spirit whenever they stepped into our midst. The cross should be the center of attraction in our assembly. Whenever we talk about the cross, we are also talking about death to the human nature.

The message of self-denial is the message of the cross. The conditions for following Jesus are well spelt out in the scripture: deny yourself, take up your cross daily and follow me. This is it, take or leave it! Such message is no longer preached again, it has been wrapped in a linen and kept behind the EPHOD. Core messages of Jesus have been kept be

hind the scene. sacrificing all for the kingdom; loving our neighbours as ourselves; sell all and give to the poor and the likes have become very obsolete to us.

The cross brings life and brings also death to us...death to all human and selfish appetite! It throws a blanket of crucifixion on a man. Its demands that we relinquish our ambitions and dreams so as to take His vision for our lives. Any gospel that encourages you to pursue your personal ambitions is anti-cross of Christ. The cross demands our lives, money, property, even our all! As a sword, it must hack us into pieces and lay us on the alter of His glorious kingdom.

But our priests have wrapped these core truth in a linen and kept them behind the EPHOD. All we see now is the EPHOD. The EPHOD is the priestly garments or vestments. The attire of the priest. This speaks of appearance. How we give extreme attention to appearance in our time today! Appearance is a major concern of the church of our time! Decoration, fine wears, cozy atmosphere, airconditioned hall: colour to match and all kinds of cosmetics.

So, when people come to our assembly, instead of them to see Jesus and the cross, they would be lost in our elegant and elaborate decorations...they feel at home and promise us that they would come again, not for their soul but for another fun and enjoyment of the cozy atmosphere. May our EPHOD not hide the cross! Amen! May God give us light! Amen! Why can not we be simple in our dressing and stop calling attention to ourselves? Wrapped behind the EPHOD! To be continued!