



the
Golden
Candlestick

**THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS, THE
MAN-CHILD, AND ANTICHRIST**

Part 2

**THE HEADING UP TO THE FINAL
SHAKING**

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CHAPTER 3 (CONTINUED)

David, we were saying, was despised of men, but chosen of God. David's way had to be a very lonely way. It is always a lonely path to have to stand against and apart from the man-made order of things which holds the field and is in the governing place. When you are standing for something more of God and you see that that whole order of things is shot through and through with Philistine principles, it is a lonely way to stand apart from that. You have got to accept that. Paul is a great and outstanding illustration of that. Withal, Paul was a very lonely man, and his loneliness was due to the fact that he had gone further than the majority in God's heavenly thought, so that, kindly disposed as they may have been they were not able to follow him all the way. Even the beloved Peter, while calling Paul, "beloved brother Paul", will find that he cannot understand all that Paul is after. "In which there are some things hard to be understood". And so Paul was alone. It will be like that if you are going right on with God. And this is the instrument God seeks to possess. There is the other, God-blessed, God-used as we have seen, but it is never going to realize for God all that His heart is set upon. A situation arises like this, that, while the Saul order-of-things is the big one, the extensive one, the governing one so far as things here are concerned, God has something else running alongside of that, which is despised by the Saul order-of-things. Sometimes it is even fought against, persecuted, but God in the fulness of His thought is with this something else, *not* with the big thing. He is blessing and using in a sovereign way, but you will not find God with Saul; you will find God with David. You will not find God in the palace, you will find God in the cave of Adullam. You will not find God with the ruling power religiously, you will find God with that which is despised, set at naught.

Very strongly in my own heart I am convinced that the Lord would have a people take account of this word, for it is just the situation today, as it was then. With all that is being done extensively and intensively, the situation is not getting better. More and more efforts have to be put forth, greater and greater have to be the movements, the machinery, and the resources poured in, but really at heart the thing is not being changed. There may seem to be at times some result, but it passes with the effort, and really proves to have been only something which was associated with the special effort. The tragedy, to my mind is this, that all that is not clearing up evils, but producing another evil. That other evil is that

multitudes of the Lord's people have to live on special efforts, and if there are not special meetings and conventions, they cannot get on without them. They have one and they think that that means something, and then it passes and their thoughts are upon the next one, or where is another one. It is another evil. It is not getting to the heart of things. No, it is not what God is after, just to improve a spiritual condition. God is after the change of principle, the change of objective; not just improvement, but something altogether other. So the Saul line of things is beyond remedy. God must bring in something else, which is wholly according to His mind.

I do feel that this does represent the two things going on in the earth; yes, which have always gone on in the earth. On the one hand, that which, because of the spiritual decline, has come in to govern, produced by man, man-constituted, man-run, man-energized. On the other hand, God always moving again and yet again alongside of that with something which is other. These two things have always been apart. The one is destined to fail of God's full purpose, the other is chosen of God to reach it, and the challenge to our own hearts will be as to whether we are in God's full thought or something else. It is not a question as to whether we are where the Lord is blessing and using; it is rather whether we are where God has concentrated His attention, where He has His eye, where He is because it relates to the fulness of His purpose. That is the question for us.

Oh, may the Lord work in us by His grace to constitute us according to the man-child which is to come, though persecuted, despised, set aside, and not even accepted by the mass of the Lord's people, and especially by the official classes of the Lord's people, which is nevertheless destined to come to the throne, and to be the means of the casting down of that other kingdom of Antichrist. The Lord work in us accordingly!

THE FAITH AND PATIENCE OF JESUS IN THE SAINTS

As we have seen in our previous meditations, the first book of Samuel represents a transition. Historically, it is the transition from the Judges to the Kings, but it is a transition in a far more important sense than that. It is a transition from one realm of things to another spiritually. It is a transition from the carnal to the spiritual, from the earthly to the heavenly in the life of God's people; from a low spiritual state to an exalted spiritual state, using the word "exalted" in its right, proper, best sense. It is God intervening for the sake of His testimony, and He intervenes by bringing in a new instrument for that testimony's sake, and that instrument is David.

The period in the life of David from his anointing to his taking the throne, or being made king at Hebron and then at Jerusalem, is very rich and full of spiritual truths which are as living today for the testimony of the Lord Jesus as they were then. It is concerning these things, which are unchangeable principles and laws, always governing and ever being pressed home by the Lord from age to age, that the Lord would speak to us at a time like this when conditions are so similar spiritually to what they were in the time of this first book of Samuel.

We have just said that this is God intervening, and the utterness of that intervention has to be noted by the fact that, whereas Saul came in by a movement of men, when the people said, 'Make us a king like unto the nations', David was not the result of movement from earth or from men. He was not even asked for; he was the immediate and direct production of God. Even Samuel had not anticipated David. He was in a measure surprised that David existed. It was a revelation to him that God knew about David. "Are here all thy sons?" he said at a moment of perplexity, when all the other sons of Jesse had passed before him, and he had no witness from God. He was not allowed to move away from the situation, but was held to that which God, and God alone knew, so far as the relationship with the testimony was concerned. We may say that David

was a discovery on the part of Samuel. The point is that David represents God's own act, not man's. He is not an idea of man at all; he is altogether out of the mind of man; man has no idea of him, but God has. And in that fact alone we see something that is always present when God intervenes or reacts for His testimony. It is in the unsuspected and unlikely realm or direction that God moves. He brings out something, some instrument that has not been in the eye of man at all, as fresh from the hand of God, as out from the secret place with God.

With the bringing forth of David by the Lord, a process begins, an exceedingly interesting and instructive process. It is the bringing in of the spiritual as over against the carnal among the Lord's people, and you see the beginning of a process of development between those two things, which grows and intensifies as it goes on. The two become more and more manifestly antagonistic, so that David brings in spirituality as the supreme characteristic of an instrument related to God's full intention for the whole testimony of Jesus.

Before I go further with that, I want to turn on in this book to 1 Samuel 22 where we have David making the cave of Adullam his headquarters, and I want to say a little about the cave of Adullam. This period preceding the time when David takes the throne is a period in which mentality is changed and upset; ideas are revolutionized; when the current and common thoughts, judgments, ideas and conceptions of the Lord's people are being tremendously affronted, and required to undergo tremendous changes. If we really saw spiritually what is in this first book of Samuel, we should understand very clearly the difference between the carnal mind and the spiritual mind in the people of God.

The cave of Adullam is a kind of comprehensive and inclusive instance of what I have just said. What a wrong idea there is currently about the cave of Adullam! I remember some years ago, in a conversation with an editor of a well-known journal, reference was made to a certain piece of the Lord's work which was outside of the generally recognized order of things, and his remark was, You know, it is a kind of cave of Adullam; all the discontented people go there! Now, that is a common idea. It is always that verse that is used if you have any group of malcontents, people who never get on with anybody. "Birds of a feather flock together", and usually speckled birds! And it is a cave of Adullam.

Now, to show how utterly wrong and false such a mentality is, take that of which this is but a type, the great antitype. David is a type of the Lord Jesus, perhaps one of the most comprehensive types of the Lord

Jesus in the whole Bible, and here David is rejected by Israel as the Lord Jesus is now rejected by Israel. During His time of rejection by His own people after the flesh, there came to Him from all directions people who had grown weary and sore because of the prevailing conditions in this world, and they gathered to the Lord Jesus secretly, and He was recognized for His spiritual and moral worth. A few are recognizing and appreciating Him, and coming to Him because they fail to find what they need and desire for their well-being anywhere else. If you call that a cave of Adullam in the sense in which I have just used it and in which it is popularly used, you see what a wrong mentality that is! That is the great antitype.

That nucleus that was being gathered to the Lord Jesus in the time of His rejection will be very near to Him when He comes to the throne. There will be a very different idea about them then. What will happen then is that all those who despised and who spoke in those despicable terms of the cave of Adullam, will have to acknowledge that they were the ones who had the truest judgment, who really knew right and wrong, what was good and what was evil, what the mind of the Lord was; they had spiritual instinct as to where God was moving. That will have to be faced, but what a change of mentality that represents! What a revolution as to standards of judgment! It is the transition from the carnal to the spiritual.

But while that is the great and comprehensive type and antitype, there is something more to it. There is that, as we have been seeking to show, which corresponds to the line of Saul; some order of things among the people of God in Christendom which has been brought in by man, constituted and governed by man, and mainly along carnal lines, according to this world, like unto the nations, what obtains today as a powerful thing. It occupies the place of government among the Lord's people generally. But God is not with that in a primary sense, only in a secondary sense and in a sovereign way. In a primary sense, God is moving in another direction, along another line, and it is here that the cave of Adullam comes in. Oh, it is a pity that the translators did not put what is in the margin into the text. "David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave of Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented (it is right, of course, but the margin says "bitter of soul"), gathered themselves unto him; and he became captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men" (1 Sam. 22:1-2). It is not that these people could not get on with

anyone else, that they were such an awkward crowd that they would not pull together with others, that they were always of the discontented type. No, they represented a revolt against that which was not God's full thought, and not directly in line with God's full end, not an expression of God's heart. They must always be full of contradictions and inconsistencies, lack a sense of life and unction, meaning that a great deal of drive and effort must be put into it to keep it going. There must be an atmosphere there which lacks real spiritual vitality. It is a realm in which men, having constituted things, have to take responsibility for them. While there may be much that is interesting, much that will please the superficial, much that will answer to natural soul cravings, yet for anybody who has really become alive and awake to any greater fulness of God's thought, who has really seen something of God's mind, who has been touched, quickened and illumined as to really what God is after, that realm has become a painful thing. You can only understand this if you have experienced it.

Today there are a lot of people who have not yet reached Adullam, but are spiritually on the way to Adullam. I think there are multitudes of the Lord's people, (I trust I do not exaggerate), who have not yet got to Adullam, but they are turning in that direction, that is, they are beginning to feel the futility, the emptiness, the dissatisfying nature, the barrenness, the lack of anointing and unction in what is the great Christian system. They are looking round, feeling round, for something, they may not know what, something to answer to a deep sense of need: yes, the Lord's people with a need not being satisfied.

Oh, it can be brought down to quite definite points. Why is it that there is an almost continuous stream of enquiries such as: What shall be done because we are getting no food in our churches, everything is so formal, so cold; we are starved. What shall we do, where shall we go? That is only one simple form of the whole thing. It is much bigger than that, it has more aspects than that. My point is that the cave of Adullam is not the rendezvous of malcontents in the purely natural sense of awkward people. It represents a heart going out to something more of the Lord, and it is there that there needs to be a change of mentality. On the one hand it is the carnal, and for anybody with any real spiritual life, the carnal is husks. There is the craving for the spiritual, where the real anointing is, where God's seal is, and a spontaneous gravitation there. That is Adullam. You see, we will never be allowed to despise Adullam again.

And what is true of Adullam is true in so many details which come

out in this part of David's life. Saul has the name of king, and the position and office of king. He has a great following, but it is only formal or official, and all who can be satisfied with mere religious formality will stay with Saul — and they did. Those who can be satisfied with the merely outward side of things, the official will remain with Saul. But those whose hearts revolt against empty formality, mere cold officialdom in the things of the Lord, will begin to look round and move in spirit, and the result will be a cave of Adullam. This is the answer to a spiritual need and it represents just exactly the other extreme from the carnal, formal, "Saul" line of things.

Now we can go back and see this contrast, and this process in David's life from the carnal to the spiritual, or of the spiritual as over against the carnal. After his anointing (very shortly after, at any rate, not very long) by one of those sovereign acts of God, David came to public notice in the incident with Goliath. Then his troubles began; a period of testing and training opened up. Now, remember, what we have before us is an instrument for the testimony in fulness, and the testing and training of that instrument, for, strangely enough, almost immediately upon his coming to public notice, he is rejected. It seems as though this one has only to come out and be detected for a great hostile movement to be projected against him — a spiritual thing, first of all. So, coming back from the slaughter of the Philistines after the slaying of the giant, David meets the first expression of this antagonism, and Saul eyes him from that day on to slay him. David's time of discipline begins, and it is all in relation to spirituality and as over against Philistine elements, and the twin factors in this training are faith and patience. If you want to know the things which lie innermost as qualifying for ministry in relation to the testimony of Jesus in its fulness, then I believe those things are faith and patience.

I believe the book of the Revelation makes that perfectly clear. Faith and patience are the two pre-eminent things in the overcomers. You can see how those very things stand over against, and in prominent and striking contrast to, Saul. If there was one thing about Saul that was true, it was that he could not wait. You remember the incident in 1 Samuel 13, which has its rise in chapter 10. First of all, 1 Samuel 10:8: "And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and, behold, I will come down unto thee, to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings; seven days shalt thou tarry, till I come unto thee, and show thee what thou shalt do." I want you to grasp the whole of that statement, that sentence. "Seven days" — yes, but "till I come unto thee". Now in 1 Samuel

13:8-12: “And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither the burnt-offering to me, and the peace-offerings. And he offered the burnt-offering. And it came to pass that, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines assembled themselves together at Michmash: therefore said I, Now will the Philistines come down upon me to Gilgal, and I have not entreated the favor of the Lord; I forced myself therefore, and offered the burnt-offering”. Now of course, as you read it, you do not believe it. I know the word that will leap to the lips of some of you as you hear Saul say those last words, “I forced myself.” Are you not saying, No, that is not it. There is so much like that in Saul.

You see what comes before in 1 Samuel chapter 13. “And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba; and the Philistines heard of it. And Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear” (v.3). That is how Saul speaks and the narrative goes on, “And all Israel heard”. Now verses 7-8: “Now some of the Hebrews had gone over the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead; but as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him.”

You see what realm you are moving in. “And Saul blew the trumpet ... saying, Let the Hebrews hear” (v.3). Now if you look far away, you will find that that was exactly the way in which the Philistines described them, ‘the Hebrews’; they never called them ‘the Israelites’. You see, this is carnal man; he has no spiritual perception about things, no spiritual sensitiveness or sense of spiritual fitness. He is always putting his hand on the things of the Lord; he is carnal, he cannot wait.

There is no doubt that Samuel knew all about it, although he was not there, and that means that Samuel was just drawing this out. We have pointed out before that God was acting in a very subtle way where Saul was concerned, and over an extended period; He would expose the truth about him as man-chosen, as man’s idea; and Samuel is in cooperation with God. He has prescribed the seven days and he has allowed the seven days to practically run their course. Saul said, “within the days

appointed”; and Samuel had said, “seven days ... till I come”. Saul hardly let the seven days expire. Well, it is true he is in difficulty; things are very awkward. Oh, that is the test! If you are driven up into a corner, if everything seems to shout that you must do something, that unless you do something all will be lost; then is the time to discover whether you are spiritual or carnal at the heart. It will then be shown whether you have faith in God, when everybody is saying, why don't you do something? Look at this, look at that; you must do something! There is a demand here and a demand there, a call here and a call there, a situation here and there, and it seems fatal to do nothing, and yet you have not the Word of the Lord. You have not the witness in your heart from the Lord. If you know the Lord at all, you know that you have not been given direction from the Lord. Now is the acid test as to faith and patience. If the flesh, the carnal side of us gets the upper hand, we will do something, we will turn to some expediency. If faith triumphs, if, though all be lost, we refuse to move without God, ah! the Lord is getting something in us that is going to be of tremendous account to His testimony.

I believe that this is one of the exercises through which the Lord puts everyone who is going right on with Him into His full purpose. From time to time we may be in a terrible corner. Everybody is saying, You ought to do something, you ought to do this or that, you ought to move, but we know that they have no word from the Lord. We have been laid under a command that we never move without the Lord, and here Samuel represents the Lord. The Lord has said, “Till I come.” Seven days is a perfect period of faith's testing and patience perfected! Till I come on the scene — the Lord coming to release, to undertake. It is easy for us to see the point, but I know, and perhaps some of you know, how it goes to the heart, how true it really is. Can the Lord count on us not to move, not to precipitate things, not to take things into our own hands without Him? If He can, then He is getting a vessel which is going to mean something very great for Him. The prisoner of the Lord! Oh, yes, we run terrible risks in taking this line, but we are taking it with God, and if God fails us, how terrible the situation will be! Ah, if — is there room for that “if”? It is up against that “if” all the time that faith triumphs.

Now it is over against that carnality as represented by Saul, that impatience and lack of faith, that David is brought in and trained. You see the tremendous difference between David and Saul all the way along. David knows that he has been anointed for the kingdom, but there is a wonderful subjection of spirit in David. At times he does break down: we

have never found a perfect man in the Bible yet, apart from the Lord Jesus. Yes, he failed, but how wonderful is this spirit which first of all accepts his rejection, and is prepared to wait for God. He knows what the issue will be eventually, although sometimes even that assurance becomes eclipsed, and he is prepared to let God work it out. His heart smote him even cutting off a bit of the garment of Saul when he had him in his power. "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put forth my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:6). On another occasion, he found Saul and Abner and all the bodyguard asleep, and sent one of his men to take away the cruse of water and the spear, and on the other side, he shouted his challenge to Abner: What is the meaning of this, Abner? You are not fit for your position of king's guard, sleeping and letting his enemy come! Then he says to Saul, I had you at my mercy, you were in my power. If I had wanted to take advantage of you, it was the simplest thing; but God forbid that I should put forth my hand against the Lord's anointed! Saul would not have done that; he was not made that way. You think of the patience, the subjection, the faith in God that lets off his bitterest enemy who is seeking his life, and that repeatedly. That is faith and that is patience.

This is a man who is fit for the throne; this is a man after God's own heart. It is the development of that under the most trying circumstances that qualifies one to be a vessel for the testimony of Jesus. Under testing, having it in your power to gain an advantage, having opportunities which come suddenly out of your being rejected (and it is a wide realm of temptation) the question always governing is: Is it the Lord's time? Is this the Lord's way? Does the Lord want me to do this? Not — How will it relieve me of my present difficulty? Not — How will it make a way out for me? Not — How will it bring me in advancement in the work of the Lord? No. Is this the Lord's time? Is this the Lord's mind? Or is this a temptation to precipitate things, to hasten things? Is this a temptation to get advantage for myself and escape from this persecution? These tests are very real things in the spiritual life. It is just in that realm of schooling that the man-child is prepared for the throne. David could wait and trust in the Lord, and in so doing he was steadily destroying Saul, he was destroying the carnal. He was really compassing the end of that other thing through faith and patience. The destruction of that other thing was being brought about. The aim of Satan is to wear out the saints. The faith and patience of Jesus in the saints will wear out Satan, and that is one of the ways in which the Lord does it.

The point I want to make is the difference between Saul and David in their utterness for God. It comes out in the case of Amalek and their respective attitudes to Amalek. Now Amalek, always remember, is the flesh through which Satan works. In 1 Samuel 15, the Lord, through Samuel, says to Saul, Go, utterly destroy Amalek, leave nothing! Well, what is the end of that with Saul? Samuel comes back after this work has been done, and Saul again goes out to meet him, and says, “Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord” (v.13). Says Samuel, “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the cattle which I hear?” (v.14). Betrayed! Very awkward that those sheep should have bleated just then! Little things betray. Well you see “the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God; and the rest we have utterly destroyed” (v.15). Do you see what has happened? This carnal man, dealing with the flesh, Amalek, has discriminated between good and bad flesh. He is quite prepared to slay a certain amount, but then there are some things that are “the best”. The carnal mind is always discriminating between good and bad in man, and trying to bring something good in man to present to the Lord. That is Saul.

You remember David’s attitude towards Amalek in 1 Samuel 30. The Amalekites made a raid upon Ziklag, and although they seemed to get the advantage in the first instance when they made their raid and David seemed to lose all at their hands, ultimately there was not much of Amalek left to tell the tale. It is Amalek, it is the flesh, through which Satan works, and David’s attitude towards Amalek is uncompromising. The point is that there is utterness about David with regard to the flesh, utterness for God. There is no sparing of anything. Saul spares, Saul judges as man judges, and says, it is a pity to sacrifice that, to destroy that! David is different.

So we could go on through his life, but I think we have almost said enough to illustrate how that in an instrument brought in by God there is a process set in motion to make spirituality, as over against carnality, the one predominating thing that will govern in every issue.

We cannot close this present meditation without saying one other thing, that while it is so true that David was characterized by spiritual principles, governed by the Lord’s interests wholly, and not by his own, the combination of the Philistines and Saul proved occasionally to be an almost overwhelming test. On one occasion he fled to Gath and found himself in a very difficult situation and had to feign madness to make

good his escape. On another occasion he fled to Achish, the Philistine king, because, he said, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul" (1 Sam. 27:1). He was a very hard-pressed servant of God, and there may be comfort here for some of us. We know what it is to be pressed out of measure. But that is not the object of my mentioning it, to find some excuse for any failure. My object in mentioning this is to point out how insidious, subtle and persistent is the Philistine principle in trying to destroy what is of God, that David should have been pursued by this Philistine thing in this way, so that it seems that a network of snares was set to get him caught on Philistine ground. The arms of this Philistine octopus are all the time reaching out to somehow, in some way, get a hold, a grip, upon what is of God. If only that can be, then God's end is defeated. So you see David perilously nearly falling into a Philistine snare, onto Philistine ground, again and again.

Yes, he did fall. You know later in the second book of Samuel there is the new cart for bringing back the ark of the testimony, which is a Philistine idea. They had put the ark upon a new cart in order to send it back when it became such a nuisance to them. It was a Philistine idea, and all unconsciously, it would seem, imperceptibly, David had a Philistine idea somewhere in him. When the question of the bringing of the ark arose, a cart just leapt into his mind. You know how fatal it was. God would not have anything of this Philistine idea. But it is always out to catch us. It means this: to act, to move by carnal reasoning, the compulsion of necessity to do something; it is a fleshly thing.

The Lord Jesus went through it all. You know that the argument, or one of the arguments, lying behind the temptation in the wilderness was that. You are hungry; You are in need; necessity knows no law! That is human argument; that is how the world argues. Necessity knows no law! How often we have fallen to that argument! Necessity is laid upon us. The Lord Jesus repudiated that argument altogether. My human necessity is one thing; God's divine law is another thing, and, if God's divine law requires it, my human necessity must wait. It is better for me to die than to violate God's law! Necessity; you must; that is natural argument, that is the flesh.

You know this is true. I am not setting up something before you that is difficult to face. You are already in it. The enemy is always trying to subtly catch us on some Philistine line, some carnal line in order to frustrate the ends of God concerning His Son. I am not going to say more about that, but we see how David's training was all the time in relation to

spirituality as over against carnality, in relation to God as over against all that is opposed to God. It is the high level of the heavenly over against the earthly. The training is there, and if you or I have ever been caught in Gath or with Achish or with a cart, and we have really been spiritual, for the Lord, the very fact that we were caught that moment has been a tremendous factor in our training. We have discovered that we must not go down that way. If we have taken things into our own hands like Saul, we have not had to wait very long to discover in our own hearts that we have lost the Lord in that realm, and it has been a very vital thing in our education.

If the Lord's fullest interests are going to be served in us and through us, He is going to have us a very utter and a very spiritual people, and there is going to be a very wide line of difference between such and what generally obtains in Israel. May He give us understanding and grace!

THE LORD'S ANOINTING

Reading: 1 Sam. 15:1-3; 22-23; 16:7.

There are few more solemn and terrible chapters in the whole Bible than 1 Samuel 15, and I confess to something almost like a dread in my heart as I am so definitely led to speak again from this chapter, a chapter which seems to me to gather up everything, and to bring it to a very direct and definite application. It really is a challenge as to what things are going to be, how things are going to be, whether we are going with the Lord or not. It is a matter of the heart; "the Lord looks on the heart". I want to repeat that with a certain emphasis, "the Lord looks on the heart". By that I mean that it is not the result of our look at our own heart; that may be an altogether misleading thing. "The heart", says the Word of God, "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" Only the Lord, but the Lord will help us to know our hearts by certain tests which He will apply, into which He will lead us, and the result of those tests will disclose what the Lord knows about our hearts. And, when all has been said and done, the issue is the heart relationship to the Lord. It is that which matters, and it is that which settles everything. The heart relationship is proved and established through certain tests which the Lord applies.

Having said that, we must first of all consider the Lord's own requirement. The Lord's requirement is a heart that is utter towards Himself. "I have found David ... a man after Mine own heart" (Acts 13:22). What a thing to say, when it is previously recorded that "the Lord looks on the heart"! What a verdict! "The Lord looks on the heart"; "I have found David ... a man after Mine own heart."

Now, I want you first of all to see the significance of the first part of chapter 15. "The Lord sent me to anoint thee" (v.1). "Go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all" (v.3). The anointing with the Holy Spirit

carries with it a comprehensive, all-inclusive demand towards the Lord. That demand is that our whole life, in every detail, shall be governed by the Holy Spirit, shall be a walk in the Spirit, shall be actuated by the Spirit, and that means, as we have been seeing in other connections, just the opposite of being governed by fleshly considerations or carnal elements. "The Lord sent me to anoint thee."

The questions which arise are, Will you follow out the implications of being anointed with the Spirit? Will you deal thoroughly and utterly with all that which is not of the Spirit but which is of the flesh? We saw in our previous meditation that Amalek is the flesh used by the devil, and it is that which steps across the path of spiritual progress towards God's full inheritance. "I have marked that which Amalek did to Israel, how he set himself against him in the way, when he came up out of Egypt" (v.2). He set himself in the way; he stood in the way. That which always stands in the way of progress towards God's full purpose and end is the flesh. It is always stepping across the path; it is always getting in the way; it is always actively and militantly opposed to spiritual growth, and the two things can never abide together — an anointing and an Amalek. The preserving of Amalek nullifies the anointing. It is a very clear issue. The Lord sent me to anoint thee; now therefore, because of the anointing, the inevitable, essential, indispensable outcome of the anointing is the utter destruction of Amalek, of that which is carnal as energized and actuated by Satan's power. It is a question of life in the Spirit or life in the flesh, and these two cannot be reconciled. There is always enmity between the Spirit and the flesh, the flesh and the Spirit.

This is one of the great distinguishing features between Saul and David. David's utterness for God meant that the anointing abode upon him and all the purpose of God in him was fulfilled. Saul, on the other hand, though anointed, did not follow out the meaning of the anointing, and the anointing departed from him, and the purpose of God was never realized.

We see what God wants, what God's standard is, what He is seeking. We see the nature of an instrument that will serve God in relation to bringing His testimony right through to its final establishment in the temple, in the heavenly kingdom. That is David. Saul loses the testimony every time. The testimony goes out with Saul; he cannot keep it, he cannot preserve it, he cannot advance it. The testimony is not operating in power where he is, because he is not really one in heart with the testimony, though he may think he is and may protest that he is. Those protestations of Saul's are

terrible things: “I have performed the commandment of the Lord” (v.13); “What meaneth then this bleating...?” (v.14). Having the situation brought home to him with circumstantial evidence, he still protests. There is a stubbornness which makes us think that we are altogether other than we are and makes us believe that we are right when, in the sight of God, we are as utterly wrong as we can be.

Here is what God is after — utterness, life in the Spirit, and uncompromising antagonism towards that enemy of spiritual progress, the flesh, Amalek, the self-life, the carnal nature. Now, the test to find out the true heart condition is: “Go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy”. That phrase, “utterly destroy”, occurs eight times in this chapter. The Lord does not leave us in any doubt as to what He means. The Lord’s meaning is perfectly clear and emphatic. If it had been said only once, well then, there might have been some reason to believe it was not such an utter requirement, though for the Lord to say it once ought to be enough. But here — eight times! There is no doubt about the Lord’s mind in this matter. We have every ground for knowing what the Lord wants. Utterly destroy! How did Saul get round that? In the very way in which this deceitful heart gets round the most emphatic things the Lord says to us!

First of all, he put his own judgment over against what God had precisely said — his own carnal judgment. As we have pointed out before, he drew a distinction between what should be destroyed and quite obviously needed to be destroyed, that which was not worth keeping; and that which was good and should be preserved. This was discriminating between good and bad — carnality, flesh. His judgment said, This can and should be destroyed; this should be preserved. Now, we want to get close to this matter. It is never a question of what *we* think about what God has said. It is what *God* has said. I do feel that we need to take note of this. There is nothing in all God’s universe that is a justifiable reason for going round anything that the Lord has stated; that is the point. If there is something which the Lord has precisely said; if there is that in God’s Word which is something that the Lord requires, which the Lord has laid down as a law, as a principle, as a truth; if there is something there which is said to us that we are to observe and to do; if there is something there which is God’s expressed mind about things in any realm, then there is nothing before God which can excuse us, which can justify us in going round that, in offering something as a substitute for it. This is solemn; this is very, very important. God never presents two demands which conflict with each other. If He makes a statement, then there is nothing whatever that we can find or

produce which justifies us in ignoring that statement. Now, that covers a very wide area and includes countless things. It is not my intention to try to make points of application; I would miss those that matter where you are concerned, if I tried. But I enunciate the principle; this is the law.

So often we have met this very thing. Here is a statement in God's Word that is as clear as anything can be for anybody who has honest eyes, and yet people are going round, doing just the opposite and seeking to justify their conduct and action by something in the Word of God, or by some private revelation that the Lord has given to them. The Lord has told them! The Lord has shown them! The Lord has spoken to them! They know the Lord's mind and the Lord's will for them and it is all as glaringly contrary to what God has laid down as anything could be. That is Saul bringing in his own religious, carnal judgment upon the Word of God. It is religious, it is all in relation to sacrifice, to serving the Lord, but it is still carnal. He put his own judgment on the Word of God instead of taking the Word as it stood: "Utterly destroy". The Lord's position is, "When I say 'utterly', I mean 'utterly'. When I say 'destroy', I mean 'destroy'." There is no justification for anything of ourselves to come in and usurp the place of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

Now, I expect you are thinking that I am very severe and this is strong. Well, the Lord knows what He is doing. I have cried to the Lord about this word and I cannot get away from it, so I must leave the consequences with Him. If you do not at the moment see the Lord's meaning for you, well, trust the Lord about it that He has a meaning in bringing these meditations to a close on this note.

Now, another thing which goes along with that: "The people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God" (v.15). Saul betrays himself in his very phraseology, but we will leave that just now. What is Samuel's rejoinder? "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (v.22). There are many who are quite willing to offer a lot of things to the Lord, a lot of service, and even to suffer for the Lord, and yet for it all to be a substitute for obedience. It is possible to do that, and there are those who are suffering, as they think for the Lord, and the Lord cannot accept that suffering because His Word is being ignored or violated or set aside somewhere. There is service for the Lord, but it is not acceptable service because behind that, somewhere in the life, there is a reservation of obedience! We cannot get round the Lord like that; we cannot make

good with the Lord in that way. There is no substitute for implicit obedience; there is no alternative for doing what the Lord has made known as His will, none whatever. The Lord tests the heart as to whether the heart is a heart wholly for Him along the line of most utter obedience to His stated will in His Word. He tests the heart by a challenge as to whether we will set aside our own judgment, our own idea of what it means to be for the Lord, and test everything by God's Word. Yes, to be for the Lord, all for the Lord, to love the Lord, to serve the Lord, to suffer for the Lord — that may be our own verdict upon our own heart. We may say of ourselves, I am all for the Lord, my heart is towards the Lord, I would do anything for the Lord, make any sacrifice, I have suffered and am suffering for the Lord — we might say that as the verdict upon our own knowledge of our own hearts, and still as the Lord looks on the heart, it may not be what He is after. His verdict may be, "Yes, but your heart is not as I want it. Will you let go your own judgment, your own mind, your own ideas about what I want, and will you come to what I say? Look into My Word and see exactly and precisely what I have stated as My will." That is the test.

The test comes along the line of how much we are willing to part with our position and take God's position; even our own religious position, our own position of devotion to the Lord, as we would call it, and find out whether it is what the Lord has really said. To be completely and wholly governed by God's Word is essential to being according to God's heart, and being an instrument which furthers the testimony of the Lord. Now, ask the Lord about it.

I could show you many things which are definite statements in the Word of God about this, as to what God's mind is regarding every phase of our lives. They touch upon our business in this world; upon our business relationships — servants and masters, masters and servants; they touch upon our domestic relationships — parents and children, children and parents; husbands and wives, wives and husbands. They touch upon our vocation in creation, as to what a man's vocation is and what a woman's vocation is; they touch upon the assembly and its order and relationships. The Word of God touches everything. Now then, let us get down to it. What does the Word of God say on these matters; not *my* judgment, but what does God's Word say? If I am called to be a father, I have got to know what the Word of God says about fathers and look to it, or else responsibility comes back upon me and the Lord cannot stand by me. So it is, you see, with a mother, with a woman, and with everything.

I have come down to very practical matters. Of course, it reaches out to every realm, but I am trying to help you to see what this means, and you must not violate the Word of God by getting out into another realm and trying to justify it by some special revelation that has come to you, some special vision. If that violates the Word of God, it is wrong, and it is not a revelation from God — never. When we come right into line with God’s will and God’s Word, with the anointing in all its glorious divine meaning, the anointing goes on with us, and there is spiritual growth and value to the Lord’s testimony.

In closing the issue, and this, so far as Saul and what Saul represents is concerned, is the most terrible part of it all. I would gladly leave this out. This putting of something — even for the Lord — in the way of the Word, of the Lord, led to a terrible consequence in Saul’s life. To begin with, it meant that the Lord had to stand back and leave him to himself. Well, that is enough, surely, and that is terrible. The attitude of the Lord was, I cannot go on with you, and terrible as it was, that was not all. He became open and exposed to evil powers, and — in an awful alternative to the anointing, to the Holy Spirit — evil spirits. “Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim” (v.23). Where the Lord does not get His way, the enemy will get his. The consequence will be, on the one hand, no going on with the Lord in the life, with His purpose; on the other hand, deception — the play of other powers. Now, that is almost too terrible to contemplate. For us in general, I feel that what the Lord wants to say to us is this, that where His highest and fullest interests are in view and where His testimony is really at stake, there is no room for anything but perfect utterness for God. Utterness means that there shall be no listening to anything of the flesh, no substituting of anything for what God has said, no getting round with any argument what God has made known to us as His will. God is calling for a heart that is really wholly towards Him, and proved to be so by willingness to take the knife against ourselves to give Him full place in every way. That is a man after God’s own heart. That is the instrument that really serves Him in fulness.

We are anointed; if we are the Lord’s, we have received the Spirit. The anointing that we have received is with us with the object that we shall walk and live and move wholly according to the Spirit and utterly set aside the life of the flesh. Remember that the anointing is never for us in some private way, so that we might have the Spirit, or be possessed of the Spirit. The receiving of the Spirit or the giving of the Spirit to us by the

Lord is never an end in itself. Anointing always has to do with God's testimony. Now, test that statement by the Word of God. In the Old Testament and in the New Testament, it is always related to the Lord's testimony, and the Lord's testimony can never be advanced if there is an Amalek strutting across the path, if the flesh is there. The anointing is intended to deal with that in the interests of the progress of the testimony of the Lord in us and through us: in the church, by the church. There is a little phrase in the Old Testament which speaks of the anointing of the shield for battle. That is tremendous when you see the meaning of it. There is a militant savour about the anointing. There is that bound up with the anointing which means war. I will have war with Amalek for ever, said God. The Lord has anointed thee: now go, utterly destroy Amalek!

The anointing demands, on one hand, that everything that is not of the Spirit of God is dealt with, and that means, on the other hand, that in everything our lives are governed by what the Lord has said. The issues are simple, but they are very searching and exacting. This is what consecration means. We always relate consecration with the Holy Spirit. Consecration in a negative sense is: destroy Amalek; in a positive sense it is: be wholly governed by the Word of God. It means no arguing, no reasoning, no substituting, no hedging, but, What has God said?

I am quite sure you are willing to ask the Lord in what way this word may affect you. If you do not see it at the moment, I know you will not turn it aside. No one, I am sure will, in the presence of such a word, fail to say, Lord, is that for me? I do not see it, but if it is, show me; I am ready to see it. No one will put it away, I am sure. The consequences are far too serious. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." "The Lord looks on the heart."

Concluded

THE HEADING UP TO THE FINAL SHAKING

Reading: Heb. 12:6; Heb. 13:14

Most of you at least know why this Letter to the Hebrews, as it is called, was written. That is, from the divine standpoint why God had it written and preserved. And that, undoubtedly, was in the light of what we have just read, an imminent, great shaking. For this letter was written a little before the end of the Jewish regime and dispensation. The year 70 was fast approaching, when the Roman legions would throw their siege around Jerusalem, and reduce it, as the capital and centre of the Jewish world, to rubble, literally fulfilling the words of the Lord Jesus: “They will not leave one stone upon another.” It was the end of that long Jewish era, and that was on the very near horizon when this letter was written, and we can see, therefore, the infinite wisdom of God in bringing into view the heavenly and eternal counterpart of that whole system of earthly things. That system was to be shaken to its foundation, and topple to the earth. But after all, as the whole letter shows, at most and at best, it was but an earthly representation of heavenly things, and the earthly was passing now. And it was therefore necessary for men and women of faith in the Lord Jesus to have their anchorage in the heavenly, the abiding, the eternal. That was the purpose of the letter.

But you can clearly see, even from the fragments which we have read, that that was not the end of the matter, for even here, when that had happened, the whole earthly thing was broken to pieces and had passed away. There is a pointing on; there is still a future vision. And even these who looked beyond the types, the earthly and the temporal, had in view a City, which was never of this earth, and of this world. We ‘look for a city’; ‘we have here no abiding city.’ That was very evident with the passing of Jerusalem — ‘but we seek one ...’.

Now, of course that opens up far more than we can deal with now, but out of that, and around that, I want to gather one or two things. If it is true that that shaking was only half of the great shaking, and the other half will be ‘not only of the earth, but of the heavens also’, that is, not only of the temporal but of the spiritual, not only of the local, but of the universal — then, in order to bring in the city which is abiding, then everything that is not abiding, that cannot stand, has got to be shaken to its foundation.

When the Lord Jesus was speaking in many words about this very

day of Jerusalem's destruction and passing, and Israel's scattering, He gave many indications which would indicate that that day was at hand. He spoke about the 'signs of the times' as we call them; He spoke about a 'fig tree', and other things, which would clearly indicate that that day was at hand. But then He passed beyond that, and carried us to the end of this dispensation, and gave many further signs of how we should know that this greater end than the end of Jerusalem and Jewry was at hand. I am not going to try to gather up all those now, or even mention them, but they are indeed very significant.

This is the point. I think we have today an almost overwhelming amount of evidence that we are on the point of this far greater shaking. In other words, that we are at the end of another dispensation. I always hesitate in the realm of prophecy and I have had enough of the confusion of prophecy in fifty years of study of it. At the same time, with all my carefulness about it, I cannot but feel that everything today is most portentous. There is a great system, the very heart and core of which, is anti-God, and anti-Christ. And one of the things which the Bible tells us, will mark the manifestation of the 'man of sin', who will put himself in the place of God, is that he will be a tremendous showman, calling down fire from heaven and many other such things. Now I could dwell on that side of the matter for a long time, but I simply mention that as I think, indicative of so much more which points to our coming to the end of this dispensation very soon and the heading up of the final great shaking of heaven and earth.

What I want to touch upon is what this means to believers. And that means you and me — what are we to expect? What will be the spiritual signs of the times? We can be fascinated with the physical, material and temporal signs, but what will be the spiritual signs?

I believe that the Word of God makes it very clear, and we shall see that much more fully later, that as we get near to the end, two or three things are going to happen where believers are concerned. One is, that they are going to be brought very definitely to the point of accountability for all that God has given. God has given much: a great revelation; a great deposit, in His Word and through His Word, in ministry. It is a tremendous amount of ministry that God Himself has given through His Word. But there, the foundation and substance of it all is preserved in a most marvellous way in the Scriptures. And at the end, you and I are going to be brought to our accountability to God for what He has given us. I believe the church, the people of God are really going to have to face up

to what they have got, to what they have received. And there, I feel, and I could show you from the Word, that that is made perfectly clear in the Scriptures, that we are going to be brought face to face in very real and even drastic ways, with what we have got, with what we have received, to answer for it, and to it. Let me carry that further. I believe the Word shows very clearly that the people of God will pass into a phase of spiritual experience where what they have is required to be their very life, their very survival. That could be said in another way — that the things that you and I have received, and think we know, are going to be sifted right down of all mere teaching, interpretation, mental grasp — stripped of everything! Now then, what about that which you have taught and believed? Now then, what about the meaning of the Cross? What about the meaning of the Body of Christ — spiritual unity and fellowship? What about the sufficiency of Christ? I believe that is what is going to happen. Reality is going to be the emphasis of the Holy Spirit at the end. And you and I and the people of God, will pass into such an intensity of spiritual experience, under pressure, under stress, under trial and testing, that we shall be found out as to what proportion of all that we have claimed to hold, is really our being and our life. We are going to be just stripped down to that. I believe that is what is happening just now, and may be the explanation. We have spoken of Christ as our life. Very well, then, the Holy Spirit says: Let us find out how true that is, and how much that is. It may be an explanation of a lot of physical trouble along that line — how much is Christ our life physically? Have we proved Christ as our life for our bodies as well as for our spirit? Because there is divine life for the body. Some of us would not be here today if that were not true. “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead be in you, He that raised up Christ Jesus from the dead, shall quicken also your mortal bodies” — that is not the dust that is in the earth, that is your body — “by his Spirit that dwelleth within”. Well, what about it? That is only one point, there are many others. We are just going to be brought to this — is it real? Is the Cross real? Is the life real? Is Christ real? How much so? That is going to be sifted out at the end. There is going to be a shaking of all that can be shaken. And does this not explain very much?

Yes, there will be ‘a great falling away’ because of the large measure of mere profession, or claim, that is not justified deep down in our very constitution. This whole letter puts its emphasis here — the thing that matters is the eternal. The Lord has built up a tremendous history around that. Do you notice that whenever, during the whole Christian era, from

apostolic times to this day, anything that was raised up by God at its beginning became crystallized and static, fixed and set, the Lord had no further interest in preserving it. This is the explanation of why things have a wonderful beginning, but they live on a past; it is simply holding a tradition. Well, you don't see the Lord preserving that intact. The Lord does not care about that; it has become something fixed down here on this earth, and God is only interested, in this dispensation, in the eternal. The City is not here; it is there! "Ye are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem." We have all got to be careful of this, that what we call our local church never becomes a fixed system of things — a rigid, set, crystallized, compass of teaching and truth; finished, complete — Never! God forbid that ever anything like that should happen to us. If so, the Lord will not preserve us. He will have no interest in our preservation, for that is the history of things. Something derived from God, and we could put our finger upon so many, could we not, down through the centuries. Yes, something from God, but has God founded something so dear to His heart that He would preserve it intact and never allow it to go to pieces, become confused, divided, and mixed up? No, not at all. Why? Because it became an 'ism'; fixed, set, and rounded off. He is not in that at all. This heavenly, eternal, spiritual, is His interest, but He will not let us settle down here. No ambitions in this earth, or in this world, will be allowed by God in His people. And have anything like that, and you are in for a bad time.

Now, you see, I am defeated entirely in trying to range this. But what I wanted to say, and what is really on my heart is this, that if we can see anything that corresponds to this in the experience of God's people today — a sifting, a shaking, stripping, getting down to roots and foundations, and finding out where we are, that is a sign of the times, an internal one. The day is far spent; the coming of the Lord is drawing near. It must be; surely it is the thing that must happen and the Lord must not come and find us in a false position. He must not come and find us in a position where it is make-believe, where it is not true. Not at all. Though the end may be through much tribulation that we enter (the Word says so — "receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken") a part of the much tribulation through which we enter the Kingdom is just this finding out by such drastic ways of discipline, chastening, hammering, battering and pressure how much is real, how much is true.

Well, the Lord throw more light on that!