

Fresh Oil Releases

Fire-forged Forerunners - Signposts to the Promised Land

Precious saints,

I would like to look a little more into the significance of the place the forerunner company finds themselves in at this time. Traditionally, at Passover, we tend to remember in depth the deliverance of the Israelites from 400 years of slavery in Egypt on the first night of Passover. On the seventh day of Passover they crossed into the wilderness through the rent Red Sea. The first Passover was followed by 40 years in the wilderness because the people believed the evil report of ten of the twelve spies who had investigated the Promised Land for 40 days. Only two of the spies brought a good report, knowing that the God they served was well able to give the land into their hands. One year of wandering in the wilderness for every day that the spies walked the Promised Land - what a sentence for unbelief! Even seeing the amazing huge fruit of the land with their own eyes did not convince the people that it was worth fighting for. One bunch of grapes was carried by two men on poles, so heavy and big was the fruit produced in Canaan!

Fast-forward to forty years later. The people of God are camped at the edge of the Jordan and prepare for three days for the crossing. At the very same time as they are preparing provisions, the two spies that Joshua sent to spy out Jericho, are hiding in the mountains under Rahab's advice. They have sussed out the stronghold of Jericho and, based on Rahab's report, it will be a push-over!

Jos 2:8 Before the two men had lain down, Rahab came up to them on the roof, Jos 2:9 And she said to the men, I know that the Lord has given you the land and that your terror is fallen upon us and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. Jos 2:10 For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the [east] side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. Jos 2:11 When we heard it, our hearts melted, neither did spirit or courage remain any more in any man because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.

Forty years before, two spies assessed what they saw with their eyes and then out of their mouths came the report that they could easily conquer the Promised Land. Now God was again speaking the same report, but this time out of the mouth of a pagan harlot into the ears of two spies! Remember she said this before the Jordan River was split. The enemy knew that even the Jordan river in flood could not prevent them being overcome. This reminds me of Gideon hearing the interpretation of the dream out of the mouth of the enemy as he spied on the Midianite camp! God loves to let us hear that the enemy is terrified of us because he has heard reports of all God has already done through our lives, even many years before! The walls of the stronghold may be thick and high and barred with iron gates but inside, even forty years down the track, the headline news of what the God of the impossible did is still being discussed! I want to say it again - the enemy is absolutely terrified of you and your God! The

promised land that God has spoken to you of for so many years is without doubt about to become your tangible possession - even the enemy knows that!

The spies stay hidden for 3 days and then cross over and report what the enemy has declared with his own mouth to Joshua :

Jos 2:22 They left and went to the mountain and stayed there three days, until the pursuers returned, who had searched all along the way without finding them. Jos 2:23 So the two men descended from the mountain, passed over [the Jordan], and came to Joshua son of Nun, and told him all that had befallen them. Jos 2:24 They said to Joshua, Truly the Lord has given all the land into our hands; for all the inhabitants of the country are faint because of us.

The two spies also crossed over back into the wilderness side after being separated and hidden in the mountains of the Promised Land from the rest of the people for 3 days in order to report back to Joshua. Remember this, the flooding Jordan river was held back for one day while the whole of Israel crossed over. So the spies then walked over on dry ground back into the Promised Land they had just come from. Their first crossing was hazardous and they got very wet because the river was in flood. 'Jordan' means 'to descend to the lower regions' depicting death. Remember what it says about the river in Ezekiel. There are different depths, the final one being water to swim in - a depth of revelation of being conformed to the death of Christ that others have only heard about!

Joshua, who is a type of Jesus, sent forerunners into the swollen waters of the Jordan on a mission to assess the state of the land He had already promised years before to lead them into. While the rest of God's people were going about their daily chores in preparation for the next season in God, two witnesses were spending three days in the high country of the Promised Land. They had a totally different vantage point to the rest of the Body. Having been baptized in floodwaters, supported and transitioned by the power of the waters to the other side and having understanding that it was the season of harvest spiritually (which is when the Jordan flooded) and also having heard with their own ears, the whispers in the strongholds of the enemy, they were in a totally different place spiritually than the rest of the Body. The conquering of Jericho was already an accomplished fact in their hearts long before those walls came down in the natural! Oh death where is your victory, oh grave where is your sting!

Beloved, there is a company of forerunners that Jesus sent ahead of the rest of His people in order to equip them with revelation knowledge that would be essential in bringing the rest of the Body into the Promised Land of the full inheritance in Christ. These forerunners or spies know the way into the Promised Land because they have traversed the territory. We see these forerunners again depicted in the instruction Joshua gave concerning the priests bearing the ark :

Jos 3:3 Commanding the people: When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God being borne by the priests, set out from where you are and follow it. Jos 3:4 Yet a space must be kept between you and it, about 2,000 cubits by measure; come not near it, that you

may [be able to see the ark and] know the way you must go, for you have not passed this way before.

There are a company of believer priests who are '200 cubits' ahead of the rest of the Body. They carry the presence of God upon their shoulders. Having walked the Promised Land, they have the faith to approach what looks like an impenetrable obstacle (the Jordan) and put their feet in the water, knowing that they are risking their lives by doing so. Remember, the word 'Jordan' means 'to descend to the lower regions'. Standing firm in the midst of the Jordan is a type of remaining in the place of death to self until all the people of God have crossed over. The forerunners know that the path of death is really the path to life and resurrection power.

The priests could have taken advantage of the presence of God within their lives and just crossed over themselves without making a way for the others. However, Jesus said, "greater love has no man than this, that he lay his life down for his friends". It was the manifest presence of God in the ark that caused the Jordan to be halted in its tracks and the crossing of the Jordan depicts the forerunners operating in love of God which is willing to put others before yourself. The priests actually brought up the rear into the Promised Land once everyone else was safely across. The first were last and the latecomers and stragglers crossed first. Those who are '200 cubits' ahead actually had to mark time in the midst of the Jordan in order for the rest of the Body to catch up and transition safely. Having done all, they had to stand, knowing that their remaining in this place of death to self was for the benefit of everyone else. Just as the spies had to hide for three days in the mountains while the rest of the Body gathered provisions and prepared for the crossing, so too these forerunners remain in a place of hiddenness in Christ, so that others can catch up to where they have already been.

I read something interesting when studying the death of Jesus. People were resurrected from the dead as Jesus breathed his last :

Mat 27:50 And Jesus cried again with a loud voice and gave up His spirit. Mat 27:51 And at once the curtain of the sanctuary of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth shook and the rocks were split. Mat 27:52 The tombs were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep in death were raised [to life]; Mat 27:53 And coming out of the tombs after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

Here were people who had personal experience of resurrection power and yet they remained hidden until the third day when Jesus came out of the tomb and then showed themselves to many people. They were brimming with resurrection life and yet remained hidden from sight until the appointed time of Christ's resurrection - because everything has to be done in order, the focus was Christ and Him crucified - just like the spies who remained hidden for 3 days and then showed themselves, testifying of all they had seen and heard on the day of the crossing.

The day after the crossing, Joshua was instructed to circumcise the 40 000 fighting men and they remained in their places for three days recovering and then celebrated the first Passover in the Promised Land on the 14th Nisan. Three days of getting prepared before the

crossing and three days of circumcision and healing after it - the Jordan crossing stands as a mirror between the two 3 day periods. A mirror is a face to face experience. When John the Baptist came face to face with Christ, there was a transition between dispensations. Jesus said all that was until John was a shadow. The reality was Christ. John's ministry was to prepare the way for people to experience Christ. When the shadow met the reality, people began focusing on the reality which was Christ. The preparation for the crossing of the Jordan and the circumcision straight after it are mirrors of one another. John's ministry was one of calling people to repentance. And here we have a picture of the first portion of ministry of the forerunners to the Body of Christ. First, their lives speak - they are the real deal - and this marks them as legitimate messengers of Christ. Secondly, once their lives have pointed the way, there is a sharing of the necessary revelation to circumcise the hearts of God's people afresh because the wilderness wanderings have produced a people with uncircumcised hearts; men ready for war, yes, but not in the spirit of Christ - and so the covering of flesh must be removed and the recovenanting with the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must occur before Jericho can be tackled.

Jos 5:2 At that time the LORD said unto Joshua, Make sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time.

Notice that 'sharp knives' had to be made. One cannot attempt a circumcision with a spoon and the time of spoon-feeding the Body of Christ and being seeker-sensitive is over. And yes, a circumcision is painful, especially when carried out upon an adult but the pain serves a purpose. God will not have a people who behave like uncircumcised Philistines and yet tout the Name of God like a banner in their fleshly exploits before a watching world. God requires fighting men who fight His battles, not their own petty squabbles. He requires a submissive and chastened people whose hearts tremble at His Word and who carry out His instruction to the letter even when they do not understand.

When God first instructed His people to teach His commandments to their children, He used words that give us an indication of what an operation on the stony heart should be like. The Amplified version says it best :

Deu 6:6 And these words which I am commanding you this day shall be [first] in your [own] minds and hearts; [then] Deu 6:7 You shall whet and sharpen them so as to make them penetrate, and teach and impress them diligently upon the [minds and] hearts of your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way,

Whetting and sharpening is exactly what was done to the flint stones used to circumcise the Israelites in the Promised land and God was probably whispering, "better late than never" because these were the people whom had been raised in the wilderness by parents who didn't circumcise their children; who didn't want to hurt their little darlings so they blunted and flattened and bent the sword of God's Word into spoons to cater to the whims of their undisciplined darling children's hearts. The Word of God is likened to a sword for a reason. It is intended to PENETRATE; to DIVIDE between soul and spirit. It is designed to change the landscape of people's hearts permanently. It is designed for heart surgery, not just slight superficial bruising. You cannot do heart surgery with a spoon; you need a sharp scalpel.

The words that are shared by the forerunner company during this transition season will be at times hard words, penetrating words; not feel-good words, but they will be Spirit and Life to those who allow the operation to take place. Remember the words of Jesus in Revelation 3 to the Laodecian Church:

Rev 3:19 Those whom I [dearly and tenderly] love, I tell their faults and convict and convince and reprove and chasten [I discipline and instruct them]. So be enthusiastic and in earnest and burning with zeal and repent [changing your mind and attitude]. Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears and listens to and heeds My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will eat with him, and he [will eat] with Me.

The forerunners, who have walked 200 cubits ahead of the rest of the Body will share Words from the heart of God and revelation that transition the Body out of their wilderness wanderings and into the Promised Land - but it will not be baby food. It will be meat for the mature fighting men, to nourish and equip them for the battles ahead.

Do you remember the angel whom appeared to Joshua as he stood surveying Jericho on the last day of Passover? Joshua asked the angel whose side he was on and the angel basically said, "Neither. I am here to fight the Lord's battles." As the church of Jesus Christ enters the season ahead, their eyes need to be opened to understand that God doesn't fight battles the way we do. The priests standing in the Jordan, putting the whole Body of Christ before their own needs and safety, laying down their lives for the brethren, were in fact depicting the very Passover Lamb they would be eating just four days later. They were doing battle with death and yet they were standing totally still. Jesus destroyed the works of the evil one by dying on the cross, not by arguing in the synagogue or lopping off the heads of the pagan priests. The church has to learn a whole lot about real spiritual warfare, the kind that really changes a person's spiritual location permanently from the wilderness to the Promised Land.

Eating the whole Lamb is about receiving the fullness of revelation of Christ and the forerunner priests standing firm in the Jordan are demonstrating that they are forged into the image of Christ whom they proclaim. Their very lives are signposts to the Promised Land! They not only speak revelation that comes from the powerful presence of Christ in their earthen vessels - they are the message made flesh! It is time for the Body of Christ to move from self-centeredness to displaying the love that was portrayed by the Son of God, that God SO LOVED that while we were yet sinners, God sent His son. Once again, God is sending His fire-seasoned sons to His Body first because judgment must begin with the household of God. Only those whose hearts have been circumcised by the hand of God themselves, are able to wield the flint knife with accuracy and compassion because they know what it feels like.

Only once the circumcision ritual has taken place and healing has occurred, are the Body of Christ ready for the experience of Passover in the Promised Land. They had heard about the lamb that was slain during their wilderness wanderings but not one of them had ever tasted of the Passover lamb in all those 40 years. Hearing about something and actually tasting and experiencing it for yourself are two different things. However between the hearing of the ears and the tingling of the taste buds and the subsequent satisfaction of the stomach is the

appointment with the flint knife of His Word. Circumcision marks you as one of His and in the wilderness years only the priests were circumcised. Only those standing holding back the Jordan had the experience with the flint knife necessary to make a way for others into the Promised Land.

A circumcision is quick, one swift blow with the knife and it is done. So too, these forerunners will, by the Spirit of Christ use just the sharpened portion of the living Word necessary to do the operation. No more hammering away with blunt instruments on hard headed people. The sword of the Spirit rightly wielded cuts straight to the heart of the matter and the heart is forever changed. And after that, rest and healing results and God's people are ready to consume the whole Lamb.

And one last point, we are only able to taste and consume the Lamb because He was willing to die. The lamb I ate at the Passover meal last night had to be slaughtered before I could enjoy the taste of its meat. Those who are appointed to share the meat of the Word, which is the Lamb of God made flesh in them, are required to be conformed to His death in order to be qualified to feed the rest of the Body, hungry for true meat. Paul said :

2Co 4:11 For we who live are constantly [*experiencing*] being handed over to death for Jesus' sake, that the [*resurrection*] life of Jesus also may be evidenced through our flesh which is liable to death. 2Co 4:12 Thus death is actively at work in us, but [*it is in order that our*] life [*may be actively at work*] in you.

That's it in a nutshell for the forerunners who are signposts to Zion!

Selah