

"Unto David:"

OR

"THINE ARE WE, AND ON THY SIDE."

BY

E. H. CHATER.

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Read 1 Chron. 12 : 1-22 ; Eph. 6 : 10-20.

IN the 12th chapter of 1 Chron. we have two scenes presented: one in relation to David at Ziklag in the hour of his adversity and rejection, and the other at Hebron when he came to the throne of Israel. He reigned 7 years at Hebron and 33 years in Jerusalem.

Now, when David was at Ziklag, Saul the son of Kish was upon the throne of Israel. And in this hour of his rejection and suffering, it has pleased the Spirit of God to record in this scripture, for our instruction, how a number of the different tribes of Israel forsook the house and fortunes of Saul and cast in their lot with him. There was war between the house of Saul and the house of David; and men of the former house who forsook Saul and gave in their allegiance to David are designated as among the mighty men, helpers of the war.

I desire, in dependence on God's grace, to show you the remarkable analogy between this and that which the Spirit of God is working at the present moment. A greater than David has been into this world, Jesus the Son of God, and He has been rejected and cast out. He has passed out of it by the way of death, and He is still despised and rejected of men. In the hour of His absence, while

He keeps Himself close (to use the language of this scripture) in the heavens, the Holy Ghost is here, touching the affections of the heart and the consciences of the saints, and leading them away from the spirit which is prevalent in this world (really the spirit of Saul over again, the spirit of the man of Sin, who will shortly be manifested in this world) to Christ Himself. He draws our hearts to Him, that we may be faithful to Him in the perilous and difficult times of the last days.

There was war, as said, between the houses of Saul and David, and there is war at the present moment (spiritual war), in which God's saints are called to engage. But we naturally prefer peace now, and to take things easily in this scene. We are going to have nothing but peace in the coming Kingdom, but now Christians are on the battlefield. Hence, if we would be faithful to Christ, we must be prepared for war. There has been war between Christ, the true David, and His enemies throughout all the ages, and it will continue until all the saints are safely landed in glory. Then shall He take the kingdom and reign in peace over all, and the heavenly saints shall be with Him to share His glory.

This scripture is very full of instruction for the guidance of our souls at the present moment. I will go a little over the previous history of Saul and David in order that all may better understand it. You will remember how that Israel in their failure asked to have a king like the nations around them, and God granted them their request. Samuel the prophet was told to anoint Saul, who was a man after man's own heart, a head and shoulders taller

than the rest of the people. He was to maintain God's authority to execute His word, and to see that His people carried it out. Now, the Lord had sworn to have war with Amalek to all generations. But Saul, when commissioned to destroy them, failed to carry out the Lord's commands, and preserved alive the best of the sheep and oxen and Agag their king. Consequently, he was rejected; and eventually he lost the kingdom. Saul having thus signally failed to glorify God, He sent Samuel to anoint another in his room among the sons of Jesse the Bethlehemite. Eliab the eldest was beautiful to look upon, but Samuel found that the Lord looks not upon the outward appearance, but upon the heart, and Eliab was refused. So with the other sons, until David was brought. He was the chosen of God (the man after God's own heart), and upon him the anointing oil was poured in the midst of his brethren.

Then there was war with the Philistines, and Goliath of Gath defied the hosts of God, who in a wonderful way and at a critical moment brought David into the camp. David overthrew the giant and cut off his head with his own sword, and he was brought into the favour of Saul. But there was such joy in Israel over the defeat of their enemies that the women sang in their dances, "Saul hath slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." Saul's envy and enmity became stirred up against David, and he sought his life. David had to flee, and was hunted as a partridge upon the mountains.

War began between the house of Saul and the house of David, and in his wanderings he came to

Ziklag. In the midst of the conflict, as already remarked, a number of the different tribes forsook the fortunes of the house of Saul and cast in their lot with David. All this is full of shadow and type for us of that which is going on at the present moment.

David is a type of Christ, and Christ has been anointed by the Holy Ghost as the future King of God's people. But there was a spirit of rage and opposition among the Jews, and He was rejected; and He went to the Cross to glorify God and to overcome the power of the enemy. He passed by the way of death and has gone into the glory of God; and as David kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish, so also Christ, so to speak, keeps Himself close in the heavens during these 1800 or 1900 years, while the spirit of antichrist, the wilful king, is working, the spirit of lawlessness, of disobedience and opposition to Himself and His kingdom. All this will end in open rebellion against Christ. The wilful king, the antichrist, with the head of the Roman empire, will come out in open apostasy against God and Christ and draw down His richly-merited judgment. It is our privilege and responsibility to break away from the spirit of iniquity already working in opposition to God and to Christ and His truth, and to be found in the company of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the true but rejected David.

It says in the first verse, "Now these are they that came to David at Ziklag while he yet kept himself close because of Saul the son of Kish; and they were among the mighty men, helpers of the war." (See also verse 2). And it gives their

names. Now, I think it is very blessed to see that the first persons who broke away from Saul were those of his own house and tribe. And hence it is quite clear that they were amongst those who had the most to give up and to lose. If they had remained in Saul's service, there was every prospect of advancement. It was in every way to their natural advantage to remain where they were. But instead of this, tho' at the moment there was not the slightest outward sign of David's coming into the kingdom, they chose to share his fortunes and sufferings. They knew that David had been anointed, and although it is the hour of his adversity, they cast in their lot with him without fear. And they are distinguished in Scripture to this moment as an example for you and for me. They were "mighty men, helpers of the war" (see v. 1—2). They were men of prominence and power, men ready to face things boldly for their new master—to fight the battles of the one to whom they were drawn. They were skilled, too, and exercised in war. Surely all this is for our teaching at the present moment. Every Christian has the Holy Ghost, and the Holy Ghost is true to Christ and draws our affections to Him. THE KEY of the whole passage is David—"UNTO DAVID." The person of David was the attraction, the person of the anointed one of God. They cast in their lot with him, without question, in view of the coming kingdom. The Holy Ghost at the present moment is drawing and attracting souls to Christ. God has blessed us and saved us, and His Spirit is engaged with Christ, and if ungrieved in us He will touch our hearts' affections, and in His power we shall be

able to go forth unto Him without the camp, and to share His rejection and to suffer adversity with Him until He comes and takes the kingdoms of this world as His own. And we all ought, like these, to be skilled and exercised, armed with the whole panoply of God, and wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (Eph. 6). We are called to overcome in an evil day, and having done all, *to stand*. Only in His power, in prayer and supplication, can we in any little measure be found faithful to Christ. Satan is a great and mighty foe, but God is *almighty*. He will exercise His power on our behalf, and the conflict may end at any moment.

The next who went forth were of the tribe of Gad (verse 8). They “separated themselves” *unto David*. This verse again is full of instruction for us. Their names are also given. God delights to record them by His blessed Spirit in His Word, that we may read, and follow their example. You will remember that, previous to this, when Israel first crossed the Jordan to take possession of the land, there were $2\frac{1}{2}$ tribes, whose names were Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh, who told Moses they desired to dwell on this side, though willing to share the conflict in the land. The Spirit of God has recorded why it was. They had numerous herds and flocks, and the land of Gilead was a very rich land, with much grass. For this they stopped short of the purpose of God. It is full of divine meaning. It sets forth the tendency of the people of God to-day to stop short of His call, which is not merely to go *out* of this

world, but to go *into* Canaan. We are called into *another world*—to enter in and dwell in another world of spiritual and heavenly blessing, and to fight the Lord's battles. How often the green grass holds saints back from entering into God's purpose! Thus we miss the richness of the blessing which He has prepared for us. God does not wait until He brings us home to glory to enjoy the heavenly blessing. He has given His Spirit that we may cross the Jordan now; that we may enter now into the full blessing resulting from the work of Christ on the Cross, not only that which we are delivered from, but that which He has entered into and would have us to share. I think, if we are honest, we shall all be ready to own how often we stop short in the experience of our souls, because of something which we fail to judge, and hence are hindered from entering into the magnificent range of blessing which God has given us in a risen and ascended Christ. How beautiful to find here, in the later history of the men of Gad, that they were among the earlier ones who crossed the Jordan to share David's adversity and to fight his battles. The Gadites separated themselves *unto David*. David was everything to them. He had no palace, no city, no gold and silver, no rich rewards to give them—nothing but himself—yet they went forth to him. They had to walk by faith and not by sight, and to wait for another moment when the anointed one of God should take the throne and reign, and at the close of his time of rejection they got their reward. But I do not think it was the reward that attracted these true hearts. No, it was the person of David, the man

after God's own heart. They "separated themselves *unto David* into the hold" They knew David was there, and *unto David* they went. They "separated themselves *unto David* in the stronghold (that is the meaning of the word) in the wilderness; men of might and men of war, fit for the battle, that could handle shield and buckler; whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains." We find four important principles here which apply to us in a very practical way. They were—

- (1) Separated men;
- (2) Wilderness men;
- (3) Fighting men;
- (4) Overcomers.

They were fine fellows in *their* day and a bright example for all in *this*. They *separated themselves* unto David; they were attracted *unto him*. David was a long way off from Saul's house and camp, and hence in his company they were a long way off also. So with us. If we go forth *unto Him*—Jesus, the true David—without the camp, we shall find Him far off from the camp of this world, and in His blessed company we shall be morally free from its principles and ways also. *Moses* pitched the tabernacle *afar off* from the camp, and all who sought the Lord had to go to it outside the camp.

There is perhaps nothing clearer in the pages of the New Testament than that the people of God should be separated from the world and from the camp—separated from all its evil and from all its false religions. Two scriptures will suffice to show this. In 2 Cor. 6: 11-18 we read, "Wherefore, *come out* from among them and *be ye separate* and

touch not the unclean thing." What is the result if we do? We get a three-fold blessing. If we come out, "I will receive you." If we are separate, "I will be a Father unto you." If we touch not the unclean thing, "Ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Is it not worth coming out to be received? Is it not worth while not to touch the unclean thing, in order to have His blessed support and succour, etc.? This is the only place in the New Testament where we get the title "Almighty," except in the book of Revelation. All His power is put forth to sustain us in that path of separation and holiness "without which no man shall see the Lord." The other scripture is in Rev. 18: 4, where the call is to come out of Babylon. "Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." I know its immediate application is still future, but the elements which will form Baylon the great, when full blown, are surging around us on all hands at the present moment, and God would have us come out and clear ourselves from them now.

Secondly, "They separated themselves unto David into the hold." They found themselves in the company of David in a stronghold. There was a stronghold there. If we are in company with a rejected Christ, we are in a stronghold which Satan cannot touch or overcome, but it involves a wilderness path. Nothing but sand, sand, sand, sand, all the way! There is no abiding portion for us here. If we look down or around us, we shall be discouraged. It is Christ God presents to the heart. He desires that our eyes may be closed,

and fixed in faith upon Him above to all down here, until we behold Him in all His beauty and glory in His Father's home. Do not be disappointed, then, if you find it is veritably a wilderness path. But His company, if known and enjoyed, will more than make up for all loss by the way.

Thirdly, they were fighting men. They were no mean warriors: they were "fit for the battle." Nothing can be clearer in Eph. 6 than that we shall have to fight if we stand for Christ. If you read that scripture with attention, you will find that the whole of that armour is for defence. We are to maintain the glory of Christ against all the enmity that Satan may bring against us. The only weapon of offence that God gives us is "the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." Hence the importance of reading His Word, of studying it, that we may be skilled in the use of it. We read of a mighty warrior of David who arose and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and *his hand clave unto the sword*. We are to use it *till the word becomes part of ourselves*, as it were, that we may be able to wield it in the power of the Holy Ghost in the wars of the Lord. Moreover, their faces were like the faces of lions. They were bold and fearless warriors, moving aside for none.

Fourthly, "they were swift as the roes upon the mountains"—the high places. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against wicked spirits, in high or in heavenly places" (Eph. 6: 12). Just as the roe (or gazelle) springs from rock to rock, from boulder to boulder, from crag to crag, from precipice to precipice, so are we to overcome all

the difficulties involved in whole-hearted and uncompromising identification with and devotedness to Christ, rising superior to every obstacle in the power of the Holy Ghost. And overcoming, again, takes a double form, *viz.*: separation from evil, both in the world and in the professing church. In 1 John v. 4 we read, "This is the victory that overcometh *the world*, even our faith"; and in Rev. ii. and iii., no less than seven times God gives His blessed promises to the overcomers, so that we are encouraged in every way to get the victory in this evil day against every form of iniquity. God desires that you and I should be characterized by four things like the men of Gad, *viz.*: that we should be *separated* men, *wilderness* men, *fighting* men, and *overcomers*. From verse 14 we learn that David did not lose sight of the faithfulness of the sons of Gad. One of the least was over a hundred, and one of the greatest over a thousand. And if our hearts are true to Christ, if drawn to Him in our affections and standing by Him in the sense of His presence as Lord, He will not forget to promote us. Assuredly that saint will be promoted morally by the Lord who seeks to stand by Him and for Him in an evil day.

Verse 15—"These are they that went over Jordan in the first month when it had overflowed all its banks." Mark that—They went over Jordan when it was in flood. In dry seasons the Jordan runs very low, but at other times the waters overflow, and it becomes a very wide river. It was when Jordan was at its widest that these men crossed it to identify themselves with David. There is a great moral lesson in this. However

great the difficulty in the way, the one who is drawn in affection to Christ overcomes it in order to reach Him. There are difficulties. You will find difficulties in your business, in your family, in every circle. Both high and low, rich and poor, find them. Satan will take good care to put obstacles in the way ; but the man of faith looks at Christ and not at the difficulties, and in His power you will overcome them. We are not told how the Gadites crossed the Jordan, so that I cannot tell you. But one thing I know : David was on one side and the Gadites on the other, and nothing stopped them from getting across to David. However great or wide it is, you will get across if you accept the death of Christ in its fullest extent ; if you accept it, not only as delivering you from this scene, but as bringing you into that scene which is full of the glory of Christ, and about to burst upon our view in all its radiance and splendour. If you have your eye upon Christ, no matter what the obstacle may be, where Christ is, there you must be. I must share *His fortunes* : He is the Anointed of God, and I must cast in my lot with Him until He come. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. The Jordan typifies the death of Christ as regards that which His death brings me into.* What I learn here is, that no matter what the difficulty is, each true heart will say in response to His love, I *must* get *into His company* before I see His face.

*NOTE.—There is no doubt a further application of this passage in relation to future events in connexion with God's earthly people Israel, but we cannot dwell upon that here.

“And they put to flight all them of the valleys, both toward the east and toward the west.” Resist the devil and he will flee from you. None can stand against you if you go in the armour of God, seeking Christ and His glory; you will find all the power on your side. They overcame and found themselves in the company of David.

Verses 16 and 17—“And there came of the children of Benjamin and Judah to the hold unto David,” etc. Now, when these children of Benjamin and Judah come, David is suspicious of them. He goes out to meet them, and says, “If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you, but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon and rebuke it.” How beautiful are the touches of Scripture! We all know that it was a Jew who betrayed the true David. Judas was a Jew. And here, hundreds of years before, David is suspicious of men of Benjamin and Judah. What a beautiful touch! “If ye be come unto me to help me, my heart shall be knit unto you.” The heart of the Lord is knit to everyone who comes to His help. What a privilege so to come in the day of His rejection! In the book of Judges we read of some *who did not come* to the help of the Lord in a crisis, and what was the result in that day? “Curse ye Meroz . . . because ye came not to the help of the Lord” (Judges 5: 23). The curse of God in that solemn moment came on those who refused to fight the battles of the Lord.

“But if ye be come unto me to betray me,” etc. (verse 17). David knew that he was innocent,

and he puts his case into the hands of God. We have to do with One Who is not only innocent, but holy—the Holy One of God. Judas betrayed the innocent blood of that blessed holy Man. Judas is a figure of the antichrist. Both are called “the son of perdition.”

“Then the spirit came upon Amasai,” etc. (verse 18). In this case they were true hearts. The spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he gave a most beautiful answer to David. “*Thine* are we, David, and *on thy side*, thou son of Jesse.” Has the Spirit of God enabled you and me to answer thus to the blessed Lord? Can we really say from the depths of our hearts, *Thine are we*, Lord Jesus, Thou blessed Son of God? and Not only *Thine*, but *on Thy side*? Have we taken up our position, owning that we belong to Him? “All Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine,” the Lord says to the Father. How blessed to be in that circle! And have we cast in our lot with Him and His interests at all costs, on His side, and against the widespread spirit of evil?

It is no day for neutrality: it is *for* Christ or *against* Him. If we are not for Him, we are pandering to the spirit of antichrist.

“Peace, peace, be unto thee, and peace be to thy helpers, for thy God helpeth thee,” continued Amasai. By nature enemies to Christ and to God, how blessed to be in His company, in the very atmosphere of peace! Peace is the fruit of communion with God. It is really entering into the joy of the peace-offering and enjoying communion with the Lord and His saints.

“And there fell some of Manasseh to David,”

etc. (verse 19). Here the Spirit of God mentions that people of the half-tribe which stopped short with Gad in Gilead are now in the forefront to be true to David. "They helped David against the band of the rovers" (verse 21). And just as it was in that day, so are there plenty of bands of rovers in the present day. The Lord had sworn to have war with Amalek to all generations. These rovers were Amalekites. There are plenty of Amalekites about to-day, plenty of men yielding to Satan in the flesh, doing their own wills and banding themselves in one way or another in opposition to Christ. God desires that we should be faithful, notwithstanding all. We are not ignorant of Satan's devices, and we need to fight valiantly for Christ against everything that is of Satan and the flesh. "For at that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, like the host of God" (verse 22). And I have no doubt if we are exercised and seek humbly to maintain the glory of Christ at all cost to ourselves, and walking in self-judgment, that as numbers came to David until it was a great host, so the Spirit of God will in grace continue to work, and many more will be gathered out through grace to Christ's all-precious Name. The Spirit of God is often hindered because we are not accepting death, but allowing the flesh. It shews itself in a thousand forms, in looseness, worldliness, self-will, etc.; but if we walk with Christ and each other in peace and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, we shall be edified and multiplied.

E.H.C.