

Accountable to Offer

John Cheever, Bowen's Mill Convention, March 2016

Circumcision is to be an accountability to the covenant, not only unto the law, but also in the Spirit. The difference is, the circumcision of the law was a one-time event and the circumcision of the Spirit is an embracing of the process by which we become—the circumcision of the heart without hands. I want to overlay two stories; they are very familiar to us. One is the story of Solomon and the other is the story of Samson. So, two “S” stories.

There was one who came “out of the gate” and looked like he was suitable for glory. In taking the throne by appointment of David, when God met with him and said, “What do you want?” In a moment of inspiration, he chose wisdom instead of money. God said, “Because you chose in consistency with My Spirit, not only will I give you the wisdom, but I’ll give you the cash as well.” As his ministry progressed and his opportunity ‘to become’ progressed, he governed Israel with the wisdom God had given him. We know the very familiar story of two women with one child. He said, “Just take a sword and cut the baby in half and give half to each woman and get them out of here.” And the one woman said that was fair and the one said not to do that; give it to her. So he said, “That’s the mother; give the baby to her.”

And his fame spread through all Israel. I’m not really sure that the Queen of Sheba went up to see the riches, although she was dazzled by the amount of gold and the accumulation of wealth; but what she was really smitten by, and the half had not been told, was the wisdom of Solomon. It is really what spread his fame. People will hate and be jealous of the riches, but the wisdom eventually becomes notable. That wisdom established the kingdom as having some merit beyond just the riches. Everybody wants to invade and take the riches, but you know you can’t invade and take the wisdom. So it’s a much more secure foundation.

The difficulty of Solomon though, is that he was willing to rule through the wisdom God gave him over Israel, but he was not willing to be governed by the wisdom God had given him. The gift of God that made him greater than what he was before he got it, he accommodated; made place for it; governed by it. But what was going to cost him because of the gift God had given him, he walked separate from. So as his testimony grew and as his fame grew and as his riches grew, the stability of the kingdom that was wisdom began to be

lost in his own life. The accounting was that he grew into an idolatrous relationship opposed to his heart being circumcised in order to give evidence of the covenant of God with him. The lack of being governed by the gift gave rise to an idolatry that was contrary to the God that was the Giver.

So, we stand in a place where we certainly haven't esteemed the gift in an appropriate way. We have taken the gifts of the Spirit and we have used those to manipulate and position ourselves for influence, authority, and significance. We've been gratified by the acknowledgment of the gifts as opposed to becoming accountable to the Giver.

The second story of "S" is Samson. He started down a different engagement of the path with gifting. He took the gifting in order to enhance his own life. There wasn't a notability that began to spread through the surrounding areas. People weren't coming to see; they were trying to take him captive and kill him, not come and observe the greatness of his administration. He was also called to govern Israel.

In the early part of the story of Samson, it says that Samson moved at times by the Spirit in the camp of Israel. When he did, he was great. When he didn't, he was horrible. It got to the point when people wanted to find Samson and he wasn't readily available, they said, "Where do you think he is?" and they said, "Well, you might check the red light district down in the nearest Philistine town." He used his strength to get himself out of the predicament that this created. He enhanced the excess of his own flesh and gratification of himself. As opposed to 'Christ pleased not himself', Samson used the gift to please himself. He took the gates of the city and he walked off and he laughed at them and scoffed. The lack of esteem and the lack of embracing the Giver caused him to lose esteem for the gift itself. Samson ended up grinding, being made fun of, and held at sport and captive to a nation that he was called to defeat on behalf of God for the people.

The anointing was evident in his life; there were notable things that took place as a result of him moving in the anointing that God gave him, but eventually it caused his eyes to be put out and for him to become a captive. In the midst of that captivity, his heart was turned to the Lord. The Philistines brought him out after a season. They were having a great pageant—a festival—and they brought him up to make fun of him. There was a young lad there and Samson asked him to put his hands on the pillars that held the temple up. As opposed to the verse that describes Samson taking the gates of

the city up the hill, Judges 16:30 says, “and he (Samson) bowed himself with all his strength.” He came to an accountability and used the gift that God had given him for the purpose for which God had given it. The “power to become” isn’t the gifts. The “power to become” is being accountable to the Giver, so that the gifts function for the purpose which God has given them—not to enhance us, not to bring glory to us, but to bring us before Him.

We are going to go to a verse in Hebrews that says the same thing that Bobby Owens brought us to in the process of what he was sharing through Romans 7 and Romans 8. Bobby said that Paul wrote what he did in these two chapters so that he could say what he wrote in Romans 12. Romans 12:1 is the same thing as the verse in Hebrews 9:12.

Romans 12:1 – *I beg you brethren, by the mercies of God to present your body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is...*

...which is the common sense thing to do—or the new normal—it’s the normal thing to do; *present your body*.

Hebrews 9:12 – *Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered...*

We are talking about a new priest.

The introduction of Hebrews shows us the Son compared to angels. He was created lower but destined for greater, such as Hebrews 1:13—*Unto which of the angels did He say at any time, sit thou at My right hand?*

So it’s not angels, it’s the man; and that man is the son, but the man has to become the son by the authority of God. But what are the sons—as a mature son—supposed to grow up into? What is his function as a son? A priest! The expression of a mature son is a high priest! It’s not an avocation; he doesn’t get to maturity and go to school to learn how to do it. His growth is in priesthood. It is one-and-the-same as coming into the maturity of a son. It’s not just any priest; it’s a high priest! It’s a different priest than under the law because it’s not by a carnal commandment, but it’s by the surety of an oath through submitting ourselves to the Giver—to become a high priest.

Why is that important? Hebrews 7:12 says that the law is not changed until the priesthood is changed first. It’s the changing of the priesthood that makes necessary the changing of the law. The government isn’t changed so

that there can be a new priest; the priest is changed so that there can be a new government! The point of us coming to the maturity of the sons of God is so that the world can come under a different government than it's under now. Instead of being subject to the vanity and the principalities and power of this world, it can have a standard raised in the midst of the darkness.

John Hinson said in this convention, "What a fellowship we have," because we covenanted and we based the fellowship, not on the basis of agreement, not on the basis of doctrine, but on the basis of Spirit. Our covenant with one another is that we would strive with everything that is in us to maintain the unity of the faith and the bond of peace; that if we had ought with our brother, we would go to our brother, instead of demonstrating our gift. That would have been great—it still will be great!

We have to become accountable. So John, the apostle, said, "You can tell me that you love God who you can't see, and I will believe you until I see you're not loving your brother." That's is the sharp end of the stick. We are at a place where I think the essence of accountability has to also be brought to the bottom line. So I just want to reformulate that and leave us with that accountability to God being expressed through an accountability to one another. Just say it – the same principle applied to accountability as the Apostle John applied to love. Therefore you can tell me you're accountable to the unseen Spirit of God until I see that you can't be accountable to your brother!

If you tell me that you're subjected to the influence of God's Spirit in your heart, I'll believe you until I see that you can't receive correction from your brother. Would that be a distortion? So accountability to God is given evidence by our willingness to be accountable to one another. Now, if I go and hide, I'm minimizing my accountability. If I'm not willing to walk transparently, I minimize my responsibility to be accountable. I'm not saying that if we try to live accountable to everybody else, that this will establish a walk in the Spirit. Obviously, that's silly because you are not going to keep everybody happy all the time. However, if we will humble ourselves before God with the true gift that God has given us, which is the Spirit of Christ (not the gifts listed in Romans 12 or in 1st Corinthians 12), but Christ who pleased not himself and recognize that Jesus said that accountability to the gospel is "if any man will lose his life for my sake and the gospel's". Unless we have come honestly to this, we have nothing that's going to benefit someone else.

We must be accountable to what we are trying to teach. But, boy is there a door open in heaven to enter into an embracing of the process by which we become accountable to the Spirit of God, to the work of the Spirit, and the evidence of its testimony among one another!

So the charge is to become a priest who offers his own life; it's a transition. I've entered into Christ by a new and a living way as a result of his blood and as a priest, I have offered his blood as atonement for my sin. Is that right? But, I'm not going to enter into Sonship and the full expression of that Sonship by only continuing to offer his blood. He didn't enter by a substitutionary offering; he entered in by offering His own blood – a priest who will humble himself and become accountable to the invisible, almighty God and be willing to have the testimony of that borne among his brethren.