

IT MATTERS WHERE YOU PITCH YOUR TENT

NUM 2:1-2:

*“And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, Every man of the children of Israel **shall pitch by his own standard**, with the **ensign of their father's house**: far off about the tabernacle of the congregation shall they pitch.”*

NUM 2:34:

*“And the children of Israel did according to all that the LORD commanded Moses: so they **pitched by their standards**, and so they set forward, every one after their families, **according to the house of their fathers.**”*

I. In our present-day environment, it has become very commonplace for some to challenge almost every “landmark” and question the significance of almost all Biblical boundaries.

The Word admonishes us... DO NOT remove your neighbor’s landmark.

II. Without much explanation, we are admonished not to remove or reposition the things that serve as structure and stability in the Church in an otherwise unstable world!

When the Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt’s bondage, they came out as a mass of people or a mob of humanity.

That is why, at least in part, God divided the children of Israel into tribes. He did NOT intend for them to walk aimlessly through life on their way to the Promised Land. He had a set structure that He wanted them to follow.

III. PS 68:6:

*“God setteth the solitary in families: He bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry *land*.”*

That is why whenever someone receives the Holy Ghost, God puts them into a church “family” somewhere. It is NOT the will of God that the solitary STAY in that condition!

IV. This mass of people was divided into tribes as follows:

JUDAH was on the East, and under him, he had Issachar and Zebulun.

REUBEN was on the South, and under him, Simeon and Gad.

EPHRAIM was on the West, and under him, Manasseh and Benjamin.

DAN was on the North, and he had under him Asher and Naphtali.

NUM 2:31:

“All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan *were* an hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go hindmost with their standards.”

So here are these chosen men that bear the FLAG or STANDARD, and God calls that standard a “sign of your father’s house.” (EX 2:2)

The children of Israel were, in the truest sense, A NATION OF PEOPLE WITHOUT A COUNTRY, so God gave them a father, or at least a “father figure” by way of placing everyone in a “family or community setting.”

So here we see that Israel had to learn to PITCH their tents TOWARD the standard. That gave them an opportunity to develop fellowship and to settle them into families.

The message was clear; ALWAYS PITCH YOUR TENT TOWARD YOUR OWN STANDARD! STAY WITH YOUR FAMILY!

V. These standards (flags) became so important to them that as they began to move when the pillar of cloud or the pillar of fire moved, the people moved following their standard; they all had to stay together. And when they finally arrived at their destination, for there to be harmony in the encampment, they had to know where their standard was.

So, it goes without saying that this standard became a very intricate part of all their lives. However, these “standards” were raised by a certain person within the camp. They became known as “standard-bearers.” The people, no doubt, had grown to depend solely upon the standard bearer to do his job.

After all, they are the ones that will keep them in line and in check with everything else in their life!

It matters that someone is lifting up the ensigns or the flags because countless thousands of people are depending on them for their personal peace and ultimate safety.

Moses lifted his hands, and when he did, Israel won the battle.

The bronze serpent was lifted up in the wilderness, and it brought healing.

Jesus said, “If I be lifted up...”

Powerful things happen when the right thing is lifted up!

VI. Lot pitched his tent “TOWARD” Sodom, yet that seemed not to be enough because it was not long until we read about him and find that he was IN Sodom!

When he did that, it nearly cost him his life and his family. However, God commissioned angels to go and take them by the hand and lead them out.

It is interesting to note that Lot’s wife was the only person in the Bible that died lost in the arms of angels.

With arms of redemption wrapped firmly around her, she looked back. She did that because she turned back to the place where she had developed her sense of community and family.

It matters where you pitch your tent!

You pitch it toward Egypt, and you are destined for destruction!

VII. Solomon, in his dedicatory prayer for the Temple, said to the Lord in 1 KINGS 8... If anyone falls or fails, they can find deliverance and help if they will just look TOWARD the Temple.

Jonah looked in the right direction...

JONAH 2:1-4:

1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,

2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, *and* thou heardest my voice.

3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.

4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.

It matters where you pitch your prayer toward!

IS. 10:18:

“And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.”

In IS. 10:5-19, God gives the curse against them.

Verse 18 seems to hold the real assessment because it says... “they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.”

VIII. This word “standard bearer” signifies... “to lift up, to elevate, or to erect a flag or standard to public view, to call men to arms; to ‘call’ men together, or to indicate alarm and danger.”

How tragic to think that when you needed the standard bearer to be in their rightful place, somehow, they were taken down in the battle themselves!

He described their calamity as having nothing to pitch their tents toward!

Serious things can happen when the standard bearer is not in their rightful place! It doesn't just affect one person or just one group of persons... there are far-reaching effects that are many times enumerable.

2 Chron 26:

16 But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to *his* destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

17 And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, *that were* valiant men:

18 And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, *It appertaineth* not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither *shall it be* for thine honour from the LORD God.

19 Then Uzziah was wroth, and *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

20 And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he *was* leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

21 And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, *being* a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son *was* over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

Uzziah could certainly be likened to a standard bearer but watch what happened to him and his family when he “fainted!”

IX. This is an important message concerning leadership!

2 CHRON 27:

1 Jotham *was* twenty and five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also *was* Jerushah, the daughter of Zadok.
2 And he did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father Uzziah did: howbeit he entered not into the temple of the LORD. And the people did yet corruptly.

His son took over the throne and most all of the responsibilities of the Temple. However, the Bible says he never did enter the temple himself!

2 CHRON 28:

1 Ahaz *was* twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem: but he did not *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father:
2 For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made also molten images for Baalim.
3 Moreover he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom, and burnt his children in the fire, after the abominations of the heathen whom the LORD had cast out before the children of Israel.

Uzziah was the first to faint, and it led his son to have a distant relationship with the temple.

And it ultimately led his grandson so far away from the things of God that he was buying and selling idols and further desecrating the house of God.

When the standard bearer faints, we lose the ability to know where and in what direction to pitch the tents of our lives.

We simply cannot allow the standard bearers of our generation to faint; we need them way too much!

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