

URIAH'S THE HITTITE SPIRITUALITY

A Christian in Consumer Culture
Banska Bystrica, 23rd August 2015

2 Samuel 11:6-15 So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" ¹¹ Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." ¹² Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. ¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. ¹⁵ In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die."

וַיִּשְׁלַח דָּוִד אֶל-יֹאבָב שְׁלַח אֵלַי אֶת-אֲוִרְיָה הַחִתִּי וַיִּשְׁלַח יֹאבָב אֶת-אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-דָּוִד ⁷ וַיָּבֵא אֲוִרְיָה אֵלָיו וַיִּשְׂאֵל דָּוִד לְשָׁלוֹם יֹאבָב וְלְשָׁלוֹם הָעָם וְלְשָׁלוֹם הַמְּלָחָמָה ⁸ וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְאֲוִרְיָה רֵד לְבֵיתְךָ וְרַחֵץ רַגְלֶיךָ וַיֵּצֵא אֲוִרְיָה מִבַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ וַתֵּצֵא אַחֲרָיו מִשָּׂאת הַמֶּלֶךְ ⁹ וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֲוִרְיָה פֶתַח בַּיִת הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת כָּל-עַבְדֵי אֲדֹנָיו וְלֹא יָרַד אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ ¹⁰ וַיִּגְדּוּ לְדָוִד לֵאמֹר לֹא-יָרַד אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-אֲוִרְיָה הֲלוֹא מִדֶּרֶךְ אַתָּה בָּא מִדָּוֶעַ לֹא-יָרַדְתָּ אֶל-בֵּיתְךָ ¹¹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-דָּוִד הָאָרוֹן וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיְהוּדָה יֹשְׁבֵים בְּסֻכּוֹת וְאֲדֹנָי יֹאבָב וְעַבְדָּי אֲדֹנָי עַל-פְּנֵי הַשָּׂדֶה חֲנִים וְאֲנִי אָבוֹא אֶל-בֵּיתִי לֶאֱכֹל וּלְשָׁתוֹת וּלְשָׁכַב עִם-אִשְׁתִּי חִיךְ וְחִי נִפְשֶׁךָ אִם-אֶעֱשֶׂה אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה ¹² וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל-אֲוִרְיָה שֵׁב בְּזֶה גַם-הַיּוֹם וּמָחָר אֲשַׁלְּחֶךָ וַיֵּשֶׁב אֲוִרְיָה בִירוּשָׁלַם בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא וּמִמָּחָרָת ¹³ וַיִּקְרָא-לוֹ דָּוִד וַיֹּאכַל לִפְנָיו וַיִּשְׁכַּרְהוּ וַיֵּצֵא בְעָרֵב לְשָׁכַב בְּמִשְׁכְּבוֹ עִם-עַבְדָּי אֲדֹנָיו וְאֶל-בֵּיתוֹ לֹא יָרַד ¹⁴ וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַיִּכְתֹּב דָּוִד סֵפֶר אֶל-יֹאבָב וַיִּשְׁלַח בְּיַד אֲוִרְיָה ¹⁵ וַיִּכְתֹּב בְּסֵפֶר לֵאמֹר הֲבֵנו אֶת-אֲוִרְיָה אֶל-מוֹל פְּנֵי הַמְּלָחָמָה הַחֲזָקָה וְשַׁבְתֶּם מֵאַחֲרָיו וְנָכַח וּמָת

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0. INTRODUCTION: URIAH AND CHRISTIANITY

0.1. THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

- **Luke 11:31-32** The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of **Solomon**, and behold, something **greater than Solomon** is here.³² The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.
- *a minore ad maius* (From the smaller or more specific to the larger or more general.)
- Uriah fought for Israel – we fight for Jesus; Uriah felt for co-fighters – we should feel for fellow Christians; the cause there was a city – the cause here is eternal salvation

0.2. CONSUMERISM & SPIRITUALITY

We have to be careful not to neglect the **spiritual reality** planted in us by God. ...It is a great thing to have **something to neglect in your life**: a great thing for your moral character to have something to snub. “The expulsive power of a new affection”—that is what Christianity supplies. The Spirit of God on the basis of Redemption gives us something else to think about. Are we going to think about it?¹

- “...fasting in its true nature means to fast from everything that is good until the **appointments of God in my soul** are accepted.”²
- **Dan 9:3** I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with **fasting** and **sackcloth** and **ashes**.

0.2.1. THE DANGERS OF CONSUMERISM

- “dwelling in unrealities” (CHAMBERS)
- SHELLEY, B. & SHELLEY, M. *Consumer Church*, (“Can Evangelicals Win the World without Losing their Souls?”)³
- easy instant Christianity “We’ve taken out all the fuss and all the work.”
- prosperity gospel

0.2.2. THE DANGERS OF ASCETICISM

[CHAMBERS] The danger of the Higher Christian Life movements is that the emphasis is put not on the regenerating power of the grace of God, but on individual **consecration**, individual **fasting** and **prayer**, individual **devotion** to God. The apostle Paul sums up individual human effort under the guise of religion as things which have “a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body” (Col 2:23). It is simply individualism veneered over with religious phraseology—“What has Jesus done for me? I have done it all for myself; I did it by prayer, by fasting, by consecration.”⁴

0.3. THE HITTITES

0.3.1. NATION

- “no such people as the Hittites ever existed” (critics before the archaeological discovery)
- “**Thousand Gods of Hatti**,” manifested in treaty lists, those agreements sworn with vassal rulers or foreign states. In some examples the **Storm-God** has his attendants as further witnesses, namely, the bulls **Seri** and **Hurri** and the mountains Namni and Hazzi. Some Babylonian divinities are then included, among them being Ea, god of fresh waters, and Marduk.

¹ CHAMBERS, O. *The moral foundation of life*,

² CHAMBERS, O. *The Psychology of Redemption*, p. 1077-8

³ InterVarsity Press, 1992.

⁴ CHAMBERS, O. *Biblical ethics*,

- "The presence of Hittites in the narratives of Israelite beginnings is thus rhetorical and ideological rather than historical." John Van Seters.⁵ ... There was a time when historians scoffed at the name Hittite(s) in the OT since it was not known outside the Bible

0.3.2. *URIAH*

- אֵיךָ "the LORD is my light"

1. LOVE AND DUTIES

- **Lk 17:10** So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, 'We are unworthy servants; **we have only done what was our duty.**'"

1.1. RELIGION – DOING ONE'S DUTIES

- the elder brother → *the religion of duties* – no excitement in it
- **Lk 15:29** 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might **celebrate with my friends.** (...son, you are always **with me**)

1.2. LOVE DOES MORE THAN ONE'S DUTY

- **Rev 2:3-4** I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that **you have abandoned the love you had at first.**
- **Rom 13:8** **Owe no one anything,** except to love each other,

2. COMPASSION AND DISCIPLINE

- The Reformation has largely done away with *asceticism*. No merits in self-affliction. But the Roman world was changed influenced by the difference in the lifestyles of the Christians.

2.1. COMPASSION – SOCIAL ACTIVISM

- **James 2:16-17** ...one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? ¹⁷ So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

2.2. COMPASSION – IDENTIFICATION

- **Rom 12:15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.
- **Job 2:13** And they **sat with him on the ground** seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great.
- **Ps 35:13-14** But I, when they were sick- I **wore sackcloth**; I afflicted myself with **fasting**; I prayed with head bowed on my chest. ¹⁴ I **went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother**; as one who laments his **mother**, I bowed down in **mourning**.

3. MORALITY AND CORRUPT LEADERSHIP

- **Mt 18:7** Woe to the **world** for temptations to sin!
- **2Sa 21:17** Then David's men swore to him, "**You shall no longer go out with us to battle,** lest you quench the **lamp** of **Israel.**"

3.1. OBEDIENCE OF EVIL – SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY

- obedience as *rebellion* – "see, how stupid you are"
- **Dt 32:50-51** die on the mountain which you go up, and be gathered to your people, as Aaron your brother died in Mount Hor and was gathered to his people, ⁵¹ because you broke faith with me in the midst of the people of Israel at the waters of Meribah-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin, and because **you did not** treat me as holy in the midst of the people of Israel.

⁵ <http://www.biblearchaeology.org/post/2011/11/08/Hittites-and-Hethites-Etymological-Conundrum.aspx>

3.2. OBEDIENCE WITH LIMITS

- **Acts 5:29** “We must obey God rather than men.”
- **Dan 6:10** When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously
- “in the world – not out of the world”
- **Ecc 10:20** Even in your thought, do not curse the king,...

4. TO REMEMBER

- Consumer lifestyle makes spiritual reality unreal.
- Access to reality is only through sacrifice – the Cross of Christ & self-denial.
- To be useful in the service of God you must not make excuses against your leader or your environment.