

Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (*1 Cor. 1.18*).

Edifying the Body of Christ (*Eph. 4.10-16*)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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Egypt Again? Oh, No!

What is happening in your Egypt? Lord, I have had enough Egypt experiences – too many valleys where I could not feel Your presence, too many attacks by the enemy: criticism, opposition, family problems, illness, heavy responsibility, stress on every side. The forces of the enemy come against me; they are too much for me to fight. But wait! If only you could see your situation through God's eyes . . .

When God told Israel (Jacob) to fear not to go down into Egypt, He knew that through the trials and hardships of bondage Israel would become a mighty nation – stronger than their enemies (Gen 46.3). Then the Lord took them through the wilderness where they experienced more difficulties and battles with the enemy, but where also they would experience God's supernatural power as He fought with and for them again and again.

Saints, when we face the enemy, God goes with us into our trials and battles; and He fights the enemy with us and for us. If only we could see the full picture! – as did Elisha and his servant.

When the king of Syria and his host came to fight against Israel, God used Elisha to inform the king of Israel of Syria's location. This prompted the king of Syria to come against Elisha. There stood Elisha and his servant – alone – with the host of Syria surrounding them. Elisha spoke these words to his fearful servant, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." Read what happened in II Kings 6.17-18.

And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *[was]* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.

Let us look at God's faithfulness to His people throughout the Bible. There are many examples of God fighting for His people – too many to include in this message.

"...When the enemy comes in like a flood, the **Spirit of the Lord** shall lift up a standard against him" (Isa 59.19).

You know Jesus as your Lord and Savior. Keep your hearts, motives, and thoughts

pure by yielding to the continual cleansing work of the Holy Spirit. Seek a closer relationship with Him; walk in obedience to His Word; and be encouraged knowing that He, your God, fights for you.

Hold on, and trust the Lord Jesus Christ in His wisdom to bring you through it all. Read what God **commands** Joshua: "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God */is/* with thee whithersoever thou goest" (Jos 1.9). Brother, Sister, Hold on. Let me say it again, be encouraged knowing that He, your God, fights for you.

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Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ

Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).

When Israel left Egypt, God not only gave direction and protection with a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, then parted the Red Sea, but God, Himself, removed Pharaoh's chariot wheels in the middle of the Red Sea thus destroying the enemy (Ex 14.23-30).

When Israel fought the Amorites, God caused the sun and moon to stand still giving them more daylight time to fight the enemy; but God, Himself, killed more of the Amorites with hailstones than did Israel with the sword (Jos 10.11-14). Notice that the hailstones hit only the enemy, not the Israelites! Exciting?

In some cases, God caused the enemy to hear an army advancing toward them; the enemy fled in panic. It may have been the army that Elisha and his servant saw, the Army of the Lord in II Kings 6.

Syria besieged Samaria causing great famine in the land. Four lepers, who decided to surrender to the Syrians rather than die of the famine, upon reaching the Syrian camp, found it deserted. God had made the Syrians hear a noise of a host of chariots and horses, and they fled in panic leaving all their tents and provisions behind (II K 7).

The enemy Philistines "spread themselves" in the Valley of Rephaim against Israel. God instructed David to go behind them and wait until he heard a "going" in the mulberry trees, then go against them. Some commentaries explain this "going" as the sound of angels moving the mulberry leaves which sounded like an army approaching the Philistines, and it brought confusion to them (II Sam 5.22-25). David obeyed God's instructions and won the battle.

When King Jehoshaphat and Israel faced an army of the three nations of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, he appointed singers to go before his army to sing and praise the Lord. There must have been a powerful presence of the Holy Spirit in their worship. When they arrived at the enemy's camp, the enemies were all dead; God had set ambushments against them, and the three nations had turned on each other (II Chr 20).

Gideon went against the Midianites with pitchers, lamps, and trumpets! (Jud 7). They obeyed God's instructions and all the host of the enemy ... "ran and cried, and fled...and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow..." (vv 21-22). The Israelites then went after the enemy with their swords.

David told Goliath, "...the battle is the Lord's," then he killed Goliath with a slingshot and a single stone – guided by the Lord, I am sure (I Sam 17.47).

Look in the New Testament at God's miracles for His people.

Peter, in prison for serving the Lord Jesus was bound with two chains and sleeping between two soldiers when an angel hit him on his side and told him to arise and put on his clothes and sandals, then the angel led him out through the iron gate which opened of its own accord! The church had been praying for him without ceasing – perhaps it is called an all-night prayer meeting to which Christ's Holy Church was once accustomed – in earlier years of my life (Acts 12).

Paul and Silas in prison, sore from having been beaten, their feet fastened in stocks, prayed and sang praises to God at midnight. God delivered them by an earthquake which shook the foundation of the prison, opened the door, and loosed the bands of all the prisoners (Acts 16.19-26).

Remember Paul, stoned and left for dead, but God raised him up to continue the ministry to which he was called (Acts 14.19, 20).

Are God's people in the above examples more righteous than others of God's people? No, David had sins for which he repented, and Peter had to repent for denying Jesus.

Did they have more courage than others? No. God answered two fleeces for Gideon, then told him to slip into the enemy camp and hear what they were saying about him – before Gideon had courage to go to battle.

When Jehoshaphat was faced with the army of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, he was afraid, but he knew from whom came his strength (II Chr 20.3, 4).

Were they immune to discouragement? No.

What about Elijah? He became so discouraged that he asked God to take him. He thought he was the only one still serving and obeying God (I K 19.9-10).

They were people like you and I, but when they cried out to the Lord and trusted God, He brought them through victoriously. Jesus is still doing miracles for His people. While on earth, He healed hundreds; he stilled the stormy seas for His fearful disciples; and He miraculously fed thousands of hungry people. He still performs miracles today. There are some things that are common in the experiences of His people above. First, they cried out to God for His help and leadership. They trusted their God. Secondly, they walked in obedience to God's will and instructions.

The Lord Himself will go to battle against the enemy when we are seeking Him, serving Him, and walking in obedience to His Holy Word. Jesus knows our struggles and fears; He feels our pain; He is our high priest Who is touched by our infirmities (Heb 4.14-16).

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *[our]* profession.

For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *[we are, yet]* without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

We are not exempt from the attacks of Satan, but we may come boldly to the throne of grace for mercy and help in time of trouble. In some cases, God's people were allowed to see God intervening on their behalf. We do not always see His hand at work in our lives, but we receive encouragement from the examples in His Word. He said He would never leave us nor forsake us; we can trust Jesus not only to be our salvation but also our shield, our strength, and our victory.