

TAKE UP THY SWORD †

A newsletter with hope and encouragement from the Holy Bible

For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword... (Hebrews 4:16)

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Power to Prevail

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might... Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand (Ephesians 6:10, 13).

When I want to listen to a CD at home, I just push the power button and expect the radio to come on because it's always plugged in. Why would I disconnect the cord from the outlet each night if I know that I'll be using it again soon? Well if God is our power source, why do we sometimes 'unplug' ourselves from His divine presence? If we are submersed in His Word and desire true intimacy with His holiness, then the security guaranteed in Psalm 91 can be manifested in our lives. Remember this promise about the vine and the branches:

If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you (John 15:7).

During the dark times, everyone wants to quote Isaiah 54:17 and say, "No weapon that is formed against [me] shall prosper"; but we forget that the end of that scripture states that this only applies to "the servants of the Lord"! So how do we know if we have been a "good and faithful servant" (Matt 25:21)? Jesus said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments". When we obey Him, we reap the benefits found in Deuteronomy 28 (listed right before the punishments for disobedience); in addition, we're equipped for battle to defeat the devil:

Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19).

One of the definitions of prevail is 'to prove superior in power, influence, or strength'. Here are a few examples in which the bible clearly announces our right and ability to be overcomers:

- *For the Lord your God is He that goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you (Deut 20:4).*
- *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me (Phil 4:13).*
- *In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression; for thou shalt not fear: and from terror; for it shall not come near thee (Isa 54:14).*
- *And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground (Mal 3:11).*
- *If God be for us, who can be against us? (Rom 8:31).*

Let's remind ourselves that only "with God nothing shall be impossible" (Luke 1:37) as we review Samson's single-handed, bittersweet victory over the Philistines:

Entice him, and see wherein his great strength lieth, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him... (Judg 16:5).

In the 13th chapter of Judges, an angel told Samson's parents that he would "be a Nazarite (no haircut/strong drink) unto God from the womb" (Judg 13:5). Because the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, Samson was able to tear apart a lion with his bare hands, kill over 1,000 men with a donkey's jawbone, and easily loose himself from any physical bondage. God had him marry a Philistine woman while they were ruling over Israel in order to have an advantage over them; but Samson allowed his wife to "entice" him into revealing a riddle he was using to trap 30 of their men who attended the wedding feast. Even his own people of Judah tried to bind him and turn him over to their enemies after he completed another "great slaughter" (Judg 15:8) of vengeance. Then Samson fell in love with Delilah, and his adversaries tried again to find a strategy to overtake him. Samson used his wisdom to deceive Delilah at first, but she eventually wore him down as "she pressed him daily with her words" (Judg 16:16). Samson told her that the secret of his strength [and connection to God's power] was in his hair; so when he fell asleep in her lap, they shaved his head, plucked out his eyes, and put him in prison. After his hair began to grow back, Samson asked the Lord to restore his might one last time so he could push over the pillars of the house of their idolatry where 3,000 Philistines were gathered to mock him. "So the dead which he slew at this death were more than they which he slew in his life" (Judg 16:30).

With God on our side, we can say with confidence that "mine enemy doth NOT triumph over me" (Ps 41:11)!

THUS SAITH THE LORD, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isa 41:10).

PRAYER: *The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Ps 27:1).*

"...Be encouraged in the law of the Lord" (2 Chron 31:4):

1 Samuel 17:37; 2 Chronicles 14:11; Psalm 144:1; Isaiah 59:19; Jeremiah 1:19; Romans 12:19; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10; 2 Timothy 1:6-7; 1 John 4:4; Revelation 12:10-11

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