

Christian Persecution And Getting Ready For Battle

We had the experience of going 24 hours without power this weekend. It reminded me of how dependent we are on the supply of electricity as well as how much we take it for granted. No lights, no hot water, in fact, no water at all, no appliances, washer, dryer, dishwasher, no heat! All that we take for granted was suddenly not available. This particular storm came without much warning (we were told there would be no snow or ice), so I was surprised by the intensity of the wind which brought down power lines. The old Boy Scout motto is cogent, 'Be prepared.'

We face a battlefield in our country these days; a battle for the soul of our nation. Will we repent and turn back to the One True God as Sovereign Ruler of our land, and therefore His Law and His Will as the supreme good in our country? Or will we continue down the path of pagan deconstruction of all things good, righteous, just and holy?

Around the world the church of Jesus Christ faces intensifying spiritual warfare:

Morning Star News reported that after Christians in Southern India this year distributed 170 Gideon Bibles, Hindu extremists issued harsh threats to them before snatching their car keys and stealing the remaining Bibles from their car and setting those Bibles on fire in the Singutam village. On January 21st one Hindu issued an ominous warning on video to Christians. *"You are useless people, you will give a Bible to whoever you want. How dare you, you shameless idiots. From now on if any of you distribute Bibles we will attack you brutally. How dare you promote Christianity."*

Video of the sermon

What we as Christians need to do is be prepared for this battle. As the history of warfare repeatedly demonstrates careful advance preparation is the key to victory. It is helpful to look at those who have succeeded in battle before us, those whose careful preparation laid the foundation for victory. In Joshua we find just such a model. The last two weeks we studied the crossing of the Jordan River and now we see what top priority on the other side was.

Joshua 5:1-9 "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel."

Notice the fear and trepidation of the pagans in face of the Army of the Lord seeing the mighty power of God. One of the things we must never forget is the reality that, if God is before us, it doesn't matter who is against us. Yes, we face powerful enemies, both in the visible realm the forces of wickedness, atheism, idolatrous belief systems and so on, but even more notably the invisible powers, the host of evil, Satan and his minions arrayed against us. If we were to make those enemies, their power, their prominence, and cunning our focus we would cower in fear and shrink from the battle field. But we should not fear; indeed, our enemies here on earth and even in the invisible realm, were they to perceive the way things actually are, they would tremble in fear and trepidation just like the king and inhabitants of Jericho and all other cities in the Promised Land did. Those people heard the reality of what God did in drying up the Jordan at flood stage allowing all Israel to cross over. No doubt they thought they were safe from war with Israel if the flood stage remained – usually a month or more. But now they saw that the God of Israel could do miraculous things

against which they had no defense.

The challenge we face in our day is that Satan has masterfully orchestrated a denial of miracles. People have adopted the materialistic world view that says miracles are not possible and that God, if He exists at all, cannot perform miracles.

For example, many people follow the philosopher David Hume who wrote in his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, “*A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience as can be imagined ...*”

Notice his premise, “firm unalterable experience has established these laws.” The Laws of the Universe are not established by God – he claimed – but by human beings based upon their own observations and their own experience. So, it is entirely a man centered worldview, believing that man is the measure of all things and man’s experience is all that is needed to establish truth. But what if something happened when man is not present, that cannot be taken into evidence when establishing these manmade laws? And what about all that happened before man came into existence? So, the evolutionist believing the universe to be billions of years old admits that man has been part of this a fraction of that time span. This means that Hume is very short-sighted in his worldview. Hume goes on to speculate, “*it is a miracle that a dead man should come to life; because that has never been observed, in any age or country. There must, therefore, be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appellation.*” He outright denies the 500 eyewitness testimonies of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This view of the world is out of touch with reality. There is a God in heaven who has all power, who established all

the Laws of the Universe, they are His Law and He is free to make alterations on the spot; to stop the Jordan river from flowing its normal course, to bring down the walls of Jericho, to even make the sun stand still in the sky, to raise His Son from the dead. We don't even need to look for natural explanations of these miracles. Many have expended ink and sweat to explain the Jordan stopped up by an earthquake, or perhaps the pole shift was underway on the day the sun stopped – or in other words, the earth's rotation had a hiccup causing a delay in the sunset. Not that all these might be explanations of how the miracle took place, but they miss the point, the point that God is Sovereign over all His creation.

The amazing thing to me is the arrogance of our modern society. The ancients who we often despise as backward or ignorant were much more in touch with the reality that there is a supernatural realm and that miracles can and do happen. Jericho believed, the Amorites believed as well as the Canaanites, it is only the foolish moderns who refuse to believe.

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