

Fear Not, the Cavalry Is Coming!



by Rolaant McKenzie

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Many times, in old Western novels or films, the phrase “Here comes the cavalry!” was said with a shout of relief by those in besieged forts or outposts when horse-mounted soldiers of the U.S. Cavalry appeared in time to turn the tide of the battle into victory. The phrase continues to be used to describe an individual, group, or something that arrives in time to rescue people from overwhelmingly difficult situations.

In Peter Jackson’s 2002 cinematic adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, Théoden, king of Rohan, evacuated his people to the Hornburg, a great sanctuary stronghold nestled in the fortified mountain gorge of Helm’s Deep. Saruman, having turned to evil and allied with the Dark Lord Sauron, had marshaled a 10,000-strong army of genetically enhanced orcs called Uruk-hai and sent them to conquer Rohan and kill every man, woman, and child.

Aragorn, who was with Théoden, aided in the preparation for the imminent battle with the Uruk-hai, whose host could be seen in the distance closing in on the stronghold. The women and children were sent into the mountain caves behind the Hornburg. All able-bodied men, ranging from those who had seen too many winters to those who had seen too few, were upon the wall of the stronghold, fortifying what defenses they could and preparing for the Uruk-hai onslaught.

While the defenders, with their families behind them, sought to muster their courage, most of them saw the situation as hopeless and thought they would not live through the night. But Aragorn remembered the words Gandalf told him four days earlier at Edoras: "Look to my coming at first light on the fifth day. At dawn, look to the east." With this in mind, he encouraged them.

The Uruk-hai army swarmed into the mountain gorge, and though the defenders fought bravely throughout the night, it managed to breach the wall, penetrate the main gate, and overrun the stronghold. Théoden, Aragorn, and the remaining defenders retreated to the keep and did their best to fortify the door. But the Uruk-hai's battering ram steadily made progress in breaching it. The women and children in the caves heard it and wept, believing that their destruction was near. Théoden said in despair that the fortress was taken and that the fight was over.

Aragorn looked up at a window in the keep and saw daylight emerging, remembering that it was the fifth day. Filled with expectation at this good sign, he encouraged Théoden and his men not to give up hope but to ride out to meet the enemy without fear. As the door was broken down and the Uruk-hai streamed into the keep, the king sounded the charge, and the defenders fought them to the fortress gate, where a mass of them awaited them.

As Aragorn, Théoden, and the defenders looked east at the early morning sunlight shining on the top of the hill leading to the gorge, Gandalf appeared dressed in white and riding a white horse. Along with him was a host of the riders of Rohan. Gandalf led them in a charge down the hill into the stunned mass of Uruk-hai fighters, thoroughly defeating them and saving the defenders of the Hornburg and their families. The remaining Uruk-hai fled in terror into the nearby Fangorn Forest, where they perished.

During the time of the judges in Israel, the people enjoyed forty years of rest after they had been delivered by God through Deborah and Barak from their Canaanite enemies that had oppressed them for twenty years (Judges 4-5). But during this time of peace and prosperity, Israel once again fell into complacency and unfaithfulness to God by worshiping Baal. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian, whose hosts would consume the produce of the land and the animals like locusts, leaving Israel impoverished and in starvation. On the brink of extinction, Israel remembered God and cried out to Him for deliverance (Judges 6:1-6).

The Lord appeared to Gideon, who was threshing wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites, who would take it if it was threshed in the normal way – in the open on a hilltop for the wind to blow away the chaff. He addressed him as a valiant warrior and commissioned him to deliver Israel from the power of Midian, promising that He would be with him.

Understanding the overwhelming and devastating power of Midian and his own insignificance, Gideon sought a sign that it was really God who was sending him, and the Lord provided it (Judges 6:16-27). Later, still with fear and doubt in his mind, he asked God to grant him another sign. First, to make the morning dew remain on a woolen fleece he put out on the threshing floor but keep the ground around it dry; second, to cause the morning dew to rest on the ground but keep the fleece dry. The Lord mercifully granted Gideon's request (Judges 6:36-40).

When Gideon gathered an army of 32,000 men to go against the several times larger Midian host, the Lord told him that there were too many; otherwise, Israel may boast and claim that deliverance came by their own hands. The Lord told Gideon that He would grant victory over the Midianites with just 300 men (Judges 7:1-8).

Realizing his nervousness and fear regarding the seemingly

impossible task ahead, the Lord graciously gave Gideon another sign to bolster his faith in Him for victory and deliverance. He told him to go down to the edge of the Midian camp at night with his servant and listen to the words they say. Gideon did as the Lord said.

“When Gideon came, behold, a man was relating a dream to his friend. And he said, ‘Behold, I had a dream; a loaf of barley bread was tumbling into the camp of Midian, and it came to the tent and struck it so that it fell, and turned it upside down so that the tent lay flat.’ His friend replied, ‘This is nothing less than the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel; God has given Midian and all the camp into his hand.’” (Judges 7:13-14)

Encouraged and strengthened by these words, Gideon worshiped the Lord and returned to encourage his men. When he sounded the charge and the 300 rushed down into the enemy encampment, the Lord caused confusion among the enemy so that they turned their swords on one another as they fled in terror.

God brought a great victory and deliverance to Israel through a humble, insignificant, fearful man by turning him into a valiant warrior who came to trust in Him through the signs He provided. When Israel wanted to make Gideon their king, he refused, saying, “I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you.” (Judges 8:22-23)

As we hear, read, or watch the news, many of us realize that we live in a world that grows increasingly dangerous and wicked, where we are often threatened by very powerful evil people and organizations that seek our enslavement and destruction. They eat away at our substance by taking away what we can have and continually increasing the cost of living, much like the Midianites did against Israel. They seek to frighten us into submission with threats of annihilation through war and disease that they engineer. Because of this, we may feel like we are under a hopeless siege and tempted to

give in to despair.

In *The Lord of the Rings*, Gandalf gave Aragorn the sign of sunrise on the fifth day, indicating that he would bring help in time to save the people in the Hornburg, and this encouraged him to persevere through the night and encourage the defenders to continue fighting even when it looked hopeless. God gave Gideon signs that encouraged him and his 300 men to fight and obtain victory over and deliverance from a seemingly invincible enemy.

The Lord Jesus has given us the signs of fulfilled prophecy, demonstrating that He was the Messiah come into the world to reconcile lost humanity to God through His perfect life, complete atoning death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead. He graciously grants salvation to all who trust in Him from the overwhelming enemies of sin, death, and eternal separation from God in hell.

Because Jesus is the risen Savior, we can trust His word that He will return on a white horse with the host of heaven as King of kings and Lord of lords to crush the oppressive evil world system and set up His permanent kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace (Revelation 19:11-21).

"There will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. **But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.**" (Luke 21:25-28)

Do not lose heart or succumb to fear. The signs are there. Believe in the Lord and continue faithfully serving Him come what may (Galatians 6:9), sharing the gospel message with

others so that they too may receive salvation, encouragement, and hope.

Because of Calvary, the cavalry of the Lord Jesus Christ is certainly coming!

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