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WHEN GOD GOES TO WAR!

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 114
HEBREWS 11:34

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HEBREWS 11:34 "Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens."

We continue our study of these interesting asyndetons. (An asyndeton is a clause joined to another clause without the usual conjunction used to link them together.)

"Quenched the violence of fire." The word for "quenched" is the aorist, active, indicative of sbenummi and it means to extinguish, to put out, to neutralize. It means to neutralize the fire of its power. This is the story of Daniel 3 and the experience of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. So we now add these three men to our list of super grace heroes. This is a constative aorist and gathers into one lump all that happened in that fiery furnace. The word translated "violence" is from dunamis and it means the inherent power of fire. So this phrase says, "Neutralized the power of fire."

1. NO MATTER HOW MUCH POWER ANY LEADER POSSESSES HE CANNOT CONTROL THE POWER OF HISTORY.

Genghis Khan had great power in the world but he did not control the course of history. The same is true of Alexander the Great, and Adolph Hitler, but none of these individually or collectively controlled history. The Communists of Russia and China still have this lesson to learn. JESUS CHRIST CONTROLS HISTORY. In this story of the fiery furnace, the man Nebuchadnezzar was the ruler of the Babylonian Empire. He was the head of gold in the statue about which he dreamed, but he didn't control history. Fame and power can't be bought. God holds history in his hands. Neither arrogance or the abuse of power can change history. When men make an impact on history, it is because they are in some way related to the Word of God.

No one ever made a greater impact on world history than Noah, but his work was related to the will of God for the world and for the human race. The same is true of Abraham and Moses and Isaiah and Paul. Julius Caesar had a great impact on world history, but his work was related to the laws of establishment by which he related the Roman Empire to the laws of history.

2. YOU CANNOT BUILD YOUR HAPPINESS ON THE UNHAPPINESS OF ANOTHER.

This is proved by Nebuchadnezzar and his relationship with the three men he threw into the fiery furnace. When people try to hurt other people, they always end up hurting themselves.

3. THE BELIEVER MUST LIVE HIS LIFE AS UNTO THE LORD.

No believer can afford to be disturbed by the opinions of others. Don't be shaken by what other people think of you. (Col. 3:16-17)

(I am very glad that the same thing does not happen to my critics that happened to Miriam or Immanuel Church would be filled with lepers.)

This is the way to neutralize the fire, live your own life as unto the Lord.

4. THE DEVIL MAKES IT EASY FOR THE BELIEVER TO COMPROMISE THE WORD OF GOD.
 You see, all Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego had to do was just bend their knees a little bit and bow down to a chunk of gold. They could have compromised so very easily. They could have rationalized about it and could have said, "It won't hurt to kneel this once. We are too important to the kingdom. Because of our position, we have such a great chance to witness in the palace." But anyone can rationalize in this fashion. But they knew that human government had no right to violate their volition and therefore, they refused to bow. They stood on doctrine resident in their souls and doctrine made them great patriots.

5. SUPER GRACE BELIEVERS NEVER DICTATE TO THE LORD ANY COURSE OF ACTION.
 This is brought out in Daniel 3:17 and 18. Doctrine recognizes the power of God to deliver without superimposing upon God our human volition. They didn't seek to bribe God to deliver them.

6. SUPER GRACE BELIEVERS NEVER MAKE SUGGESTIONS TO GOD ABOUT WHAT HE OUGHT TO DO.
 Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not suggest to God that he ought to deliver them. They stood on the basis of doctrine resident in their souls. I think this is a great tribute to Daniel for he is the one who had taught these men the doctrine they knew. Super grace believers always recognize the sovereignty of God as well as their own human freedom. If you are ever thrown into a fiery furnace like having cancer or something similar, how are you going to act? Are you going to fall apart? Are you going to wring your hands? Or are you going to trust in the Lord? Remember, you cannot dictate to God, so leave everything in the hands of God. They refused to compromise God by worshipping a golden image. They lived by doctrine and stood upon the sovereign decision of God.

7. THE PRIDE AND ARROGANCE OF POLITICAL RULERS OFTEN LEADS TO THE DESTRUCTION OF MILITANT SOLDIERS.
 Military heroes are often destroyed by politicians. The best soldiers in the Babylonian army were burned alive and destroyed because of the wicked determination of Nebuchadnezzar. (Daniel 3:19-22) Nebuchadnezzar was filled with mental attitude sins. These faithful soldiers lost their lives because of the wicked determination of one Nebuchadnezzar. Soldiers are often sacrificed upon the whims of politicians. This happened in Vietnam.

8. POLITICIANS REPEAT THEIR SAME MISTAKES IN DIFFERENT FORMS.
 Nebuchadnezzar quit trying to push his policies over on the people because of the salvation of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. But he went to the other extreme and tried to make all the people worship Jesus Christ. This was just as bad as making the people bow down to a chunk of gold. He had the right person to worship, but he forced worship of him in the wrong way. We want people to believe in Jesus Christ but in the Angelic Conflict, it must be free will all the way. No coercion must ever be used to try to bring people to Christ. Government must never be used to coerce people to be believers. It must be volition apart from works.

9. UNCOMPROMISING SUPER GRACE BELIEVERS ARE DELIVERED AND PROMOTED.
Now this is the whole message of the neutralizing of the power of fire.

The Sixth Asyndeton

They "escaped the edge of the sword." The word for "escaped" is the aorist, active, indicative of pheugo. This is a culminative aorist and is used to describe escaping death in combat. These people were completely outnumbered, but they stood their ground and refused to run away. A running troop is always an easy target. They themselves received this deliverance. 2 Chronicles 18:31 gives Jehoshaphat as an illustration of this. The enemy surrounded him and he cried out unto the Lord and the Lord helped him. It says that Jesus Christ and Elohim saved him. We have the accusative plural of the greek word stoma and it means "the mouths of the sword." Maximum doctrine in the soul delivered the military man in a desperate combat situation.

The Seventh Asyndeton

"Out of weakness were made strong." "Out of weakness" is from apo asthenia and it means "from total helplessness." In principle, this describes every believer in the Devil's world. We are all totally helpless. Next we have "were made strong" and this is the aorist, passive, indicative of dunamaoo. This is a reference to any super grace believer who is helpless but who has maximum doctrine in his soul. He received this strength through consistent positive volition. This is the thing Paul faced in the thorn in his flesh in 2 Cor. 12:9-10. The grace of God kept on being sufficient for Paul. We have this same word for weakness astheneia. "When I am weak, then I am strong" is the grace principle.

Isaiah was a man like this and this passage probably refers to him in 701 B.C. when the Assyrians were invading his country. They were in a desperate situation and Isaiah came to the front and encouraged the people and Christ came in the right moment of time and destroyed 185,000 in one morning.

The Eighth Asyndeton

"Waxed valient in fight." Now waxed can mean lots of things. This is an aorist, passive, indicative of ginomai and it means to become something they were not before. We have the predicate nominative masculine plural of the noun ischuros and it means strong, mighty, powerful. Then we have en polemos and this means "in battle." So it means "Became courageous and strong in battle." It refers to those who persisted in taking in doctrine. All the men who were used to set the land free are included in this group. Jesus gave the highest honor he almost ever gave when he talked about the Centurion. He healed his boy and gave him salvation also. This man was thirty miles away from his station where his boy was dying. He told Jesus "Heal my son, for I know you can do it." Jesus told him that he would go with him to his house and do it. The Centurion told Jesus that he understood the principle of authority, that he had men under him who obeyed his commands and he knew that all Jesus had to do was say the word and his boy would be healed. As a result of faith like this, Jesus gave this man one of the greatest compliments he ever gave anyone. This is recorded in Luke 7:1-10. This phrase "becoming strong in battle" has to do with the military.

The Ninth Asyndeton

"Turned to flight the armies of the aliens" is also a military term. "Turned to flight" is the aorist, active, indicative of klino and it means to cause to fall back. This is culminative aorist and views the activity in its entirety and pictures the final result of victory in battle. This is the result of faithfulness in military life. We have already seen the names of Gideon and Barak and Sampson and Jephthae and David who all illustrate this clause. The word for "armies" is from parembole and it means a fortified camp, an army in action. The word "aliens" comes from allotrios and it means the enemy. So this clause says, "Put to flight the invading armies of the enemy."

So we have had three phrases here that refer to the military--

Escaped from the mouths of the sword.

Became courageous in battle.

Put to flight the invading armies of the enemies.

THE DOCTRINE OF WARFARE

What does the Bible really say about the military and about warfare? Is war wrong? Does God ever sanction warfare? Let us examine this doctrine from scripture.

1. THE CONCEPT OF WARFARE AS TAUGHT IN THE WORD OF GOD.

- a. In spite of man's efforts to bring peace throughout the ages, warfare will exist until the Millennium. We are about 2,000 years into the Church Age and how long it will last, we do not know. But when the Church Age ends, and then we revert to the Age of Israel and the seven year Tribulation runs its course, Christ will then return and will defeat the enemies at Armageddon, and then he will set up his Millennial reign, and at that time, war will come to an end. Jesus said this in Matthew 24:4 and Matthew 24:6. There will be hot wars and cold wars. Jesus said, "These things must take place." Warfare is an extension of the Angelic Conflict and the old sin nature. Look at Matthew 24:7. Therefore a wise nation will be prepared in the military.
- b. The exception to warfare will be the Millennial reign of Christ. This will be the last dispensation of history. Christ will reign for 1,000 years in perfect environment and in this period there will be no warfare. Isaiah 2:4-5 tells us this. Liberals try to quote this for today but it applies to the Millennium. Man can't improve environment and produce a warless world, but Christ can.
- c. Man will not accomplish in the Church Age or in the Tribulation that which only Christ can accomplish in the Millennium. The abolishing of war belongs to Jesus Christ, just like the solution of social problems belongs to Jesus Christ, just as the solving of life's problems belongs to Jesus Christ.
- d. The Bible says that warfare is a bona fide phase of human history. (Ecclesiastes 3:8, Numbers 21:14)
- e. There are some misunderstandings about warfare. (Matt. 26:52) Those who draw the sword must perish by the sword is referring to drawing the sword in crime. Criminals who commit murder should be executed. Jesus didn't want Peter to kill a Roman soldier and perish from capital punishment because he had work for him to do in the world, and therefore, he told him to put up his sword and not commit a crime.

- f. The word "sword" refers to capital punishment in Romans 13:4. It does not refer to the military. (Don't make the mistake and say that you know World War III will be Armageddon. It may be and it may not be.)
2. WE HAVE THE CONCEPT OF THE MILITARY IN SCRIPTURE.
- a. Under the laws of divine establishment, all freedom comes from military victory. The law for preserving the human race in freedom is warfare. (The United Nations cannot bring peace to the world. Only Christ can.)
- b. There are two factors involved in the protection of a national entity in sovereignty and freedom.
- (1) The spiritual factor A good national army. (Neh. 4:8-9) There were four enemy nations that surrounded the Jews-- The Samaritans, The Ammonites, The Arabs, and the Philistines. But all four put together couldn't stop the Jews. We read, "We made intercession to our God." No nation can survive unless the Lord Jesus Christ permits it to survive.
- (2) A military factor (Nehemiah 4:13-15) Nehemiah, a great general, got his army together and protected the people as they built the wall. They used swords, spears and bows. Warfare is here used of God to get the work of God done. Thus we have "Fight in battle" and this was the will of God for them to do this.
- c. The failure of the military on the battlefield indicates lack of training--a lack of respect for discipline. It also shows a lack of spiritual incentive for freedom.
- d. The failure of the military indicates the weakness of character of the people of the nation. The military is an index to the character of the nation. (Illustration--The Victorian era in England.)
- e. The Jewish failure when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem can be attributed to the spiritual decline of the people. Jeremiah's whole book tells the spiritual decline of Israel that set them up for defeat.
- f. God allowed the armies of Nebuchadnezzar to demonstrate the degeneracy of his own people.
- g. The army, therefore, becomes the index to the character of a nation. Armies defend freedom and can also destroy it. (Jeremiah 34:7)
- h. The issue of national sovereignty always depends on which army wins.
3. LOOK AT THE MILITARY IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST, THE GOD OF ISRAEL.
- a. We see this first in the Exodus deliverance of Israel from Egypt. Exodus 14:14 "The Lord will fight for you today." It was Jesus Christ who fought for Israel at the Red Sea.

- b. This same image of Christ fighting continued under Joshua. We often see the picture of Jesus as God and as a man of love and tenderness and devotion, but seldom do we see him as a man of war. Jesus asked Joshua to give him his name and rank and serial number. Then Jesus told Joshua who he was and said, "I am The Lord Of Hosts--The Lord of the Armies." This is in Joshua 5:13-6:2.

This military image of Jesus Christ goes all the way through to the Armageddon campaign. (Zechariah 14:3-4) In his military image, Jesus Christ holds all records in military victories. In 701 B.C. he destroyed 185,000 of the army of Sennacherib of Assyria. (Isaiah 37:36-37)

"The angel of the Lord" is one of the titles for Jesus Christ Revelation 19:11 reveals his program--"And make war." When he fights evil, he always kills and it is right for him to do so. Christ has always been a fighter. Revelation 19:12, "And make war." Isaiah 63:1-3 describes this slaughter. Also Ezekiel 39:11 and Joel 2:20.

4. THE PRINCIPLE OF UNIVERSAL MILITARY TRAINING

- a. Universal military training demands total national conscription. (Numbers 1:2-3) This was national draft registration.
- b. The principle of mobilization. (Numbers 31:3-5)
Remember, this is the Word of God.
- c. Each generation must be trained in warfare.
(Judges 3:1-2, Judges 3:3 and 3:5)
The Lord let the enemy stay there so Israel could be tested.
Look at Luke 14:31.
- d. True motivation for military training comes from God himself.
(2 Samuel 22:35, "God trains my hands for battle."
(Psalm 18:34 and 144:1)
- e. Military training is neutralized when men degenerate and go into reversionism. This is what is happening in our nation now.