

The Battle Is Not Yours, But God's

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[Scripture quotations taken from the NASB](#)

In 2 Chronicles we read the account of a miraculous deliverance and victory for the people of Judah and Jerusalem over a vast army coming to make war against them. Jehoshaphat was king of Judah at this time. When Jehoshaphat was told of this army advancing toward them, he proclaimed a fast for all of Judah, and the people came together to seek God's help in their time of desperate need (2 Chronicles 20:2-4).

When they had assembled at the temple of the Lord, Jehoshaphat stood up in the assembly and interceded for them with a prayer that emphasized God, and His power and might. By contrast, the prayer also emphasized the weakness and inability of His people to face the threat that was advancing toward them. Jehoshaphat's prayer is recorded in 2 Chronicles 20:6-12, and his prayer ends with the words: “... *For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You.*” (2 Chronicles 20:12).

As God's people, we will at times be confronted with overwhelming circumstances in our lives. In these times, we too will be faced with our own "great multitude" of troubles that are coming against us. We will look around at our own resources and abilities to see that we cannot face the situation on our own. We will realize that our only hope is the same as the people of Judah and Jerusalem saw at this time of dire need in their lives, which is to look to God, our Strength, to take our burden to our sovereign and omnipotent God in prayer, and to wait for His answer and His deliverance from the overwhelming troubles that have come into our lives.

Continuing in this passage of 2 Chronicles, after Jehoshaphat had brought their urgent need for help to the Lord in prayer, he and those in the assembly waited for God's answer. Then we read that the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel, who was a Levite and a descendant of Asaph. He spoke to the assembly of the people saying:

"Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the Lord to you, 'Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the Lord is with you." (2 Chronicles 20:15-17).

After receiving an answer from the Lord with encouragement and instructions on what to do, Jehoshaphat bowed before the Lord with his face to the ground in worship and gratitude, as did all of the people in the assembly. Some of the Levites also stood up and praised the Lord with loud voices. The account of events then continues as we read beginning in verse 20:

They rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the Lord your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed." When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the Lord and those who praised Him in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, "Give thanks to the Lord, for His lovingkindness is everlasting." When they began singing and praising, the Lord set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed. For the sons of Ammon and Moab rose up

against the inhabitants of Mount Seir destroying them completely; and when they had finished with the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. (2 Chronicles 20:20-23)

Our Times of Trouble

This passage is a great encouragement to believers for the times when we are faced with circumstances that we are unable to confront in our own strength and with our own resources. Like Jehoshaphat, we also will cry out to the Lord in prayer with words something like his: “We are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You”.

The lesson in this passage is not that God will miraculously remove every burden, obstacle, or adverse circumstance that we face in life after we have brought our prayer for deliverance to Him. There will be times when we experience various sufferings as part of God’s sovereign plan and purpose for our lives, as He works to bring about in us a share in the sufferings of His Son Jesus Christ (John 12:24-26, Romans 8:17, 1 Peter 4:12-13, 19, others). There will be times in our lives when adverse circumstances come upon us, and it can be said of us:

All this has come upon us, but we have not forgotten You,
And we have not dealt falsely with Your covenant.
Our heart has not turned back,
And our steps have not deviated from Your way,
Yet You have crushed us in a place of jackals
And covered us with the shadow of death.
If we had forgotten the name of our God
Or extended our hands to a strange god,
Would not God find this out?
For He knows the secrets of the heart.
But for Your sake we are killed all day long;
We are considered as sheep to be slaughtered. (Psalm 44:17-22)

And again, there will be times in our lives when it can be said of us:

For You have tried us, O God;
You have refined us as silver is refined.
You brought us into the net;

You laid an oppressive burden upon our loins.
You made men ride over our heads;
We went through fire and through water,
Yet You brought us out into a place of abundance. (Psalm 66:10-12)

When considering the circumstances of our own lives, we may feel like we are trapped in a “net” of sorrows brought about by difficult and painful burdens, which God Himself has assigned for us (Psalm 66:11). But the end intended by our sovereign and loving God is that one day, in His time and according to His plan and purpose for our lives, we will be brought out “into a place of abundance”.

Our Instruction from God’s Word

The instruction given to us in this passage as God’s people is that when we are facing times of overwhelming adversity in our lives, we are to do just the same as the people of Judah and Jerusalem did at this time of dire need in their lives. We are to look to the Lord our God; we are to bring our prayer before Him and wait for His deliverance. Once again, we find instruction and powerful encouragement in God’s answer to Jehoshaphat’s prayer:

“Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, ***‘Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God’s.*** Tomorrow go down against them. Behold, they will come up by the ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley in front of the wilderness of Jeruel. ***You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the Lord on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.’ Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the Lord is with you.***”

(2 Chronicles 20:15-17, emphasis added).

God’s word instructs us that we are not to be afraid or discouraged when we are facing overwhelming troubles in our lives. We need not be afraid, because as believers in Christ, as spiritual Israel, we have this promise: ***The battles that we have not the resources or strength to fight on our own will be fought for us by God Himself.***

Our instruction on what to do when we find ourselves facing these times of overwhelming trouble is to first “station ourselves”, or position ourselves, just as the Lord instructed Judah and Jerusalem. When they marched out early the next

morning to meet this vast army, ***they did as they were told to do*** in the word of the Lord (verse 16), which is to say that they ***obeyed*** the word of the Lord. Therefore, to “station ourselves” means that we are to position ourselves in obedience to the word of God as revealed to us in the Scriptures.

After we take up our position in obedience to God’s word, we are instructed to “stand and see the salvation of the Lord on our behalf”. To “stand” means that we are to stand firm or continue in our position of obedience to the word of God, and not move away from that position. We should never consider an escape from our circumstances that is in disobedience to the word of God. ***The lesson from this account in 2 Chronicles is that when we are facing overwhelming burdens and troubles in this life, we are to look to God for our deliverance, and we are to stand firm in obedience to His word as we wait for Him to do for us what we are powerless to do for ourselves.***

When we find ourselves under great pressure that is far beyond our ability to endure, as happened in the life of the Apostle Paul, let us take comfort and understand that these things happen in our lives “so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead”. Let us also know that God will sustain us and ultimately deliver us (2 Corinthians 1:8-11).

David wrote with confidence in the Psalms:

Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you;
He will never allow the righteous to be shaken. (Psalm 55:22)

When we have no power to face the “great multitude” of troubles that are coming against us, and we do not know what to do, then let us do as we are instructed in God’s word: let us position ourselves in obedience as we look to Him for His deliverance and His provision for our lives. We can take courage knowing that in times like these, the battle is not ours, but God’s.