

## ON TO VICTORY!

*“Awake, Deborah, utter a song! Arise, Barak, Bind fast thy captives.” Judges 5:12*

The words are both startling and impressive. This clarion call of Jehovah, coming as it did, to a lonely woman struggling to maintain the courage and faith of her nation and already distracted by the long drawn out siege of a persistent enemy. Why this rousing summons? Did it signify that even Deborah herself, this mother in Israel, had begun to quail, and her spirit to sink under the terrible conditions all around her?

But God’s call to Deborah signified that the worst was over and the battle already won, even before the call to arms throughout the tribes of Israel had gone forth. “The battle” we are told, was “fought from Heaven.” (Judges 5:20) The unseen forces of Jehovah had already dealt with the powers of darkness behind the Canaanites, and the time had come for a Song, and the binding of the captives. Now too, the moment had arrived when the armies of Israel must move forward and take the aggressive against the foe. But it was to Deborah, apparently the one individual in Israel who was in direct communication with Jehovah, that He unveiled His plan of campaign. We see Barak actually afraid to take the initiative, and depending for his guidance upon this woman who was in touch with the Throne. It was she who passed on the signal for advance to the waiting army of Israel. “Up! for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thy hand. Is not the Lord gone out before thee?” But surely Deborah understood that she too had done her part, in dealing with the unseen forces of evil in the Heavenlies, without which the earthly battle would have spelled defeat. (Note the battle with Amalek. (Ex. 17:10-11; Eph. 6:12)

“The Lord made me have dominion over the mighty,” sang Deborah and Barak; (Judges 5:13) and one is reminded of David’s experience in Psalm 18:32-40. This lesson is repeated over and over again in Scripture. We see God communicating His plan of deliverance to one or more individuals in close touch with Himself, having but one objective in life – the interests of God’s Kingdom – and ready to act at a moment’s notice when God showed that His time had come. In the long drawn out siege of Jericho, God’s imperative order to Joshua was, “Ye shall not shout or make any sound with your voice, until the day I bid you shout,” (Joshua 6:10). There must be no discussion of the situation, no human suggestions as to how to proceed, no premature shout of victory, but silence and obedience. So it was with David in the valley of Rephaim. God’s orders were that he must not rush forward, but wait until he heard “the sound of marching in the tops of the mulberry trees.” Then God said to him, “Act with decision, for then shall the Lord go out before thee,” (II Sam. 5:23-24).

Those of us who are awake to the significance of the present hour cannot but see how Satan, as the god of this world, is making his last bid for power, and the rulership of the world kingdoms. By every conceivable device he is seeking to deceive the saints of God, especially is he striving to arrest the progress of those in the advance guard of the Church, and those who are most loyal to the cause of Christ. Because the path of spiritual progress is so beset with dangers, many are retreating into the rear, and taking up a position of criticism and suspicion toward all advancing souls, with the result they are unconsciously dropping into passivity, and their spiritual senses are becoming benumbed. Voices are calling to us from many directions, each one declaring they have the correct interpretation of Truth, but one and all diverging from

each other in details and particulars. Some in their anxiety to catch God's vision are running from one place to another, and so finding themselves in hopeless confusion. But they would be wiser if they followed Moses' example, when driven to his wit's end, he makes his heart's appeal to God, "Show me now Thy Way that I may know Thee." (Ex. 33:13). In these last perilous days it is only those "who know their God" who will "be strong and do exploits," (Dan. 11:32). We cannot be blind to the significance of the times we are living in. Everywhere we are faced with the closing up of this present dispensation and the near return of the Lord to reign. Go forward we must, at any cost; otherwise we shall sink into darkness and despair.

But in going forward we shall need to watch and pray continually. To watch lest by word or thought or deed we give any advantage to the enemy, for if we give license in any degree to the flesh we shall certainly fail, sooner or later. How deceptive is this old life of the flesh? It may be over-confidence in ourselves, harsh judgment or criticism of others, partiality, party-spirit, or suspicion. All these things, if allowed any hold in us, will be so much ground for the enemy, and he will appropriate every ounce of uncrucified flesh in us, and use it, not only to our own undoing but to cause a setback to the whole Church of God. (James 3:5, 14-18)

Then what about prayer? We read in James' Epistle, "The inwrought energized prayer of a righteous man is mighty in its operation." That is the literal meaning of James 5:15. But prayer that operates, that deals blow after blow on the enemy's forces, that actually takes the prey out of the hand of the mighty, pulls down his strongholds (II Cor. 10:4), and effectually paralyzes and binds the foe, such prayer as this will cost us dear. It can only be effectual as we "take up with us to the battle the whole armor of God," (Eph.6:10-14) and are indwelt and energized by the Holy Spirit. Indeed we must be so grafted into Christ, reckoning moment by moment on our death union with Him to the old life of the flesh, that as He flashes to us His commands we may instantly carry them into execution, even though it may mean a death knell to our own dearest hopes and most cherished plans. "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" (Amos 3:3). "They two went on," (II Kings 2:6). "They that are with Him are called and chosen and faithful," (Rev. 17:14) In this last hour of the Great Battle may we not be found wanting.

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"Awake! Awake beloved!  
Utter a song! Yea see,  
Christ bore the curse on Calvary  
That all might go out free.

Awake! O sing with gladness,  
The foe is put to flight;  
Awake! The dawn is breaking,  
In spite of sin's dark night."