

ARISE AND SHINE

March 2021

In our Kingdom Warfare section we began with the profile of our chief adversary and formidable foe whose primary weapons are lies and deception. Satan has ensnared many persons in these **common traps** regarding himself.

- * **Deny his existence** - 40% of Christians strongly agree that Satan is not a living being but merely a symbol of evil. - Barna research 2009
- * **Underestimate his cunning deceit** - Pride precedes a fall, we must walk humbly with God
- * **Become obsessed with his influence** - This can lead to fear as we focus less on God

During the Biblical times of Israel and the Philistines, God's people had a **paralyzing fear** of the giant Goliath, who taunted them twice daily. He was over 9 feet tall with armor that weighed over 125 pounds and whose iron spear tip alone was 15 pounds. God raised up an unlikely hero in this situation, the young shepherd boy David. He was not afraid of Goliath because his faith and focus remained on the greater one, the Lord God of Israel. **David was a powerful warrior** because he had learned in earlier years to become a **passionate worshiper**. He became **militant** only after he had become **intimate**. He was a **praiser**, as evidenced by all the Psalms he sang to God and wrote down for our benefit. He was a **romantic warrior** who loved God but he hated evil and wickedness. He demonstrated that **prayers and proclamations can be used against the enemies of God** and their plans. There are 21 imprecatory* Psalms in the Bible. (Psalms 5, 6, 11, 12, 35, 37, 40, 52, 54, 56, 57, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 94, 109, 137, 139, 143)

* Imprecatory = to curse or pronounce judgment

Here are excerpts from one such Psalm.

O Lord, the God who avenges, O God who avenges, shine forth.
Rise up. O Judge of the earth; pay back to the proud what they deserve. How long will the wicked, O Lord, how long will the wicked be jubilant? They pour out arrogant words; all the evil evildoers are full of boasting. They crush your people, O Lord, they oppress your inheritance. - Psalm 94:1-5 NIV

Who will rise up for me against the wicked? Who will take a stand for me against evildoers? Unless the Lord had given me help, I would soon have dwelt in silence of death. Can a corrupt throne be allied with you - one that brings on misery by its decrees? They band together against the righteous and condemn the innocent to death.

Such prayers may seem unusual or unacceptable in light of Jesus' words to 'Bless your enemies and do not curse them.' As I pondered this last year, I realized that **we can bless the person but not their wrongful plans and purposes**. There may be exceptions if the Lord reveals they are reprobate and beyond redemption as when Jesus pronounced 'Woe' upon certain cities in Israel and upon the Pharisees due to their hardness of heart and unbelief. James and John sought to call fire down upon their enemies but Jesus rebuked them for it and said that he had 'not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.' - Luke 9:54-55.

Revenge belongs to God, not us - Romans 12:19. It is all about our heart attitude toward God and our enemies. Jesus never sought personal revenge or defended himself. He sought only to

honor the Father and stand for His purposes. He spent most of His time **shining the light** of God's goodness through demonstrations of supernatural compassion, love and power along with proclaiming truth. That is the best way to overcome evil, not just by cursing it. **The presence of Jesus is a light that shines wherever it is.**

*'Jesus said, I am the **LIGHT OF THE WORLD**, whoever follows me will never walk in darkness (ignorance), but will have the light of life.'* - John 8:12

*'Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the **RISING SUN** will come to us from heaven **TO SHINE** on those living in darkness and the shadow of death to guide our feet into the path of peace.'* - Luke 1:78-79

*'The city (New Jerusalem) does not need the sun or the moon to **SHINE** on it, for the **GLORY OF THE LORD** gives it **LIGHT**, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.'* - Revelation 21:23-24

*'For God, who said, "Let light **SHINE** out of darkness", made His light **SHINE** in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.'* - 2 Corinthians 4:6

I was blessed to grow up on a dairy farm midst the rolling hills of western NY state. I had cousins who lived 90 miles away in Buffalo who would come to visit in the summer and tell us how lucky we were to live there. There is something special about laying on the grass at night and gazing at the nighttime splendor of a myriad of shining stars. Cities have lots of street lights whereas those in the countryside have dark settings which permit a greater display of the light in the sky. The same is true in the spiritual realm. We return to the passage we have mentioned previously in other messages.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the **glory** of the Lord rises upon you. See, **darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples,** but the **Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you.** Nations will come to **your light** and kings to the **brightness** of your dawn.
- Isaiah 60:1-3 NIV

In one of our earlier messages I shared an experience I had in London over 30 years ago. I regularly went to scores of homes to visit people I got to know through evangelism. The majority of them were from India as our church was located in a suburb described as 'Little India' due to its large percentage of families from India. One afternoon I made a followup visit to a Hindu man who worked for the Post Office. As he opened the door, the first words that came from him were these: **'I see a glow on your face and a light in your eyes.** Have you ever seen God?' Immediately I thought of the Isaiah 60 verse about the glory of God upon us.

In the months before I had moved to England to work with a church for several years as outreach director, God had me meditate on **Psalm 67** which speaks of the **power of praise.** The first verse begins with a prayer that God will **make his face shine upon us.** God proclaims that as people praise Him, 'then the land will yield its harvest' - 67:6a.

When I went to London, my life was one filled with much praise and time spent seeking

God's face in what was a spiritually dark area. Audrey, an Irish woman at our church, used to call me 'the glory man', as I often would exclaim the words 'glory!' A few years later I went through some trying disappointments which led to a period some have called the 'dark night of the soul'. One Indian lady who attended our church noted that I no longer had the same glow on my face as before. King David went through dark trials and was downcast at times. When his son Absalom conspired against him, David fled and wrote these words:

' Lord, they have increased who trouble me! Many are they who rise up against me. Many are they who say of me, "There is no help for him in God". But You, O Lord, are a shield for me, my glory and the one who lifts my head. - Psalm 3:1-3 NKJV

During **dark days**, God will lift up our heads and shine His glory upon us. Our part is to praise Him for that is when God manifests Himself more fully to us. Psalm 22 prophesies the **dark day** when Jesus was crucified. David wrote these words:

' You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.' – Psalm 22:3 NKJV
' God inhabits the praises of His people' – 22:3 KJV

There are many instances in the Bible where God shows up to deliver His people when they begin to praise Him. Praise not only honors God and is an invitation for Him to manifest His presence and power among us; it is also a weapon of warfare that causes the evil forces to flee. Read Psalm 149. The praise of God in our mouths is like a double-edged sword to inflict vengeance on our enemies and to bind kings with chains. .

Many years ago I was asked to write some topical Bible courses for a school in London. One of them was on Revival: God's Intervention. In my research on revivals, I noticed that they occurred when they were most needed, that is, during dark days. We live in such times now.

'Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness.....Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes and clever in their own sight" – Isaiah 5:20-21 NIV

It is time to praise God and to pray. May the wicked fail and righteous plans prevail.
It is time to rise and shine and see what only God can do.

Turn darkness to light.

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