

In his book entitled *The Best, Worst and Most Unusual*, Bruce Felton gives the account of what he considers to be the most unusual battle that has ever been fought in human history. This Cavalry engagement took place in 1794. A French General named Charles Pichegru had decided to lead his brigade in an invasion of the Netherlands. The French had a decided advantage in this military contest for they had the superior Cavalry units. The Netherlands had a superior Navy at this time. But what transpired surpassed even the most optimistic hopes of General Pichegru. Predictably, the French soldiers rode their horses through the Netherlands to the port town of Den Helder without opposition. It was only when they were stopped by the sea that they discovered the Dutch Navy frozen fast in the bay waiting for the spring thaws. The French General made a daring but brilliant decision. He ordered his brigade to ride their horses out onto the frozen ice and surround the ships. The horses gingerly walked out onto the ice and the entire Dutch fleet was overwhelmed by the surprise maneuver and surrendered without a gun being fired. This remains the only time in history where a country's whole navy was surrounded and captured by a Cavalry Brigade.

While we all would certainly agree with Felton that the French invasion of the Netherlands in 1794 was a most unique battle, I beg to differ with him that it was the most unusual battle that has ever been fought in all of human history. For there was another battle fought some 3,000 years earlier. But instead of walking out on frozen water, the victors walked under the water, through a tunnel of water on dry ground. And in this battle there was also complete victory without a shot being fired. For in an instant, the Egyptian army which was the best trained and most feared army in the world at this time, was completely stopped and subdued under the waters of the Red Sea.

It's no wonder that the Israelites joined Moses in a great celebration after they had witnessed God's mighty hand working on their behalf. We began last week to look at this great song of deliverance that Moses led the children of Israelites in singing that is found in Exodus 15. In the first 18 verses of this chapter there are some 45 references to the Lord. Certainly, these people were awed by the power and majesty of their great deliverer God. So it should not surprise us in the least that after the picture of the Saving Lord that we discussed last week, Moses goes on to speak of the Warrior Lord - the Lord who is mighty in battle. Notice this picture as we read Exodus 15:3-5 together this morning.

*The LORD is a warrior; the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his army he has hurled into the*

*sea. The best of Pharaoh's officers are drowned in the Red Sea. The deep waters have covered them; they sank to the depths like a stone.*

Now the truth that Moses brings out about the Lord in this passage is one that is often overlooked in the world in which we are living. We hear a great deal about the love and mercy and compassion of the Lord today. But when a fighting God is mentioned, many people immediately start to hedge. Even some Christians are a little bit embarrassed by some of the Biblical references to the wrath or the anger or the vengeance of God. But the simple fact remains that God has made no attempt to conceal his wrath or anger in the Bible and He also clearly reveals himself as a fighting God. In fact, if you take an exhaustive concordance of the Bible, you will find more references to the anger and wrath of God than you will find to the love and tenderness of God. You see, God could not be perfect in his love if He were not also committed to the eradication of evil. How could a being who is all powerful be perfect in love if he chose just to be indifferent to wickedness and sin allowing evil to dominate and consume the universe that He had created absolutely good? How could such a being be perfect in love if He looked with equal satisfaction on good and evil, virtue and vice, wisdom and folly?

God is the Warrior Lord. And we must never forget that the greatest example of God's love is also the supreme example of his commitment to fight against evil until it is eradicated. For it was not only God's love that moved him to send his one and only son into this world to provide the ultimate sacrifice for sin upon the cross of Calvary, it was also his commitment to eradicate evil. That hill called Calvary was the greatest battlefield that this world has ever seen. It was on that wooden cross under the cloak of darkness that the battle of the ages took place. And when the Lord Jesus Christ cried out *tetellistai - it is finished* the head of the serpent had been crushed. The Devil, depravity and death had been finally defeated. The human race could now have the hope that one day there would be a perfectly sinless environment in which to dwell for all eternity. But heaven would never have been a possibility if it were not for the fact that God is a Warrior Lord.

This fact, of course, was fresh in the minds of the Israelites when Moses led them in singing this great song that is recorded in Exodus 15. They had cried out to the Lord for deliverance from their oppression. Their slavery had been so unfair - a clear picture of the depravity of sinful man. For Jacob and his family had rightfully been originally welcomed down into Egypt as heroes. Jacob's son, Joseph, had just saved the nation by his wisdom and careful planning. Now Pharaoh would honor Joseph's family by giving them a place to live in Goshen where they could raise their families and tend their flocks. But how time can change circumstances. Several generations later there arose a Pharaoh who began to look upon the growing Jewish

population as a threat. He made the decision to enslave these Hebrews - a decision that would bring a short-term gain but eventually would hurt his nation severely. For as this growing nation suffered under its oppression, the Israelites began to cry out to the Lord for deliverance. God heard their pleas and looked down from heaven to see their plight. The Lord recognized the injustices that they were suffering and came to their aid bringing his deliverance to them. That great war that was fought on the battlefield of the Red Sea was a dramatic illustration of the power and majesty of the Warrior Lord - a God who is committed to defend his people against evil aggression.

Now some might raise the question - why did God allow his people to suffer so long in Egypt in the first place? If he truly is a Warrior Lord who is committed to war against evil and wickedness, why did so many generations have to live and die in slavery before freedom was achieved? And these are worthy questions not unlike others that are asked today - if God is the Warrior Lord committed to the eradication of evil, why is there so much suffering and wickedness in the world today? Why does so much injustice abound? Why doesn't he step in every time there is a wrong and immediately correct it?

I don't claim to know all of the mysteries of life. There is no human mind that can fully comprehend the infinite mind and wisdom of God. But we do know from God's own revelation to us that He has a plan and purpose beyond our human comprehension and that He has the ability to even work evil out for his own good ends. And we can certainly see that illustrated in his forming a people for himself in the nation of Israel in the O.T.

The Book of Genesis ends with some sordid stories of moral failure just before Jacob led his family down into Egypt to join his son, Joseph. We have the record of Dinah's defilement and the subsequent slaughter of the citizens of Shechem in Genesis 34; and then we have the account of Judah's incest with his daughter in law, Tamar, in Genesis 38. At first, we might wonder why God would even include these stories in the Bible? But then we realize that they certainly illustrate how quickly Abraham's descendants were becoming just like the Canaanites who lived around them. They were on the road to becoming just another tribe, totally amalgamated into pagan Canaanite culture - hardly the distinct people that God intended for them to be, hardly the people of God that was needed for the redemptive history of the human race. So God removed them from that setting in Canaan and planted them in Egypt. He put them in an environment where there would be no possibility of their becoming one with the people around them. It was not by their choice, but by the Egyptians' choice. For the Pharaoh wisely planted them off in the land of Goshen by themselves because they were shepherds and Shepherds were an abomination to the Egyptians. The Egyptians had no respect for shepherds - they regarded them as second class citizens. They would honor

Joseph's family for his sake, but they didn't have to like his family or associate with them. So in the seclusion of the land of Goshen, the descendants of Abraham grew into a nation of several million. Now they were the distinct people that God wanted. Now they had enough in their nation so that they could intermarry and maintain their cultural distinctives.

But now another problem arose. They had lived so long in Egypt that they felt very much at home there. And God wanted them to live in the land that he had promised to give to Abraham. How would God motivate them to move up into the land that we call Israel today? Well, God had to allow some pressure to mount. First, they had to see the depraved nature of the paganism around them. They saw that as they were subjected to slavery. Then as the slavery intensified, they became more and more dissatisfied with their living conditions until they were finally motivated to leave the security of Egypt for the unknown land of Canaan. They finally came to the place where they felt that anything would be better for them than Egypt. And when they were ready, God was there to go before and behind them as the Warrior Lord. Fighting against the atrocities of evil while at the same time even using evil for His own good ends. We can't understand how God is able to do this completely - but that is why he is God and we are not. For God has the ability to act in ways that are far beyond our comprehension. While he hates evil and is totally opposed to it by His very nature, He is able to use even evil to accomplish His own good purposes. This is the reason for Joseph being able to say to his brothers, *you intended to harm me (by selling me into slavery) but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. (Gen. 50:20)* This is the reason for the Apostle Paul being able to write under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, *and we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. (Romans 8:28).*

We are now waiting for the physical redemption that will be realized at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the future. In a very real sense, we feel imprisoned in this world of wickedness and sin. There is so much injustice. There is so much violence. And we are tempted to cry out to God and ask him *what are you waiting for?* How can a Warrior Lord who is committed to the eradication of evil stand by and allow so much corruption and wickedness? *Why don't you wipe out all these evil people on the earth? Why don't you open up the earth and swallow the Al Qaeda camps? Why don't you come quickly to take us to our promised land in Heaven?*

But then we read in His word 2 Peter 3:9 - *The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness, but He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, , but everyone to come to repentance.*

That's it, we realize. God is doing today what He did so many years ago in Egypt. Just as he allowed

his Jewish people to suffer in slavery so that they might become a great nation of God that would be the means of human redemption, so God is growing a people for himself today. God is forming a bride for the redeemer. Yes, this bride is being made in some suffering - but just as God worked Good out of the Evil in the past, He is able to do the same today.

But we must never mistake God's patience for weakness. For He remains the Warrior Lord. And there is coming a day when the waters of the Red Sea are going to come crushing down on God's enemies. It won't take long - just the twinkling of an eye. For when an all mighty Warrior Lord decides to act, He will do so quickly and decisively. And evil will finally be eradicated - and God's people will enjoy the blessings of righteousness for all eternity.

Now how should this picture of God being the Warrior Lord have an impact upon our daily lives? Let me conclude this morning by sharing 3 ways that I believe this truth should affect us each and every day that we live.

1. It is critically important for us to see the Warrior Lord in order to have a balanced, proper view of God himself. We will never truly know the God of the Bible if our view of God is a weak, anemic one.

Listen to these words recorded in Hebrews 12:28,29: *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.*

There are many people in our country today who cannot even imagine God as a consuming fire. They have pictured God for so long as the kindly, grandfather figure that they cannot even conceive of a God who is a conquering Warrior. In this way, they have become idolatrous - for the God that they worship is not the God of the Bible, but it is rather a God of their own imagination and a God that has become culturally acceptable.

It is only as we worship the God who is a consuming fire, the God who annihilates his enemies and evil, that we can worship him with a proper reverence and awe. And it is only as we worship God with reverence and awe that we worship him acceptably. That is what this verse says. *And so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.*

You see, it is not just an option to see God as the Warrior Lord. It is absolutely essential for us to see God in this way if we are to see God at all. For that is who He is. He is just as much the Warrior Lord as He is the Heavenly Father and the Loving Savior. And seeing God as the Warrior Lord gives to us great confidence in life. It is no wonder that so many people who claim to believe in God live their lives obsessed with anxiety and fear when the God whom they are worshiping is considered. We cannot be confident in

each and every circumstance of life when our God is one who is either unconcerned or unable to handle life's situations. But when we really see God as the Warrior Lord, the Egyptian armies of life take on a different perspective. We can then live our lives thankfully, realizing that we have received a kingdom that cannot be shaken as the author of Hebrews encourages us to do.

2. Secondly, it is important for us to see God as the Warrior Lord in order for us to see sin for what it really is.

It is so easy to become calloused to sin in our day. We are exposed to so many different types of sin in a single day. One cannot watch the television for long before hearing some funny remark making light of sin. Our eyes see pictures that are designed by experts to make us lust; our ears hear vulgarities and profanity on a regular basis; we are tempted to sin at every turn. The extent to which sin has been accepted into our world's culture is seen in the fact that there presently is serious discuss about making female pole dancing an Olympic sport. It's amazing that there would even be a consideration of that which is designed by nature to be erotic and sensuous in a strip joint to be a legitimate Olympic sport. I mean, it might get to the place where we can't even watch the Olympic Games with our families.

We desperately need to see sin for what it really is. Seeing God as the Warrior Lord helps us to do this. God is committed with every ounce of his being to fight against sin at every turn. Seeing God in this way helps us to see the tragedy of joining forces with His enemy. And make no mistake about it - that is what we are doing when we invite sin into our lives. We are volunteering to fight in the army that is opposing God.

I was reading an article from an old Newsweek Magazine some time ago which was speaking of the training that specialized Marines are given. A great deal of time is spent in the Marine training sessions to distinguish friends from the enemy. In stressful, combat situations, there isn't a great deal of time to make discernments, so these specialist Marines are taught to be able to make almost instantaneous decisions about whether the person they see is a friend or a foe. And often, this ability might mean the soldier's life.

There are many Christians today who are accepting sin as the ally instead of as the awful enemy that it is. And like the Trojan horse of ancient Greek Mythology, these sinful practices are destroying the power and effectiveness of their lives.

Now there's not one of us who is perfect. We all live in this sinful world, and we cannot help but be tainted with the defilement that is around us all the time. But we must never forget who the enemy is. And we must commit ourselves to battle against the enemy following our commander-in-chief, the Warrior Lord.

3. Finally, seeing God as the Warrior Lord and realizing His ultimate victory over all evil gives to us hope for the future and motivates us to lift our hearts in praise and adoration to God.

Just think of the hope that filled the hearts of these Israelites as they originally sang this song of praise to the Lord. Here, just months before they hadn't had a hope of ever being free from slavery - but God had changed the heart of Pharaoh through the miraculous plagues that he brought upon Egypt. And then just hours before, any short-lived hopes that they had had been dashed as they watched the dust of the Egyptian army get closer and closer until they could see the sun glistening off of their shields and chariots. They were defenseless. It would be like shooting fish in a barrel.

But all that despair had changed into renewed hope as they watched that wall of Red Sea water crash down upon the floundering Egyptian soldiers. They had experienced the Warrior Lord coming to their defense in a first hand way. Now what situation could they ever face in the future that he could not handle?

Again this week as we plan to do each week, we have used an actual picture taken of Egyptian chariot parts at the bottom of the Red Sea as the background for our PowerPoint slides. This is a picture of an Egyptian chariot axle with the wheels still attached sitting on end at the bottom of the Red Sea. This reminds us that this Warrior Lord that we have been talking about this morning is not just some figment of Jewish legend designed to give some false hope and security. This Warrior Lord is a living, all-powerful being who actually destroyed his enemies in an instant. One moment the Egyptian soldiers were arrogantly chasing the apparently helpless Israelites with absolute confidence, the next moment they were crushed by the deluge crashing down on them. While the vast majority of the carnage lies buried deep under the silt, there remain a number of ancient Egyptian chariot parts still visible as silent witnesses to the power of the Warrior Lord.

Have you experienced the power of the Warrior Lord in your life? Are you allowing the Warrior Lord to fight your battles in life?