



God is spirit, and those who
worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

On Worship

with Pastor Steve

Worship and Warfare

Through the years I have heard spiritual warfare taught from a number of angles. I have been involved in services that focused on spiritual warfare and participated in rebuking certain principalities, powers and spiritual wickedness in high places. During these "intercessory" prayer meetings we engaged territorial demons over nations and cities from the four corners of world. Although we called this warfare, which may have some validity, I have come to believe there is a higher place of warfare where God wants his people involved. It's the place of high praise.

When Jehoshaphat was king over Judah the people of Moab, Ammon and others came to battle against him. Upon hearing the news Jehoshaphat was scared and called a fast throughout all Judah to seek the face of the Lord. In the midst of the fast the Spirit of the Lord moved on the heart of Jahaziel to prophesy God's victory for Judah over their enemies. Jehoshaphat and the people responded with praise and worship.

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who should sing to the Lord, and who should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army and were saying; Praise the Lord, for his mercy endures forever. Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against all the people of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated. For the people of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir to utterly kill and destroy them. And when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

2 Chronicles 20:21-22

There are some interesting facts about some of the characters in this story. In 2 Chronicles 2:14 it is recorded that Jahaziel, the man who gave the victorious prophecy, was a Levite and a

descendant of Asaph. Asaph was one of the three worship leaders appointed by King David the Levites to lead the procession before the ark of the covenant when it was carried to Jerusalem from the house of Obed-Edom (1 Chronicles 15:17). He was later employed for worship at the temple of Solomon. Asaph's sons were under his direction to *prophesy according to the order of the king* (1 Chronicles 25:1-2). Asaph is also credited as one of the contributors to the book of Psalms.

Prophecy was not a new thing to Jahaziel; it was in his lineage. The name Jahaziel means "beheld of God." The Hebrew words which make up Jahaziel mean that God had his eye on him or that God was looking in his direction. There is one part of Jahaziel's prophesy that is particularly interesting. He said, *You will not need to fight in this battle. Position yourselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord, who is with you, O Judah and Jerusalem! Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord is with you...* (2 Chronicles 20:17)

Twice in this one verse God assured Judah that he was with them; that his presence would go before them to engage the enemy on their behalf. In the book of Psalms we find evidence of what happens to the enemies of the Lord when confronted with the presence of God. David wrote, *When my enemies turn back, they shall fall and perish at your presence. (Psalm 9:3) As smoke is driven away so drive them away; as wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. (Psalm 68:2)*

The Hebrew word for presence used in these two scripture passages is *panyim*. *Panyim* means the face, as the part that turns. God prophesied that his presence would be with Judah; that his face would be turned in their direction. He prophesied it through a man whose name meant just that; Jahaziel.

Once Jahaziel had concluded the prophecy, Jehoshaphat and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem bowed before the Lord in worship. *Then the Levites of the children of the Kohathites and of the children of the Korahites stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with voices loud and high.* (2 Chronicles 20:19)

The Kohathites were the Levites in charge of carrying the ark of the covenant (1 Chronicles 15). Above the ark of the covenant on the mercy seat was the place where God's manifest presence rested. The Korahites were gatekeepers. The King James Version uses the word porters. The Hebrew word for porter means janitor. They stood guard at every gate of the temple and were on duty within the temple in their regular courses. They were in charge of the work of service (1 Chronicle 9:19; 1 Chronicles 26; 2 Chronicles 8:35).

The Kohathites were the bearers of the manifest presence of God. The Korahites were the protectors of the manifest presence of God. These Levites were among the first to enter the high praises of God. God used worshipers to prophesy and bring about the eventual defeat of his enemies.

It is the manifest presence of God, however, that puts the enemy to flight. Nothing gets God's attention quicker than praise and worship. God inhabits the praises of his people. We need only to position ourselves in worship and stand still to behold his salvation. I'm speaking here of more than just our expressions of praise and worship; rather a lifestyle of praise and worship. The Amplified Bible renders 2 Chronicles 20:21 this way: *When he (Jehoshaphat) had consulted with the people, he appointed singers to sing to the Lord and praise him in their holy [priestly] garments...*

It isn't the expressions of our praise and worship that brings the presence of God. It isn't how loud we shout or how low we bow. It is the bringing of our offering clothed in our priestly garments of holiness. Psalm 29:2 says, *Give unto the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.* In other words worship the Lord decorated with sanctity. A life of worship is one that is decorated in holiness. That is the worship that draws the presence of God.

Jehoshaphat positioned Judah (which means praise) for battle in the Wilderness of Tekoa. Tekoa comes from a Hebrew word meaning trumpet. Often in biblical days the sounding of a trumpet preceded an important introduction or announcement. When we position ourselves as people of praise, decorated in God's holiness, we won't have to shout at the enemy. We need only to address the Father. He will make sure the enemy gets the message.

A few years ago our family was on vacation and decided to visit a church for the Sunday morning worship service. The church had a contemporary style service and the music carried us into a time of intimacy with the Father. As we loved on the Father one of the ladies singing with the praise team began to rebuke Satan. She drove him out of the building, out of the city and out of the state. She bound his activity over the lives of the people in that church and all other churches. What was probably only a minute seemed a lot longer as she vehemently addressed every work of darkness that might be listening.

It could be that this lady saw something I didn't see. All I know is that one minute I was snuggled in the Father's arms and the next minute all my thoughts were turned to Satan. My guess is that I was not alone. In my humble opinion Satan, if he was listening, got exactly what he wanted; our eyes off the Father and on him. He likes attention, he thinks it is worship. There is, however, a way for the church to bring down or bind the works of darkness without a thought of the demonic. Our weapon is the high praises of God.

The psalmist had some revelation of the power of the high praises of God. He wrote,

Let the saints be joyful in glory; Let them sing aloud on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the nations (heathen in King James), and punishments on the peoples; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute on them the written judgment-this honor have all his saints. Praise the Lord.

Psalm 149:5-9

There are two levels of the spirit world mentioned in this verse, "kings" and "nobles." The king of the heathen is Satan. The nobles refer to the lesser powers of darkness. Our weapons against both levels are the high praises of God in our mouth and a two-edged sword in our hand. Notice that the high praises of God are to be in our mouth. The two-edged sword (the Word of God) is to be in our hand.

The Hebrew word used in Psalm 149:6 for praises is the word *tehillah*. *Tehillah* is the word used for praises when associated with the new song. It is a laudation or hymn. In fact the psalmist uses the word *tehillah* in verse one where he says, *Sing to the Lord a new song, and his praise in the assembly of saints.*

A new song is one that is fresh. Paul referred to these songs as hymns. He wrote to the churches

...but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs... (Ephesians 5:18-19) Colossians 3:16 says ...teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs... The Greek word used here for hymn is humnos. Humnos is defined to celebrate, or one of the psalms, a hymn.

When we generally think of hymns great songs like *Amazing Grace*, *How Great Thou Art*, and many others come to mind. *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing* is one of my favorites. However, these songs we refer to as hymns are actually psalms. A psalm is a set piece of music accompanied by an instrument and voice; so once these "hymns" were recorded they became psalms. In fact all of the recorded worship songs we sing in church are in reality psalms. Since hymns and psalms are different we must conclude that a hymn is a song that has not been recorded. Thus it is a new, spontaneous song. In exhorting the church to sing hymns, Paul was encouraging them to sing tehillah.

I believe that the new song is synonymous with the high praises of God. These songs find their way into the heavenlies and become not only offerings of worship to God but effective weapons of warfare.

Judah tapped into the power of the high praises of God when faced with an imminent attack. Second Chronicles 20:22 reads, *Now when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; and they were defeated.* The Hebrew word for praise in this verse is tehillah. The Hebrew word used for sing is the word rinnah. Rinnah is a creaking, a shrill sound or shout. Judah didn't shout at the enemy. Their focus was on God. They elevated their praise to a heavenly realm. The result was that God confused the enemy and the enemy self destructed.

The Apostle Paul wrote, *For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal(fleshly) but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought in to captivity to the obedience of Christ...* (2 Corinthians 10:4-5) Ephesians 6:11-12 reads,

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly (high) places. The high praises of God go beyond our intellect. They do not come from our mind or the flesh but from the Holy Spirit. It takes "high" things to bring down "high" things. The high praises of God are lethal against every high thing that is against God.

Is there a time for the church to address the demonic? Certainly. We have Jesus as an example. Jesus spoke to Satan and his demons when they manifested. He rebuked them, bound them and sent them on their way. No where do we read where Jesus addressed Satan or demons without first there was some form of manifestation. He spent very little time even speaking of Satan.

Satan is not omnipresent. He is not everywhere all the time. Yet, the church seems to spend a lot of time shouting at him. I'm not sure that he hears much of what we say. However, he does have a seemingly organized constituency that exists to grant his every wish. When they manifest the church should deal with them as Jesus did. Otherwise our focus should be on the Father. I am not convinced that any amount of shouting at Satan or demons, outside of a manifestation, will do much harm to the kingdom of darkness. But, I do know that if the church arms herself with the high praises of God, that God himself will shake the kingdom of darkness and bring its plans to ruin.

It is my belief that as the church proclaims the high praises of God that the kingdom of darkness will find its demise. As God is exalted in the high places we will see the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.

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Contact Steve at lovnjesus@cableone.net