

III Kings VII – The Stand of the King

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?"¹ Thank God that when He said this there was Isaiah who responded, "Here am I. Send me!"² But unfortunately, there was only Isaiah amongst millions of Jews who did respond. And more importantly than responding, Isaiah was one whom God could trust and say, "Go and tell this people..."³ Unfortunately, God could not have then turned around to Satan and say, "I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it," as the centurion at Capernaum said to Jesus.⁴ For even the Lord in Isaiah's time only had one who responded and one He could trust only, not two.

If a Roman centurion can have men under him who he knows will obey him, then does not our Lord deserve more? Indeed, does not His glory and His honour demand that there be more? Of course He does. However, the raising up of the 'more' does not stem from raising up and encouraging others to follow Him if you are not yourself prepared to follow Him. We are not recruiters of the King's army as the armies of the world recruit, encouraging others to enlist while we remain safely at home. Rather, if anyone is to join us, it is because they themselves are inspired to, for in the end it is never the largeness of the congregation that permits God to give the victory, but rather, the **faithfulness** of that congregation.

Shammah was but a congregation of one in that field of lentils, but through that one man God gave the victory.⁵ As he stood his ground, Shammah did not see death, and through him God gave the victory. It does not say that Shammah inspired Israel as Eleazar, who stood with David at Pas Dammin, did and struck down the Philistines until the troops returned.⁶

If any one of us is inspired to say, "Here am I. Send me!" as Isaiah did, it should be with the attitude of Eleazar and Shammah who stood alone and fought and won the day for the Lord. Even though the troops returned to Eleazar, it is not written that Shammah was likewise blessed. As such, even as we take our stand upon our patch of ground into which the seeds have been sown, the words of Jesus and the sons of God, we should not assume that others will join us, but rather, it is enough that we have taken our stand in our field with our King. So do not even waste the Lord's time as Peter did in asking the Lord about John, saying, "Lord, what about him?"⁷

It is not a question of what another person is doing for the Lord, but rather, what we are doing for the Lord ourselves. If you have ears to hear, you have heard (can hear). If you have eyes to see, you have seen (can see). For what we have found is not a new gospel or a new invention or discovery, but rather, that which has been available to the common man for the last 100 or so years and what has been available to the professionals, the clergy, for more than 1500 years. If the truth has been hidden, they hid it, not God. If the truth was not found, it was because we did not search, not because God did not reveal it.

As one of our critics have said, "There is no new gospel, no new revelation;" this is absolutely correct. The truth that the eleven did not believe, did not obey and did not go is not a gospel, for it is not good news. It is bad news... very bad news. And the Lord had to rebuke them. ...He rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen.⁸ And there is no new revelation in this truth either, for what we have found has been there for hundreds of years. Now if we were to ask the Lord, "What about them?" then we are as guilty of wasting the Lord's time as Peter was, and the reply He gave to Peter is sufficient for us, "...what is that to you? You must follow Me."⁹

It did not matter to Eleazar that the troops had deserted him; what mattered was that he stood with his king. And it did not matter to Shammah that his king was not there; what mattered was that he was defending the king's field and what was in it. As such, it is not a matter of whom God can send or who volunteers... but rather, it is a matter of God finding those who are doing what He has commanded them. The need may be great, but the supply and provision is even greater. The problems may be many, but the answers are much more... for it was not by their strength or power that Eleazar and Shammah won their day, but it was God who gave them the victory.

¹ Isaiah 6.8

² Isaiah 6.8

³ Isaiah 6.9

⁴ Matthew 8.9

⁵ 2 Samuel 23.11

⁶ 2 Samuel 23.9-10

⁷ John 21.21

⁸ Mark 16.14

⁹ John 21.22

So take heart, we are more than one as God had said to Elijah who thought he was the only one left. "Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel—all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him."¹⁰ But what we should be are ones who think and behave in our stand as if we are the only one in the knowledge and encouragement that we are not, so that not only will we have fellowship with one another, but strengthen one another.

The elect have been raised up not to accuse, not to judge or to condemn, but to remedy. An error is an error; a sin is a sin; and a truth is a truth no matter how ugly or unpalatable. No amount of sympathy can save a patient with appendicitis, only surgery can. Likewise, glossing over the ugly truth does not help the body of Christ, but the qualities demanded of a surgeon – keen eyes, good courage and a sharp knife – will. **Eyes that are fixed on Jesus' every movement, courage to repent and an accurate knowledge of His word – that is what is called for.**

The remedy is not to run after the fleeing troops. Let them flee. But like Shammah and Eleazar, we take our stand. If they return to us, good, they can strip the enemy. But until the victory is won, there is no enemy dead to strip, just a war to be won.

If our stand encourages others to join us, great and well. If they flee, it is not because of our stand, they were already fleeing. Remember it was not the stand of Eleazar or Shammah that routed the Israelites, but the appearance of the Philistine army. As such, learn also not to be discouraged by those who flee from where you stand... and remember it is not your stand that makes them flee, they flee because of the sight of the enemy.

For God, our God, deserves not only to say that He has servants who do what He says or go where He sends them, but He deserves to have sons and daughters who do what He wishes before He asks and go where He wants them to before He sends them... now that is truly glory for Him in the sight of His enemies.

When Jesus said, "He will do even greater things than these..."¹¹ one of the greater things that we can do is to be able to say what the Father would have said before He says it and to do what the Father would have shown us before He does it, so that truly we can give Him rest. Lofty aspirations? Yes, but does God deserve it? Of course! Just like Eleazar and Shammah... fool's courage? Suicidal stance? Yes, but better to have stood and died than to face the charge of the cowards, for it is the cowardly who go first to the lake of burning sulphur.¹²

For that was the stand of our King, alone on a hill, crucified, surrounded by enemies, deserted by His friends... watched by His loved ones who were helpless to Him... Yet this was His field, the world that His King, His Father, had given Him to save, to defend and to return to the kingdom. You could say Eleazar and Shammah were as good as dead, and figuratively speaking, God raised them both from the dead. Likewise, Jesus did die defending His field and was raised from the dead by God to prove His victory over every enemy of God – men, Satan, demons and Death himself. **If then we are to do the greater things, is it not to stand as He stood and live to fight as He fought? If you thought He was powerless, that is because He wanted to draw His enemies out. If you thought He was powerful, that is because He is merciful to His enemies.** Truly, One who has mastered the art of war.

Shammah and Eleazar stood alone in the weakness of one so that the entire Philistine army would be drawn out, so that the power of God would slay enough of them for the rest to flee and live by the mercy of God. For if Israel did not flee, then many more Philistines would have been slaughtered. If Jesus did not hold back the angelics, then many more than Judas would have died that day, but by God's mercy the powerlessness of one drew out the enemy so that the victory was won with very few casualties... especially for the enemy.

Thus the stand of the King is not as a king of the world who at best might stand at the head of a very large army and lead them into battle... or what is more commonly practised by most of the kings of the world is to hide behind a human shield of their soldiers, being the first to vacate the field if there is the smell of defeat. Rather, the stand of the King of the Kingdom of God is that He stands apart for His army whilst the whole might of the enemy falls upon Him so that the sight of one Man defeating many in a small field will allow God to panic the rest and spare more than would have been spared had both armies joined in battle. That is the power and the mercy of our King, mercy not just to His troops, but even for the troops of His enemies, and likewise we need to learn to do the same.

¹⁰ 1 Kings 19.18

¹¹ John 14.12

¹² Revelation 21.8

To stand alone and defend the King's field so that the power of God can be displayed for all to see... as a few are slaughtered, but many more of the enemy's troops are spared. If it is the will of God to decimate the ranks of His enemies, He would have done so long ago, but rather, He is not willing that any should perish but all to come to repentance. So He has permitted the ranks of His enemies to swell and become numerous without decimating them, even preserving them from each other so that He might display His mercy to them all.

That is the first lesson of the Mount – to come to see and understand how our King fought and won His victory so that we may fight and win ours – to learn the true power of one who stands alone defending his King and his King's fields... so that not only will God give the victory, but the very enemies themselves may be spared. Likewise, it will be the sight of one who takes his stand alone with his King to defend the kingdom's field, putting to death the sickness, pain and torment in the hundreds so that the tens of thousands who are watching can be saved... because the message, His message, is being confirmed with signs and wonders.

So now it is not God asking, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for Us?" rather it is, "Who will remain behind for Us?" For if one of the twelve broke ranks that evening outside Bethsaida and went immediately to where Jesus told them to go, then the harvest that awaited them in Bethsaida would have been brought in. What would have happened to them at Bethsaida? God knows and the Spirit knows and He makes known to those who agape Him.

And if it were not possible to get to Bethsaida because the others had taken the boat, then at least there would have been one who waited for the Lord to tell Him where they have gone; not that the Lord had not been watching.

So now it is time to remedy the wrong and correct the error, not by undoing the past, but by securing the future to ensure there is at least one of us who would remain on the sacred field even if all the others have fled so that God can give the victory on the day.

If only one can already do that, what can two do and what can thousands do so that our God can boast and say, "I have servants who go before I send them and do what I wish before I command"? No, not just servants, but sons and daughters.

Now for the joy of having such sons and daughters, what price?