

# THE UPWARD CALL

*Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet;  
but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead,  
**I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God  
IN CHRIST JESUS.***  
(Philippians 3:13-14 NASB)

#05-1135

## **Engedi Speaks of Spiritual Leadership**

July 3, 2011

As reported in the last issue, I believe the Lord woke me from sleep in the middle of the night and spoke to me the word *Engedi*. As I have meditated on this word and studied it more, I have realized more needs to be said. I was going to revise the last issue as part of a series but decided instead to let it stand and simply add to it in subsequent issues, as the Lord leads.

To rightfully place this word in the context of our day, I feel we need to step back a bit and take a closer look at the historical record of Jehoshaphat and the hostile army stationed at Engedi. This is important because, in order to have an "Engedi moment" in which God owns the battle, one must have the right heart toward God. In other words, it requires more than a nation having its back against the wall, so to speak. It requires a humble spiritual leader who unites the people as one with a heart-felt cry to God and an unwavering trust in God, even knowing Him as their trust.

Let us consider a few points.

First, Jehoshaphat's father Asa had a similar experience when an Ethiopian army of a million men came against Judah's army of 580,000 men. When he saw that the numbers were not in their favor, King Asa called upon the Lord and put his trust in Him. The Lord heard and routed the Ethiopians before Asa and Judah (2 Chronicles 14:8-9, 11-12). In other words, Jehoshaphat had a good role model.

Second, it is interesting that King Asa had an army of 580,000 men at his disposal, but when his son Jehoshaphat took the scepter of Judah, he had an army of 1,160,000 men (2 Chronicles 17:14-19). How could the size of the Judah army have doubled? The answer is simple. Israelites from the northern kingdom of Israel defected to Judah. Keep in mind that Israel under Jeroboam had forsaken the Lord and given the people Baal and a golden calf to worship; however, not all the Israelites were pleased with this evil transgression. When they heard that King Asa was removing the idols from the land and restoring the altar, and that the Lord was with Judah, many of them defected from Israel in favor of Judah, especially some from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon.

**He gathered all Judah and Benjamin and those from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who resided with them, for many defected to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.** (2 Chronicles 15:9 NASB)

It is apparent that the number of men in Judah's army had swelled dramatically under Asa so that his son inherited a very large army.

Third, the number of Jehoshaphat's army was recorded prior to him making peace with Ahab the wicked king of Israel and joining him in war against Ramoth-gilead. Ahab refused to heed the warning from Micaiah the prophet and was killed in battle (1 Kings 22). The record does not offer a count of the casualties from this war that Jehoshaphat should have avoided, so it is possible that his army was considerably diminished below the 1,160,000 level, which could have led him to fear the enemy that was invading Judah by way of Engedi. He knew that he had failed to follow the Lord and could see the result of his disobedience to wage war alongside wicked Israel.

Fourth, as Jehoshaphat returned from war, **Jehu the seer went out to meet him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD and so bring wrath on yourself from the LORD? But there is some good in you, for you have removed the Asheroth from the land and you have set your heart to seek God"** (2 Chronicles 19:2-3 NASB). The king had made a mistake, but there was some good in the man that made him a seeker of God. Undoubtedly, it was this heart that led him to rally all of Judah as one voice and to call upon the Lord as they faced possible annihilation by a mighty force staged at Engedi. In other words, a spiritual leader does not have to do everything correctly and will make mistakes; he needs a heart for the Lord.

Fifth, Jehoshaphat did not hide in his closet, so to speak, or appear before his people with some sort of political speech to positively spin the dire situation. He unabashedly stood before his people and cried out and appealed to God based on their history with the One who is in heaven and the ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations. No one can stand against His power and might. Even if they suffered, Jehoshaphat vowed: **'Should evil come upon us, the sword, or judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we will stand before this house and before You (for Your name is in this house) and cry to You in our distress, and You will hear and deliver us'** (2 Chronicles 20:9 NASB).

Sixth, Judah and Israel had a history with the Ammonites and Moabites, and Jehoshaphat reminded God of this history. When the sons of Israel had come out of Egypt, the Lord did not allow them to destroy the tribes of Lot, and now these very same tribes were about to reward them by driving them out of their God-given inheritance. Again, the king cried out: **"O our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this great multitude who are coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are on You"** (2 Chronicles 20:12 NASB).

Seventh, all of Judah stood together with their king, and when they did, God sent a word to them through Jahaziel the Levite. He answered their cry for help.

**(13) All Judah was standing before the LORD, with their infants, their wives and their children. (14) Then in the midst of the assembly the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah...; (15) and he said, "Listen, all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not fear or be dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. ... (17) 'You need not fight in this battle; station yourselves, stand and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem.' Do not fear or be dismayed; tomorrow go out to face them, for the LORD is with you."** (2 Chronicles 20:13-15, 17 NASB)

The battle was not theirs but God's. For their part, they were to stand and see the salvation of the Lord, that is, stand as one united under God and see Him save them from their enemies. They did not even have to fight; they simply had to march out and face their enemies. When they did, God made His move. But how did He rout their enemies? Some say that God sent angels to the battle, but the most likely scenario is that He caused a distrust to rise up among the army stationed at Engedi. The Moabites and Ammonites came from the land of Edom (Mount Seir), and they had Edomites in their ranks. It has been proposed that other Edomites, ones separate from the Edomites in the invading army, laid an ambush on the Moabites and Ammonites, which, in turn, led the Moabites and Ammonites to turn against the Edomites in their ranks, thinking they were co-conspirators in the ambush. Thus, infighting occurred that quickly led to all the tribes devouring one another.

Eighth, and the most significant, Jehoshaphat was a humble spiritual leader who united all his people as one nation under God. There was no wavering in the king's heart and call to God alone as their only way to be saved from their enemies. He was an example of a true leader, one that was fertile ground upon which the Holy Spirit could work. He didn't puff up himself before his people with rhetoric about how powerful he and his army were, nor did he assume that God was on their side. No; he did not presume anything except how powerless he and his people were in such a situation. The King of Judah set his eyes upon the Lord and the people followed. **"We do not know what to do, but our eyes are on You."** This is spiritual leadership. Think about it in light of our modern-day leaders!