



Iron Chariots



David Wilkerson November 16, 1987

"And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron" (Judges 1:19). "But the mountain shall be thine; for it is a wood, and thou shalt cut it down: and the outgoings of it shall be thine: for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites, though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong" (Joshua 17:18).

Why is America plagued with AIDS? Why are our streets unsafe to walk on? Why is a whole generation alcohol and drug crazed? Why are our borders defenseless, with pushers flooding our nation with a tidal wave of drugs of all kinds?

Isaiah describes our time in Isaiah 1:4-7: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evildoers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken anymore? Ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers."

God warned Israel that their evil lusts would end up in slavery. "The Lord shall bring you into Egypt...there ye shall be sold to your enemies" (Deuteronomy 28:68).

America has become an evil, wicked nation; and God has sold us to the enemy. We are now a nation of slaves. We are slaves to lust, alcohol, drugs, television, money, sex, pleasure! We were warned to study God's Word and learn from Israel's mistakes. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: *and they were written for our admonition* (instruction), upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11, emphasis mine).

A powerful, detailed example for our instruction is found in Judges 4 and 5. "The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord...And the Lord sold them into the hand of Jabin, king of the Canaanites" (Judges 4:1,2).

Israel was a once-holy nation, set apart unto God, relying on His power alone, afraid of nothing! Her cities were filled with laughing, playing children. Her leaders and shepherds yearned after God's own heart. But God sold Israel to slavery because of lust and compromise! During twenty years of bondage Israel cringed like cowards because 900 Canaanite iron chariots raced up and down their highways. No Israelite could safely walk the streets. Children lived in fear! There was "war in the gates" because they had turned to new gods. "The highways were unoccupied...travelers walked through byways" (Judges 5:6).

What pity! How shameful! There was a day these people of God would have wiped out any enemy! No weapon formed against them could prosper. Now, look at these cowards — God's people — sneaking around, walking in fear. The sound of the rumbling of the enemy's iron chariots striking fear in their hearts. It was the same kind of scene in Czechoslovakia when Russian tanks rumbled through the streets enforcing Communism. All opposition was squelched! Israel fled the villages, hiding out in the hills. Sin had turned the nation into a cowardly, groveling, powerless people.

Some of you reading this may be asking already, "What's your point? You are certainly not going to suggest we Christians today are enslaved and cowardly! Certainly you aren't going to overlook all the great conventions, seminars, crusades, marches! What of all the special ministries against abortion, pornography? What of the mega-churches, where thousands now gather in great praise and worship meetings? Isn't this revival? Isn't God with His church?" Others may be asking, "Look at all the busy Christians — jail workers, street workers. Look at all the drug rehabilitation programs, all the many spiritual retreats. And what about all the mass literature invasions, Christian radio and television? Isn't this revival?"

The answer to these questions is in Times Square, on 42nd Street — and in other decadent areas across our nation. The answer is in the many crack dens, the crowded hospitals filled with AIDS patients, the screaming, mind-blown addicts; the porno video shops proliferating all across the nation, even in the smallest towns.

We Are Talking About the Devil's Iron Chariots!

The devil's wicked iron chariots are still racing up and down the streets — spreading fear — going unchallenged! The nation, the church, seem powerless to stop them!

Recently we brought over 500 Christians into New York City to help us launch Times Square Church. Most were bold and fearless and got a burden for New York. But some could not wait to get back to their safe areas. They left saying, "What a slime pit! Demons are in control everywhere! How awful!" New Yorkers are no different. I hear Christians say, "I try to stay out of those wicked areas! I don't want to go near them." So we escape to our safe homes and apartments, staying away from addicts, staying away from Times Square, staying away from the poor, the bag ladies, staying a safe distance — *afraid of these satanic iron chariots!*

How dare we boast that revival has come — anywhere in this land — when Satan's strongholds are not being challenged! Is this revival, when all the powers that be, both city, state and national, cannot shut down 42nd Street? When all our government can offer is to go up to the iron chariots and "*just say no!*"? Is this revival, when all the churches in New York City combined are not able to stop the devils' iron chariots?

The addicts and pimps are getting bolder; homosexuals come out of hiding; pornographers mock our laws; Wall Street brokers wheel and deal with no fear; criminals plunder and rob in broad daylight! And every Sunday, a few hundred Christians gather like cowards in their safe houses — most of them thinking nothing can be done about these iron chariots! The rest are lounging in easy chairs, laughing at Bill Cosby on TV.

The truth is, the church has settled for only mountaintop victories. Like the Israelites in the story in Judges 1, we "drive out the enemy on the mountain." "And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain..." (Judges 1:19). This represents victory over habits: flesh, lust — the enemy within! Israel set up her altars on the high places, began to settle down to worship and praise, and gave up the rest to the devil's crowd. They looked down on 900 iron chariots and said, "The valley belongs to the god of this world. Let the enemy have it. Let's avoid it! We'll stay up here and enjoy the blessings of the mountaintop. What can we do against such wicked power?"

By not going after those iron chariots, Israel presented a false picture of God to the heathen. They made God appear weak, helpless! The chariot drivers mocked, "Theirs is a god of the hills! He's only a god of songs — someone to sing about! They praise so loudly but act so cowardly! Theirs is only a god of the cowardly, the helpless."

So it is today! What image does the world have of the church? This is what they're saying, "It's a weak, fanatical bunch of old ladies and megaphone street preachers who stick a piece of literature in your hand. Church is for the sick, the weak, the powerless — those who fall apart! Those people don't make any difference whatsoever. They've been here for years but nothing changes. It only gets worse!" "They are all like the money-grabbing TV preachers. They have a computer Jesus. They have no guts, no power. They talk a lot about power, but the only demons they fight are inside the church. They are afraid of the real devil out here."

There can be no true revival until God's people go out in faith to challenge the devil's iron chariots — right on his own ground! Why must there be a revival of holiness? Because that is the only kind of revival that brings out hatred for sin. There must be holy anger against the devil's iron chariots! When the revival God wants is here, no demon is

safe! There will be no co-existence with evil. No principality or power is immune from spiritual authority, because the vision of Christ's holiness creates an active hatred and anger against sin! The demoniacs are commanded to be free! The idol-makers cry out, "Our livelihood is at stake" — the evil books are burned. The deceivers who lie to the Holy Ghost drop dead. The magistrates tremble, jailers fall on their faces and get converted, and the cities are filled with the knowledge that God is in town!

During the great Welsh revival under the ministry of Evan Roberts, teen-agers prayed! They got tired of alcoholic dads beating mothers. They prayed the bars shut! The police wept and joined in the singing — and crime nearly stopped.

Intercessory Prayer: The Only Way to Bring About the Revival God Wants!

"And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord..." (Judges 4:3). It is even stronger in the original Hebrew, "They shrieked unto the Lord together!" Corporately, desperately they called on God!

In the midst of all the wickedness, God had a witness of His holiness in the land — a prophetess named Deborah. While everyone else was cowardly, drying up, barren, Deborah was in Mount Ephraim shut up with God, getting to know His heart, bearing His burden, learning to trust Jehovah for victory over all enemy power. Deborah began to bring forth a pure word to the church of the Lord which was under the palm tree at the hill of Ephraim. There was a message of holiness and repentance and victory being preached in that hidden church! The people came — slowly at first! Rich and poor! The upper class ["...ye that ride white horses..." Judges 5:10] came to Deborah to hear and to pray. God always has His own among the wealthy. During Finney's revival, the wealthiest in town were at the heart of it all. They listened to Deborah, and how their hearts burned within them! They, too, began to see the iron chariots had to go!

The middle class came ["...those who walk..." Judges 5:10]. Not riding on white horses — today these represent those who ride the buses, the subways, the blue collar workers. There was no class preference, as the all came to hear the same Word.

The poor came. "Those that are delivered from the noise of the archer in the places of drawing water..." (Judges 5:11). These had to fight to survive; they were always at risk, living from one draw to the next. But they, too, came to Deborah's palm church!

And the scribes came. "Out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer" (Judges 5:14). All revivals have this — a hidden remnant of scribes, willing to fight iron chariots with their gifts! I prophesy many will be raised up in the media in days ahead. Theirs will be a powerful word! Praying writers, both male and female, will be enlisted in this last war!

It was men and women — working together! There were Deborah and Barak, ministering together. There is nothing macho about a true Holy Ghost revival. It is God moving on handmaidens; it is God provoking men to act! How different Barak's attitude was from what we see today. He was told that if Deborah went along into battle, a woman would be given credit for winning the war. Barak cared nothing for credit or honor! He wanted the prophetic authority and the praying power of this prophetess with him. So it will be today! When true revival comes, no one shines! There will be no ego tripping! No going to hear "my favorite preacher." There will be no more saying, "Oh, doesn't he have such great power!" Instead, it will be said, "Jesus is there! It's holy there! God speaks there!"

The victory was really won against the iron chariots on Mount Ephraim under the palm tree. It was an underground move of God. The message in this church was, "Not one inch to the enemy! No more iron chariots! War is here!" Everyone who came to this hidden place left with their hearts on fire. Barak, the warrior ["man of lightning"], had been there! What did he hear from Deborah? "When will you rise up and be men? When will you believe God has the power to wipe out these iron chariots?" And the princes, the leaders and the scribes received the word coming forth that God was about to wage war: "Better get in the fight! God is going to vindicate His name! He will be glorified before the eyes of the wicked!"

Out of the intercession came very clear directions. "Go to Mount Tabor, and take with thee ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun" (Judges 4:6). It could not have been any clearer! How very specific it was — go to Mount Tabor and gather 10,000 men! The enemy will come against you with iron chariots at the Kishon River — God will deliver the iron chariots and all the army into your hands!

Deborah knew when to move and how to move. On that precise day she had heard from God! To her, those 900 iron chariots were already junk! "And Sisera gathered together all his chariots, even nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people that were with him, from Harosheth of the Gentiles unto the river of Kishon. And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the Lord gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him" (Judges 4:13,14).

Why is it that so much of what we do in the name of God is without results, confused, unsatisfying, and no challenge to the devil's iron chariots? Why are our directions not so precise, so clear, as that received by Deborah who lived in a time of less light? It is because we have not been shut in with God! We pray only to be self-gratified! We refuse the discipline of private and corporate prayer!

I am personally tired of all the empty, useless activity. In the past 30 years, we have distributed tons and tons of literature. We have stood before the people, like children on the seashore holding up hands to a tidal wave, yelling, "Stop!" A tract is nothing but a paper sword — unless it is accompanied by the Holy Ghost! It is like going up to the iron chariots and crying out, "This far and no further," then waving paper swords. That is the letter that kills, unless it is backed with much prayer and tears! Through prayer God turns that paper sword into rapier steel! Street meetings without Holy Ghost power, without spiritual authority, are useless. Mere entertainment with no changed lives. Only through prayer and fasting can we challenge these strongholds!

They prayed down a rainstorm — and it was the rain that brought down the iron chariots! "They fought from heaven; the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength. Then were the househoofs broken by the means of the prancings, the prancings of their mighty ones" (Judges 5:20-22). The Kishon river overflowed its banks. A huge marsh was created. The enemy got up, mounted their chariots, and the wheels spun deeper and deeper into the mud. The chariots were now liabilities! Worthless hunks of iron. Look at Barak's army excitedly climbing over those immobilized chariots, smashing wheels, tearing apart the harnesses. Don't you know they looked at those worthless, muddy, sunken chariots and said, "We were afraid of this?" "And the Lord discomfited [routed] Sisera, and all his chariots, and all his host..." (Judges 4:15).

When the rain of the Holy Ghost comes in answer to prayer, God mires the enemy down on his own territory. Overnight, Satan's power is exposed as useless. God's people will not be afraid anymore. They will not fear what Satan can do. Families will be saved; children will be made strong! All the enemy strongholds among God's people will be crushed. The falling rain renders the enemy powerless.

It Is Dangerous to be Complacent During God's Appointed Day of Awakening!

While the awakened band went out to take dominion in God's name, others refused to get involved. Iron chariots did not concern them as they were too busy with their own problems and life.

The Reubenites refused to get involved. "Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks? For the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart. Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches" (Judges 5:16,17).

The Reubenites are still with us! They are right now conducting or planning another "How To" seminar. They are gathering at conventions, conferences, sharing great thoughts about how to win the lost. How to take dominion. How to bring about a righteous kingdom. They are drawing up charts. They have their computers spitting out numbers — how the world can be saved in 90 days if 3.5 Christians witness to 6.2 heathen.

What great heart-searchings! They even weep over their unconcern. They love to go to meetings to be greatly convicted. They make great resolutions. Committees are formed. They draw up strategy, always asking, "What is your strategy to win your city?" "What is your game plan?" My answer is, "Our only plan is to stay on our knees until God tells us exactly how and when to act." They are still talking when the battle is already fought and won. They are the ones who write the books for the future generations — "16 Steps To Win Over Iron Chariots." The Reubenites were people of no action — no commitment — no dirty hands — no going up to the mountain to pray with Deborah! They had to get to their next conference.

I say — Enough of all the marches, the TV specials, the mass meetings, the paper plans, the strategy meetings, the

great thoughts of great minds, the prodding, the begging! *It's time to pray! It's time to lay hold of God! It's time to put it all aside and cry out to the Lord for power and guidance!*

Giliad, Asher and Dan were too busy making money! Seeking success and prosperity. Too addicted to comfort and ease! Read Judges 5:17 again. They "abode in the breaches" — all wrapped up in their own little world of need. Absorbed with little battles of their own! They "remained in their ships" — rowing their own boat.

These are those against whom Amos prophesied! "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion...that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; that chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music, like David; that drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph...."

They were "not grieved over the affliction of Joseph!" They "put off the time of judgment" — "lying on beds of ivory, at ease!" "Stretched out on easy couches" — "eating and drinking well" — "chanting their music." They were inventing new ways to enjoy life.

It was said that someone came into A. B. Simpson's office early one morning and saw that great missionary preacher on the floor, clutching the globe of the world — weeping over the lost.

The Curse of Meroz

The Merozites just did not care! And they were cursed by God for their complacency! "Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord against the mighty" (Judges 5:23). The curse of Meroz is one of the most serious matters in all of God's Word. It was a curse right out of heaven — clearly revealing God's attitude about complacency! Reuben, Gad, Giliad and Asher did not get involved — but they were not cursed as was Meroz! Why the frightful curse on Meroz?

It was a bitter controversy God had with Meroz! I believe it was because Meroz sinned against light. They had heard the trumpet sound and turned a deaf ear. They heard Deborah's' heartcry and mocked! Merozites, I believe, were cursed because they were so close to the battle, so near the iron chariots, yet so far from being involved or caring. The days are long gone when Christians can be so near the battle, see so much all around them, and shut it out, saying, "I'll shut myself in, pray, grow up in Jesus all alone. I don't need anybody — just me and the Lord!"

No! The judge will call us to account. "I was hungry — you did not feed me! Naked, in prison — and you did nothing! You did not go out into the byways and hedges and compel them to come in! You shut yourself up — wrapped your talent in a napkin, waiting for the Lord's coming! You are the buried talent!"

Meroz tried to hide out from the turmoil and take the safe and easy way. They would let the rest of God's people fight the iron chariots, while they cuddled up securely around their cozy fireplaces. But God despised their complacency and put a curse upon them. The curse of Meroz is the worst kind of all — to be left to one's self interest, robbed of all spiritual vision and energy, to simply fade away into mindless oblivion.

As for me, give me Deborah's spunk and fire — give me her Holy Ghost backbone, her boundless faith and confidence, and her unwillingness to cower before God's enemies. *Let the church of Jesus Christ declare war on all Satanic iron chariots and pray down victory!*

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