

Hang 'Em High

The Bible says God's righteous people may be knocked down seven times, but they get back up every time. It makes me think of the movie "Rocky" because every time his opponent Apollo would knock him down, Rocky would get back up.

A believer's success is not based upon doing everything perfectly. The believers listed in Hebrews 11 were not perfect, but when they got knocked down, they got back up.

Abraham was knocked down numerous times, but he got back up. David was also knocked down many times, but each time he got back up again. Regardless of how many times we may be knocked over by the enemy, our success is in the faith, grace, strength, and power that were made available to us when Jesus rose from the dead. No matter how many times we are knocked down, through Jesus we can get back up every time.

Ephesians 4:

vs. 26 Be angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down on your wrath:

vs. 27 Neither give place to the devil.

The word for "place" is the Greek word "topos." The words "topography" and "topographical" come from this word. The word means, "a bounded off area, marked off territory." Verse 27 is telling us that we can draw a boundary around what God has given us and be determined to not give it up. There is a justified anger, a righteous indignation we should have toward the works of Satan. We need to be determined to stand against those works until we win.

Galatians 3:

vs. 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangs on a tree.

This verse defines the fact that God has removed from His Church the curse of the law. First, Jesus became sin so we could become the righteousness of God in Him. But if that were not enough, He also took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses and with His stripes we were healed! Both the Old and New Testaments reveal this. In addition, Jesus removed the curse of poverty from us. Second Corinthians 8 tells us, "He became poor for us that we through his poverty might be rich."

Jesus took the curse that was on us to the tree. That curse was nailed to the cross, removed far from us, and then Jesus Christ rose from the dead!

Joshua 10 relays the story of five kings who united against Joshua, the children of Israel, and the inhabitants of Gibeon, who had allied themselves with Israel. Previous to this battle, Israel had conquered Jericho and Ai. The five kings were upset because of the alliance between Gibeon and Israel. Actually, the kings were fearful not so much of the people of Israel. They were fearful of the God of Israel.

Satan is not afraid of us. He is afraid of our God. He is afraid of Jesus Christ who redeemed us. He is not afraid of our name. He is afraid of the name in which we stand, the name of Jesus.

When Israel crossed dry ground through the Red Sea and the Egyptian army drowned when they tried to cross after them, fear shook the inhabitants of the nations. When the ten spies went into the promised land, even though they came back with an evil report, the people of Canaan were probably wondering why they didn't attack them. Thirty-nine years later, two spies came in to Rahab's house and she said, "What has taken you so long? We knew when God split the Red Sea, this land belonged to you and we have been waiting in fear for forty years!"

There are days when it seems that one aggravating demon is coming against us. And then there are those days when it seems that all of hell has come against you. Israel found itself in a similar situation. Up until this time they only fought one king at a time, but now they had five kings coming against them.

It does not matter whether one demon is coming against you or all the demons in hell, the Bible says, the gates of hell shall not prevail against us and greater is He that is in us than He that is in the world. When we have a promise from the Word of God to support what we are believing, what other people think is irrelevant.

Joshua 10:

vs. 12 *Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.*

vs. 13 *And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.*

vs. 14 *And there was no day like that before or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man; for the Lord fought for Israel.*

Imagine the earth's rotation being suspended for an entire day at the voice of one man. The law of gravity was still in effect and all the systems of nature continued to function normally. God heard the voice of one man and the sun did not set just so that man and his troops could win a battle. That is how much God cares about each one of us. Heaven and earth may pass away, but not a single word of God's promises will ever pass away.

Some may wonder, "What in the world is the book of Jasher?" mentioned in verse thirteen? "Jasher" actually means, "the book of the upright". It was a book of history, more like a journal, in which battles of the armies were recorded. This book is also mentioned in Numbers 21:14, recording the battles of Moses, and in 2 Samuel 1:18, recording the battles of David. The book of Jasher contained battle hymns, poems, and odes journalizing documented battles. Although it was not an inspired book, it

evidently was important enough to have been mentioned in the Word of God in relation to Moses, Joshua, and David's ministries.

Joshua 10:

vs. 15 *And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.*

vs. 16 *But these five kings fled, and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah.*

vs. 17 *And it was told Joshua, saying, The five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah.*

vs.18 *And Joshua said, Roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave, and set men by it for to keep them:*

vs. 19 *And stay ye not, but pursue after your enemies, and smite the hindmost of them; suffer them not to enter into their cities: for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hand.*

vs. 20 *And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed, that the rest which remained of them entered into fenced cities.*

vs. 21 *And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace: none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel.*

vs. 22 *Then said Joshua, Open the mouth of the cave, and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave.*

vs. 23 *And they did so, and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.*

vs. 24 *And it came to pass, when they brought out those kings unto Joshua, that Joshua called for all the men of Israel, and said unto the captains of*

the men of war which went with him, Come near, put your feet upon the necks of these kings. And they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them.

vs. 25 *And Joshua said unto them, Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight.*

vs. 26 *And afterward Joshua smote them, and slew them, and hanged them on five trees: and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening.*

vs. 27 *And it came to pass at the time of the going down of the sun, that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees, and cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid, and laid great stones in the cave's mouth, which remain until this very day.*

How incredible! The sun did not set until the entire battle was over. Just imagine what was going through the minds of those five kings when they realized the sun was not setting. Once they noticed that the sun was not going down, they fled and hid in a cave leaving their armies to be killed. It is likely the kings had planned to flee at the first sign of darkness so no one would see them, but the light kept them exposed. When it was reported to Joshua that they had fled, he commanded that great stones be rolled over the mouth of the cave and sent guards to watch over it.

After Israel had won the battle, Joshua commanded the stones to be rolled away and the kings to be brought from the cave. He then told the guards to lay them on the ground. Joshua commanded the leaders of the tribes of Israel to put their feet on the necks of these kings and announced, "This is the power that God has given you to overcome. Be strong and of a good courage, for what you see under your feet will happen to all of our enemies. Keep your faith and trust in God. Trust His promises and stand on them and just like the king of Jericho, the king of Ai, and these five kings, the enemies that remain to be conquered will end up under your feet!"

Joshua then slew the five kings, hung them on five different trees, and left them there for everyone to see. After they had been cut down and buried in a cave, the sun went down! How could Joshua possibly know that the sun would keep shining? The answer is simple. His faith kept the sun in place until the time the kings would be cut from the tree and buried. Joshua was standing on a promise!

Deuteronomy 21:

vs. 22 *And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree:*

vs. 23 *His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.*

These verses stress the importance of burying someone who was hanged before the going down of the sun. Under the law, if a person hung was not buried before the sun went down, the same curse that was upon that person would come upon the land.

Notice, verse 22 mentions a sin described as “worthy of death”. This would encompass murder. It was required that such a person be hanged on a tree. As the crowd watched a person being hanged for murder or another capital sin, they observed the consequences of committing those sins. If any in the crowd were considering committing the same sin, watching someone die by hanging on a tree gave them an opportunity to reconsider.

There is no explanation as to why a curse would come on the land if the person hanged was not buried before the sun went down, but Joshua understood that his battle could not end until those five kings had been hung and buried in the cave. He knew all of this had to occur before the sun went down.

It is important to understand that the sun was hanging in the balance for one reason; the promises of God were at stake. God’s promises were hanging in the balance,

and if it comes down to the sun standing still or the promises being fulfilled, God will see to it that the sun stands still until the promises come to pass!

God loves man more than all of His creation. God hearkened to the voice of *one man* whose mouth was filled with the promises of God! Throughout the Word of God, His promises proclaimed from the tongue of a man or woman of faith caused nature to be suspended. God parted the Red Sea at man's command. He caused the Jordan River to back up at man's command. An axe head floated when man commanded it to do so. Impossible? Yes. But if you have to walk on water to fulfill your ministry, God will suspend nature, even for just one person whose mouth is filled with His Word because He loves His people so much!

In Exodus 17:12, Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands until Israel had won the battle against Amalek. Aaron and Hur understood the importance of winning the battle before the sun went down and they held Moses' hands to speed up the battle.

Whether speeding up the battle or commanding the sun to stand still, the Word of God was fulfilled. When you are facing a battle, winning the battle is what is most important. God can speed up the battle or suspend nature in your behalf when his Word is in your mouth.

Hanging on a cross was one of the most agonizing deaths in the ancient world. When a person was hung on the cross, it usually took days for them to die. A person who was hung on the cross usually had their hands and feet pierced, and in Jesus' case, He had a crown of thorns placed upon His head. They normally were groaning, screaming, and crying while people watched them typically die of dehydration. It may take twenty-four hours or maybe thirty hours, but eventually they would pass out. After they passed out, the Roman soldiers would break their bones with a mallet to speed up the death process. However, in the case of Jesus, God knew that because they hung him on a tree, He would have to be buried before the going down of the sun.

At nine o'clock in the morning, Jesus was placed on the cross. That meant that He had to die before sunset. The thieves on the cross next to Jesus probably lived a day or two longer. But Jesus had to die and be buried before the sun went down because

He did not take one case of adultery or murder upon Himself. The sin of the entire world was placed upon Him. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.

For the first three hours Jesus hung on the cross, He forgave the sins of those around Him and gave the keeping of His mother over to John. Suddenly, at noon, normally the brightest time of the day, darkness covered the entire earth for three hours. During this time, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Three hours later, at three o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus died. He cried out, *"Into your hands I commend my spirit."* Jesus did not die because of the nails or thorns. He died when He was ready to die. The Bible says that Jesus "gave up the ghost." Satan did not take Jesus' life; Jesus gave it up. At three o'clock, one of the guards noticed Jesus appeared to be dead even though Jesus had only hung on the cross for six hours. The guard rammed his spear into Jesus' side and declared Him dead. Another guard came with a mallet to break Jesus' bones but the other guard stopped him because Jesus was already dead. This was to fulfill a prophecy from Psalms that said, *"Not one bone of Him would be broken."*

They removed Jesus from the cross, wound Him in grave clothes, and buried Him in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. As soon as the stone was rolled in front of the tomb, the sun went down. In order for Jesus to be buried before the sun went down, God either had to stop the sun or speed up the process. He did both and Jesus was buried before the sun went down! The sin of the whole world was hanging in the balance, but God's plan came to pass and Jesus was buried in accordance with the law.

It is important to note that Joshua did not put his feet on the necks of the five kings but commanded the leaders of the tribes of Israel to put their feet on their necks. We are to take dominion over the enemy. What caused Joshua to be courageous? He believed God's promises. What caused him to be victorious? He believed God's promises. What causes us to be courageous and victorious? We too, must believe God's promises.

Ephesians 1:

- vs. 19 *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,*
- vs. 20 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,*
- vs. 21 *Far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*
- vs. 22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,*
- vs. 23 *Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

When Jesus rose from the dead, it wasn't for Him; it was for us. When Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father, it wasn't for Him; it was for us. Jesus Christ is the head of the Church. Jesus is the head of the body of Christ and the body of Christ has been given authority over all dominion, principality, power, might, and Satan himself. They have been placed under our feet! You may feel like the lowest member of the body of Christ, but Satan is still under your feet. I doesn't matter if you feel like "less than the least of all saints" as Paul did, Satan is *still* under your feet! One of the most unscriptural prayers we can pray is "Jesus, please get rid of the devil for me." We are to put our feet on the neck of the enemy. Joshua didn't put his feet on the neck's of the kings. He commanded his leaders to do so. Jesus has already defeated the enemy. He has given us the authority to put our feet on his neck!

Luke 10:

- vs. 19 *Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

We have been given authority to "tread" and we "tread" with our feet! We have been given the authority to step on Satan's neck, but eventually he will be

thrown into the cave called the lake of fire—the bottomless pit, forever. Until that day, we keep our feet on his neck. He cannot defeat us. Just as Joshua told his leaders, “*Fear not, nor be dismayed, be strong and of good courage: for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight;*” the Lord has given us victory *every time!* We win *every time* because Satan is under our feet!

We are to speak to things. Satan can hear us, demons can hear us, and things can hear us! Jesus spoke to trees. He spoke to mountains and commands us to speak to them as well! Romans 8:31 says “*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*” Our words need to be in line with God’s Word. We need to forget the voice of the multitude, nature around us, and the things that seemingly cannot be changed. God can change any situation and nature itself to bring His plan and promises to pass!

It is a discredit to the work of Jesus on the cross if we give up the battle before we win because Jesus went to the cross and won so we could walk in victory! He defeated Satan, spoiled principalities and powers, and did everything to ensure our victory. But so often we give up before we win because we say, “The sun is setting...the doctor’s report came in...the creditors are calling...It is hopeless.” But God is saying, “Don’t give up! Command these things to stand still! Fight until you win!”

Bob Yandian

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