

Monday morning! Another gift from God. My prayer: "Lord, give me grace to live today for Your honor and glory. May the Holy Spirit help me be a positive witness for the precious Lord Jesus, so that others may desire to know Him and walk with Him. Here is my Devotional for today as we begin this work week. I trust it will be a blessing to you.

PROMOTING GOD'S CAUSE

A Devotional prepared by Dr. Robert L. Morris

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"And David said, ... 'Is there not a cause?' '... that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all this assembly shall know that the LORD does not save with sword and spear; for the battle is the LORD's.'" (1 Samuel 17:29, 46; NKJV)

King David's question could easily be restated in a positive statement. "Surely you men have not forgotten that we have a cause." In question form, this was very important, as it came from the heart of a young shepherd boy named David. In the Hebrew language (the language of the majority of the Old Testament), an important word is used. It is דָּבָר – dābār and it deserves serious consideration. The New King James Version translates it by the English word "cause." As a verb the Hebrew word is usually translated with an English word related to "speaking," "talking," "telling," "questioning" "reasoning." As a noun it is translated by "a word," "something said," "a reason," "a cause," "a speech." It is, as always, very important to review the context in which a word is used. David, a young shepherd boy had just brought food from home for his older brothers who were engaged in a war with the greatly feared Philistines. Arriving at the scene of the battle, he observed the Philistine champion, a giant named Goliath. David also noticed that the Israelite soldiers retreated from any encounter with this powerful man. David, young but perceptive, asked two closely related questions: "What will be done for the man who kills that Philistine and removes this disgrace from Israel? Just who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (1 Samuel 17:26; HCSB) After David received an unsatisfactory answer from his eldest brother Eliab, David asked one of the most important questions ever asked: "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?" (1 Samuel 17:29; NKJV) Interestingly, other translations render the last question of David: "What have I done now?" protested David. 'It was just a question.' (HCSB) Or, "Now what have I done?" said David. 'Can't I even speak?' (TNIV) Or, "What have I done now? Was it not just a question?" (NASB) Unashamedly I prefer the New King James Version: "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?" Or "... is there not a reason?" The word דָּבָר – dābār is a part of the response of David to his older brothers when their "anger was aroused against David." (1 Samuel 1:28; NKJV) David's question could easily be restated in a positive statement: "Surely you men have not forgotten that we have a cause." Or, "Surely you men have not forgotten that we have a reason for stating and defending the great truth about our God." It is this same shepherd boy, trusting in the LORD God of Israel, trained well and obviously skilled in how to use a sling, who stated the cause when he said to the Philistine giant Goliath, "the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel." (1 Samuel 17:46; TNIV) I recall reading somewhere that "David didn't need to know Goliath's strength, because he already knew God's strength!" Now, my friends, let's think a little more about the cause of which David spoke in his question! This fantastic truth, and its applicational format to our day, will unapologetically be repeated over and over throughout this Devotional.

1. "WHO IS THIS GOD IN ISRAEL?"

This is the serious question that must be answered. A future-determining war was being fought. The marauding Philistines were challenging a very significant people ... the people of God, "the apple of His eye," (Deuteronomy 32:10). Moses wrote of Israel, "the LORD your God loves you." (Deuteronomy 23:5; NKJV) The Prophet Jeremiah recorded God's statement concerning Israel: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore, I have drawn you with lovingkindness." (Jeremiah 31:3; NKJV) Therefore, Philistines ... and the rest of the world ... don't mess with Israel. There IS a God in Israel!

Let us remember clearly and unmistakably that it was through Israel that God elected to reveal Himself in the most significant way ... to bring deliverance from the eternal bondage of sin. That was the cause for which David stood firmly and fought bravely. Who is He? God is not some cosmic bell-hop who will jump at our commands, and perform according to our will. He is the God who is able to perform everything He wills to do. This has been challenged by many through the centuries through such as the atheism of Marx and Lenin, the evolutionism of Darwin, the humanism of Huxley, the secularism of Dewey, and the existentialism of

Kirkegaard. Yet, it stands unalterably true! The Word of God proclaims this great person of God ... full and absolute reality. It would exhaust a life-time of study, preaching and teaching just to skim the surface of Biblical truth related to the truth of WHO God is! Let's look into the Word of God and find at least a part of a Biblical answer to this question. It needs to be proclaimed, from the Holy Scriptures that the Lord our God is:

Elohim the Mighty, All-powerful God!

El Shaddai the Mighty, All-sufficient God!

El Tzidkenou the LORD, our righteousness!

El Elyon the Most-High God!

El Olam the God of Eternity!

El Roi the God who sees!

Jehovah the Covenant-keeping God!

Jehovah Jireh the LORD who provides!

Jehovah Shammah the LORD who is there!

Jehovah Hoseenu the LORD our Maker!

Jehovah Rophi the LORD our Physician!

Jehovah Nissi the LORD our Banner!

Jehovah M'Kaddesh the LORD who Sanctifies!

Jehovah Shalom the LORD our Peace!

Jehovah Rohi the LORD, my Shepherd!

Yeshua Mashiach the Messiah Savior!

Such self-designating names as given by God Himself in His Word are but a small part of that magnificent storehouse of Biblical revelation touching the reality of God! This is the first foundational principle which will positively assure that "the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel." This is the reality of the Person of God.

2. "WHAT IS THE "TRACK-RECORD" OF THAT CAUSE?"

A student of the Word of God needs to research carefully to be able to document the "history" of that challenging, God-given cause, that "the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel" For:

* It is the definable theme of a deliverance plan announced by Moses on the desert of Midian.

* It billows in the clouds and smoke and fire as God's people traversed out of Egypt.

* It roars in the night wind that parted the waters of the Red Sea for the people of God to cross safely.

* It thunders from behind the veil on Mt. Sinai as the divine etchings were cast in stone to announce: "You shall have no other gods before Me!"

* It gushes forth as water from the grayish-brown rock in the hot, barren desert of Israel's long journey toward the Land of Promise.

* It falls as a blanket of manna on the table of the desert to reassure God's people of His presence.

* It rides on the flood-swollen waters of Jordan, parting them to allow the people of God to enter the Land of Promise.

* It was the rally cry for the people of Israel as they stood on the east side of the Jordan river, ready to cross that flood-swollen river into the Land of Promise. Joshua declared fervently of the miraculous crossing that lay ahead of them: "By this you shall know that the living God is among you!" (Joshua 3:10; NKJV)

The history of Israel and of the Church of Jesus Christ affirm without question that this cause is:

* The cause for Israel's existence and conquests.

* The cause for which Daniel stood unafraid in the den of lions.

* The cause for which Jeremiah suffered in the dungeons of judgment.

* The cause for which three Hebrews valiantly accepted the hateful judgment of a fiery furnace.

* The cause for Bethlehem's manger and Golgotha's cross.

* The cause for which the early followers of the Nazarene endured the vermin-ridden dungeons, the flesh-mangling beatings, and hideous, inhuman martyrdom.

* The cause for which a little Jewish man left every creature comfort to march fearlessly across Asia Minor, braving the elements, with inadequate human support, to maul the marketplaces, to stir the synagogues, and penetrate the palaces with the glorious news of redemption.

* The cause that soars on the wings of flight for every missionary with the vision of winning the lost to Jesus the Christ from every nation, tribe, language, and village.

* The cause that rode in the saddle with John Wesley to face the uncouth, uncultured, unreached miners in Northern England, Ireland, and Scotland.

* The cause that pulled the heart of Francis Asbury across the coal fields of Pennsylvania, the green hills of Kentucky, the red-barn dotted farms of Ohio, to plant the seeds of Scriptural holiness on American soil.

* The cause that burned as an inextinguishable flame in the hearts of a host of spiritual giants of the faith to plant the Gospel in the hills and valleys, across the dusty plains, and in the growing hamlets, villages, towns, and cities of America.

And now, since Calvary's love, mercy, grace, and redeeming power, it is that "All the earth may know that there is a God in the Church triumphant!"

3. "HOW THEN CAN THIS CAUSE BE PROMOTED?"

In other words, how can we, a part of that world-wide group of God's people, promote ... spread to the world in which we live, that clearly defined cause, that "the whole world will know that there is a God, alive, well, all-loving and all-powerful in the Church triumphant?" There is no way I can cite the full spectrum of life-qualities that characterize the people of God who meet the conditions of cleanness of heart and commitment to service.

As we walk obediently in holiness before the Lord, it is our nonnegotiable, challenging, but also thrilling privilege and calling to promote the cause of making sure that "the whole world will know that there is a God in the church triumphant." At a minimum the following statements challenge us, for in this fashion we will promote the cause – "that the whole world will know there is a God in the church triumphant." We must:

a. Recognize that there is a Biblical life-style by which we are to conduct our lives. This is the transformed, born-again, and sanctified life.

b. Replace the old life-style with its habits and paradigms for life with the clearly stated Bible life-style. This is the triumphant, separated life.

c. Resist all persuasions to become enamored with legalistic and externalistic approaches to life. This is the trained in the Word, stabilized life.

d. Rely on the Holy Spirit for careful Biblical instruction and enablement to live a holy life before God and others. This is the trusting, energized, surrendered life.

In 1894 Mary Brown and Charles E. Prior wrote the lyrics, and Carrie E. Rounsefell the music to a familiar, and challenging hymn.

I'LL GO WHERE YOU WANT ME TO GO

1. It may not be on the mountain's height, or over the stormy sea;

It may not be at the battle's front my Lord will have need of me.

But if by a still, small voice He calls to paths that I do not know,

I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine, "I'll go where You want me to go."

2. Perhaps today there are loving words which Jesus would have me speak;

There may be now, in the paths of sin, some wand'rer whom I should seek.

O Savior, if Thou wilt be my Guide, tho' dark and rugged the way,

My voice shall echo the message sweet. I'll say what You want me to say.

3. There's surely somewhere a lowly place in earth's harvest fields so wide,

Where I may labor thro' life's short day for Jesus, the Crucified.

So, trusting my all to Thy tender care, and knowing Thou lovest me,

I'll do Thy will with a heart sincere. I'll be what You want me to be.

CHORUS (after each verse)

I'll go where You want me to go, dear Lord, over mountain, or plain, or sea.

I'll say what You want me to say, dear Lord. I'll be what You want me to be.

Do we hear David saying again ... to us ... "Surely you have not forgotten that we have a cause."