

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)

#05-1134

We Need An "Engedi Moment"!

June 29, 2011

During the early morning hours of June 8, 2011, as I slept, I was awakened with the word "Engedi." I knew of the word but, frankly, had no clue what it meant or where it was found in scripture. Based on past experience with the Lord, I was pretty sure it was from Him, which led me to search it out in His word.

Engedi was an important oasis town and fresh-water spring west of the Dead Sea. The name means "spring of a kid (goat)" or "fountain of the goat, " It was also known as *Hazazon-tamar* or "the cutting (felling) of the palm." Engedi (*Hazazon-tamar*) is mentioned seven times in scripture, dating it as far back as the time of Abraham and as far forward as the manifestation of New Jerusalem.

Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, defeated the Amorites at Hazazon-tamar (Genesis 14:7) but was himself later defeated by Abram the Hebrew and his 318 trained men. When Joshua brought the sons of Israel into Canaan, Engedi was the last city named in the inheritance territory given to Judah (Joshua 15:62). While escaping from the pursuit of Saul, David stayed in the strongholds of Engedi, also described as the "wilderness of Engedi" and the "Rocks of the Wild Goats" (1 Samuel 23:29; 24:1). An overwhelming army or great multitude of Moabites, Ammonites, and Meunites camped at Engedi in preparation to make war against Judah and Jerusalem during the reign of Jehoshaphat (2 Chronicles 20:2). Solomon poetically referred to the vineyards of Engedi (Song of Solomon 1:14). Finally, Ezekiel prophesied of the river of living water giving life to all that it contacts and of fishermen standing by this river from Engedi to Eneglaim as they catch a great many of all kinds of fish (Ezekiel 47:10).

Obviously, each of these references is spiritually significant, but the account of King Jehoshaphat in Chronicles caught my attention as being most relevant to our day. You could say it was an "Engedi moment" for the king and his fellow Judahites.

Jehoshaphat was the fourth king of Judah after the death of Solomon and the breakup of his kingdom into Judah (2 tribes) and Israel (10 tribes) as ordained by the Lord and prophesied by Ahijah (1 Kings 11:9-13, 29-36). He was one of the good but not "perfect in all his ways" kings. He followed the example of his father David's earlier days, and he required that the Law be taught throughout the land. As a result, the Lord was with him, and he amassed a million plus army (1,160,000), along with great riches and honor. But consider what happened when he received word that an army was ready to invade his kingdom.

(2) Then some came and reported to Jehoshaphat, saying, "A great multitude is coming against you from beyond the sea, out of Aram and behold, they are in Hazazon-tamar (that is Engedi)."
(3) Jehoshaphat was afraid and turned his attention to seek the LORD, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. (2 Chronicles 20:2-3 NASB)

Amazingly, in spite of a million-man army, Jehoshaphat feared this enemy encamped at Engedi. It must have been a massive army for him to have such fear. However, this caused him, along with all of Judah, to turn to the Lord. They didn't presume that the Lord was on their side or that their own military might was sufficient to win in battle. Out of desperation, they sought the Lord.

(4) So Judah gathered together to seek help from the LORD; they even came from all the cities of Judah to seek the LORD. (5) Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and

Jerusalem, in the house of the LORD before the new court, (6) and he said, "O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You. (2 Chronicles 20:4-6 NASB)

The king rightfully and humbly appealed to the Lord as the ruler over all the nations, just like the psalmist, who declared that God is a great King: **For the LORD is a great God and a great King above all gods** (Psalm 95:3 NASB). By his question, he declared that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-Israel is the King of all, and on this basis, he appealed to Him alone.

As the whole nation of Judah stood before the Lord, the Spirit of the Lord spoke through a Levite.

(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)

What an encouragement in a time of great fear and dismay! Jehoshaphat stood on this word and encouraged his people to **"put your trust in the Lord your God and you will be established,"** and **"put your trust in His prophets and succeed."** So, they went forward singing and praising the Lord. As the story goes, the Lord caused their enemies to turn on themselves and kill one another. Judah prevailed and **the dread of God was on all the kingdoms of the lands** and **the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at peace, for his God gave him rest on all sides.** See 2 Chronicles 20:1-30.

Can you imagine what would have happened if on September 11, 2001, the leaders of America had turned to the Lord as Jehoshaphat had done? What if church leadership in America had turned in such a fashion? We can only imagine that things might have turned out entirely different. Oh, many proclaimed "God bless America" in that day as if God were on our side, but we never truly turned to and humbled ourselves before the Lord God. Instead, we trusted in our own strength, our military might, and embarked on wars of vengeance and so-called justice. Rather than taking up the sword of the Spirit and waiting for the Spirit of the Lord to speak to us as a nation, we took up the physical sword of man and went to war. Since then, there has been no peace or rest on all sides. The fact of the matter is that conditions for us and the rest of the world have grown progressively worse with our wars playing a significant role in leading us to the cliff of bankruptcy. By their very nature, wars rob the wealth of nations.

The decline of America on practically all fronts has been accelerating since the beginning of the 21st century, and yet, as a nation, there has been and continues to be no collective voice or heart like Jehoshaphat that seeks to draw the nation together to seek the Lord, even to declare that God is King of all the nations. If anything, there is a concerted antichrist movement to deny God His rightful place on the throne of the Universe and over all the nations.

What will it take for our nation, as well as the nations of the world, to turn to God and humbly cry out to Him for the answer? We need an "Engedi moment," a moment when all is stacked against us, and we see no way out. The enemies of all realms (not just of the human) must be against us to the point of backing us up against a wall, so to speak, so that we have nowhere to turn but to God. For it is in that day and at that moment that we will hear God's solution to our Engedi moment. Only when we are desperate enough to hear from God will the Spirit of the Lord speak, and when He does, there will be only one solution. The solution is a Person; and He is Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords. We need the kingdom of our Lord to come. We need the King! Our Engedi moment is coming!