

HOLDING THE WORD AND BEING UPHELD BY THE WORD

2 Samuel 23:9 *And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite, one of the three mighty men with David, when they defied the Philistines that were there gathered together to battle, and the men of Israel were gone away:*

2 Samuel 23:10 *He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary, and his hand clave unto the sword: and the LORD wrought a great victory that day; and the people returned after him only to spoil.*

What should a Christian do if the entire church forsakes the work of God and you find yourself alone? This was the unenviable situation that Eleazar the son of Dodo found himself in – he was deserted by all and left to confront the Philistines by himself. That is the time to firmly grip the sword that is in your hand and trust in God. The Apostle Paul calls the word of God “the sword of the Spirit”. “And take the helmet of salvation, and the *sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God* (Ephesians 6:17). The sword (word of God) is the only offensive weapon mentioned in the divine arsenal of weapons in Ephesians 6. Eleazar did not criticize those who forsook the battle; he clenched his sword more firmly. Apostolic Christian, are you witnessing fellow Apostolics abandoning the One God doctrine? Strengthen your grip around the sword of the word of God! Are you seeing fellow Apostolics compromising on standards of holiness? Seize the sword of the word of God more firmly! Is there less prayer in the church? Begin to pray more! Be more vigilant; be more of everything that is lacking in the church. Be an Eleazar! While those who fled forgot the word of God, I believe Eleazar remembered the word of God to Moses.

Deuteronomy 32:30 *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up?*

Deuteronomy 32:31 *For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.*

Let us say, “their rock is not as our Rock!” The tragedy of it all was that the other Israelites also had swords, but only Eleazar was willing to use his sword by faith. A sword is useless unless proven in battle. This is what David told King Saul. “And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him” (1 Samuel 17:39). You must confront the enemy with *your* sword! Your sword is your faith in the power of the word of God; your understanding and experience of the faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“His hand clave unto the sword” (2 Samuel 23:10). When danger arises, we must strengthen ourselves in the word of God. In the days when the children of Israel were scheduled to return from exile in Babylon, God raised up Ezra, a scribe, because the path back to Israel was fraught with many dangers. “For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments” (Ezra 7:10). In the same way, and metaphorically speaking, Eleazar the son of Dodo strengthened his grip on the sword, the word of God. He fought with such ferocity that as long as his hand clave to the sword, the Philistines were falling like flies around him. Our Lord Jesus Christ will defeat every enemy of the Gospel as long as we cleave to his word. Whatever the Philistine attacking you right now, just strengthen your grip on the word of God – immerse yourself deeper into the word of God – and this Philistine will be defeated. Remember Jacob! Like Eleazar, he was so absorbed in his aim of being blessed that he did not seem to feel the pain of his joint until he secured the blessing.

Genesis 32:25 *And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.*

Genesis 32:26 *And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.*

Similarly, Elijah did not collapse until he accomplished the great victory on Mount Carmel against 450 prophets of Baal. God covered his weakness until the victory was a fact. God did not leave Eleazar despite his weariness until the Philistines were vanquished. Eleazar fought so intensely that his hand clave to the sword. He was weary not *of* the fighting, but *in* the fighting. We cannot get tired of facing Philistines, God has ordained Philistines to fight us, but we must be tired while fighting the battles of God. All victories follow battles! Military personnel carry medals that tell a proud story of some battle fought gloriously somewhere. What medal or crown will we carry in heaven? Only Jesus could fight the unique battle of Golgotha; Jacob fought at Peniel and Paul fought in Philippi, Corinth, Galatia etc. Cleave to your sword and fight, Apostolic!

Eleazar fought so hard that he did not know his hand was stuck to the sword. In the old days, stories were told of soldiers and sailors who fought with such vehemence that their hands had to be operated upon to release the sword. There comes a time when we hold the word of God so strongly that it will not let go of us even when we try to leave it.

John 10:28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.

The sword of Eleazar can be compared to the integrity of Job. “And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without cause (Job 2:3). Job’s wife knew that his integrity would not let him deny God. “Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die” (Job 2:9). Job responded to his friends who came to comfort him, “God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me” (Job 27:5). Such was this holy prophet’s love for integrity before God that his integrity upheld his faith in God when he lost everything in life. This was the sword of Job – hold fast to the integrity that comes from serving God, and it will uphold you when you lose everything.

Take courage brother! Take courage sister! Have you held firmly to the Lord Jesus Christ these 10, 20, 30 or more years? He will ensure that you that no one can separate you from his hands. There is no surgeon skilled enough to perform such an operation. Like Eleazar, Paul was stuck to Jesus.

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

Romans 8:39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you and I cleave to precious foundations of the Apostolic doctrine: one God manifested in flesh, repentance and baptism in Jesus name, holiness standards etc. these truths will stick to you and hold you up when your strength is exhausted. Peter could not get rid of the dialect of Galilee that was associated with the Lord Jesus. “And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.” (Matthew 26:73). Only Galileans spoke like Peter and the Lord in Jerusalem. They could not hide their identity – it cleaved to them like the sword of Eleazar. We Apostolics are also like Galileans in Jerusalem! The Apostolic truth cleaves to us like the sword of Eleazar – we are stuck to it, and it is stuck to us.