

Step Out – Marching in the Tree Tops

WHEN WE STEP OUT GOD STEPS IN (9)

MARCHING IN THE TREE TOPS

Read: 1 Chronicles 14:13-17

Down in the valley (13)

- David had many conflicts with the Philistines
- They attacked him this time in the valley
- Sometimes we feel as though we are in a valley – sickness, doubt, fear, betrayal, criticism, unemployment, bereavement, debt, addiction and so on.
- A church may seem to be in a valley, too. Little growth, people leaving, not enough money, not enough staff, few conversions, few young people, shortage of musicians and so on.

Apparent retreat may actually result in victory (14)

- God told David not to oppose the enemy but to go behind them
- This seemed to be a step backwards
- Sometimes when God apparently takes us backwards it is for a greater long-term gain

Listen for the sound of marching (15)

- They were to listen for the sound of marching in the tree tops
- In the Outback of Australia, at evening, when the heated air begins to rise from the hot, desert soil and rush up the valleys, you can hear it in the tops of the giant red gum trees. At first it sounds just like a loud sigh but it increases to a roar like the waves of the sea. It can be quite frightening if you are camped there.
- Something like this happened in this valley.
- There was a whispering in the tree tops, then a trembling, a stirring, a trembling, a shaking, a swaying, a moving, until it began to grow to a roaring – and then, amazingly, there was the sound of marching feet
- It was the army of God – the seraphim, the cherubim, the angels, the archangels – all marching to the beat of God’s drum.
- At this sound David was to attack
- There is the sound of marching in the tree tops today
- God’s Spirit is moving in many places around the world
- Perhaps he is moving in your life.
- Can you hear the whisper of God? The trembling in the treetops? The sound of God’s army marching!
- There are many voices in the valley – criticism, opposition, doubt, discouragement, negativity, fear, self-pity and so on. Which will you listen to? The voices of the valley or the sound of marching in the treetops!

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God has gone before (15)

- When God goes before us we can safely follow
- Have we heard the sound of God's army?
- Are we ready to go with God?

*Move, move, move, O move with God
 Glory, hallelujah!
 Where true sons of faith have trod,
 Glory, hallelujah!
 God is moving by His Spirit,
 This is revival day,
 So let us then determine in our hearts
 The way God's moving
 And move with God!*

The victory is complete (16)

- David's victory was complete
- From Gibeon to Gezer represented a 40 kilometre front
- It cut off the Philistines from Israel's territory
- When God gives us the victory it is a mighty victory
- See Romans 8:37; 2 Corinthians 2:14; Revelation 12:7

Obedience precedes outcomes (16)

- David did as God commanded him
- He had to step out in faith – his actions were based only on the sound of 'marching' in the treetops
- When we step out (in faith), God steps in (with power)
- We can't usually see the next step until we take the first one.
- Obedience is necessary for us to see God's promises fulfilled
- *Trust and obey for there's no other way
 To be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey
 (John Sammis).*

Listen! There is the sound of marching in the treetops. Can you hear it? Will you respond to it? This may be God's time for a great victory in your life!

SOMETHING TO THINK OR TALK ABOUT

Remember: You don't have to answer all the questions. First do those that seem most helpful to you.

Biblical

1. Read verses 1-12. What do we learn from these verses about the background to this story?
2. Using biblical reference books and/or websites, identify the names of the people and places in this passage.
3. To what extent was the battle between Philistia and Israel a spiritual one? (see for example 1, 2, 12)
4. What attitude do you think David's soldiers might have had to the idea of waiting for the sound of marching in the treetops before they attacked?

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Personal and practical

5. What are some of the valleys you have experienced in your life? How did the Lord rescue you? Write down or share your answers.
6. Initially, God seemed to be leading Israel in the wrong direction. When has this happened to you and what was the outcome? Or is something like this happening to you right now?
7. Can you hear a rustling in the treetops for your life or for your church? What does it sound like? What does it look like?
8. To what extent do God's commands usually require an element of faith? Why?
9. If you are to obey God's command for your current situation, what do you need to do first?
10. If you are to experience a further victory of the Lord in your situation what do you think it will look like? Describe it by faith.

Prayer: Lord, help me never to miss the sound of your footsteps. May I always be ready to move when you move and to claim the victory that is mine through Christ. Amen.

About Dr Barry Chant

Barry Chant is Senior Pastor of the Wesley International Congregation in Sydney, Australia. He is a regular speaker at church services, seminars, conferences and conventions. Hundreds of thousands of his books have been sold around the world. He has degrees in arts, theology and ministry, a diploma in education and a PhD in history. He was the initiator and former president of Tabor College, Australia.

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