

# The Need of the Times

by James Smith

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*The sermon calls for a generation of young men to unite in faith and action to conquer spiritual challenges for Christ's glory.*

**Scripture:** 1 Kings 20:15, 2 Chronicles 16:9, Psalm 144:1, Isaiah 41:10, Romans 8:37, 1 Corinthians 16:13, Ephesians 6:10, Philippians 4:13, 2 Timothy 2:3, 1 Peter 5:8

**Topics:** "Spiritual Warfare", "Evangelism"

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## Description

James Smith preaches on the victory of the Israelites over the powerful army of Benhadad, highlighting how God sympathized with them despite their sins and delivered them. He emphasizes the need for a noble army of young, educated, and influential men who are deeply spiritual and devoted to God's service. Smith calls for young men of power in prayer, purpose, and determination to do noble deeds for God, engaging in a spiritual battle against the powerful foes of the world. He stresses the importance of combined action and universal victory in conquering for Christ, urging young men to unite, cooperate, and engage wholeheartedly in the glorious enterprise of winning souls for Christ.

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## Transcript

"So Ahab mustered the troops of the 232 commanders. Then he called out the rest of the army of Israel, some 7,000 men. About noontime, as Ben-hadad and the thirty-two allied kings were still in their tents drinking themselves into a stupor, the troops of the commanders marched out of the city as the first contingent. As they approached, Ben-hadad's scouts reported to him, 'Some troops are coming from Samaria.'

'Take them alive,' Ben-hadad commanded, 'whether they have come for peace or for war.'

But Ahab's commanders and the entire army had now come out to fight. Each Israelite soldier killed his Aramean opponent, and suddenly the entire Aramean army panicked and fled. The Israelites chased them!" 1 Kings 20:15-20

Israel had sinned, and were under God's frown. There was wickedness in the palace, and idolatry throughout the land. Yet when proud Benhadad, the King of Syria, came blustering and boasting against them--the Lord sympathized with them, sent a prophet to them, and promised to deliver them. It is nothing for the Lord to save, whether by many or by those who have no might.

Here is proud Benhadad, with thirty-two kings to help him, with a most numerous army; on the other hand, here was a small army of some 7,000 men--and yet the victory was theirs. What a subject to strengthen faith, excite hope, and encourage efforts in the Lord's cause! May the Lord give us a few profitable thoughts, while we meditate on this subject.

Here is, A Noble Army, made up of young commanders. Just such as we need in the Lord's cause now. Young men of education, taught of God. Led by the Spirit into the truth. Men who know themselves--and the Savior; the salvation that is by grace--and enjoy it; their own weakness--and where their great strength lies. Who are taught to use the Lord's armor--to wield the sword of the Spirit, and the powerful weapon called "all prayer." O for an army of young men taught of God! Young men of influence--influence acquired by character, and employed for God and his glory.

It is character which gives weight. When young men are deeply spiritual, well read in God's word, devoted heart and soul to God's service, and in the world exhibit truthfulness, honesty, industry, decision, and activity in God's cause; they acquire an influence that is almost invincible.

O for an army of young men of influence. Young men of power--power with God in prayer, which gives them power in the church, the school, and the world. If we have power with God--we shall be sure to have power with man. Jacob first prevailed with God--and then Esau's heart was subdued, melted, and transformed. It is in private, when alone with God--that the battle is won. Those who pray well--will fight well. Those who succeed with God--will be sure to overcome their fellow-men. O for an army of young men who have power with God! Young men of purpose, who are determined to do something noble. Who live for a noble end, and live by a noble rule. Whose minds are made up, in God's strength, to subdue themselves--and then to subdue others. To bring the body into subjection to the soul--and the soul to the obedience of faith; and then to consecrate both soul and body to Jesus and his cause.

O for an army of young men of determined purpose! Young men thoroughly decided for God, wholly devoted to God, and determined to employ all their time, strength, and talents for God. Such are princely young men, young men whom God will delight to honor, and to whom he will give the victory.

Here is, A Powerful Foe. Benhadad and thirty-two kings with him, backed by an almost innumerable army. Just so--we have a world lying in wickedness, led on against God and the Savior's little flock by the prince of the power of the air and all his infernal associates.

Or, nearer home, we have a kingdom to conquer for Christ, the inhabitants of which are in enmity against him, and are daily saying, "We will not have him to rule over us."

Or, nearer still, we have a town, with its streets, lanes, and alleys, to win for the Prince of peace. Or we are called to do battle with principles which are opposed to the rights of God, the honor of Christ, and the eternal happiness of man; with practices which are alike injurious to God and man, violations of law--and opposition to the Lawgiver; with people who are in rebellion against God, ignorant of God, and refusing to accept the mercy of God. Those principles we must subvert, those practices we must change, and those people we must convert from the error of their way. Here is work for noble minds, daring spirits, loving hearts, for princely young men. O to see a host of them coming forth to battle against the mighty!

Here is, A Tebbible Conflict. It must be hand to hand, foot to foot, heart to heart. Each one must kill his own opponent, not so much by might as by mercy; not so much by skill as by kindness. The victory may be gained--but the conquest is not easy nor quick; it calls for stern, determined, persevering conflict. We

must take to ourselves the whole armor of God; we must take the Lord with us to the work; we must have our hearts glowing with love to man, burning with zeal for God, and panting to bring honor to the great Captain of our salvation. Then, relying on the promises of eternal truth; then, expecting the all-subduing influences of the Holy Spirit; then, throwing our whole souls into the work, as if all depended on us, and yet looking to the Lord, knowing all depends on him--we shall conquer, we shall overcome, we shall triumph!

O to see the whole Church, and every member of it, engaged heart and soul in this desperate conflict, then, then we would soon see glorious things!

Here is Combined Action. "Each Israelite soldier killed his Aramean opponent" but they acted in concert; they fought together, they encouraged each other, they proved that union is strength. This is just what we need. We want our princely young men to act together, to form one glorious phalanx, one determined combination, one noble, indomitable band. If all who profess faith in Jesus were right-headed and right-hearted, and would only act together with this one sole object in view--to win souls, to conquer for the Savior, relying alone on the promised presence and power of the Holy Spirit, they might be called "The Invincibles." The entire Aramean army would be mere children to them. O, to see our young men meeting to pray together, until they are endued with power from on high; to plan together how they shall best commence, carry on, and persevere in the work to its completion; and to fight together, determined to conquer or to die! We need more hearty union, more combined action, more persevering efforts to conquer the world for Christ.

Here is Universal Victory. "Each Israelite soldier killed his Aramean opponent." There was not one coward, one deserter, or one who missed his mark. Each slew his opponent, and thus all conquered. Syria was humbled, and Israel was exalted. The victory was gained with comparative ease. But how many professed soldiers we have in our ranks who have never slain a man, or taken one captive for Christ! How can you live? How can you enjoy one moment's comfort? How can you bear yourselves, who have never been the means of the conversion of a soul? What, have you professed Christ for years, and never gained one single victory for him --never brought one penitent rebel to his feet? Yours is an experience we cannot commend, a condition we would not be in for the world. O for grace, that, with a princely spirit, with indomitable courage, with steady perseverance, we may engage in the great conflict of subduing the world to Christ!

Brethren, see the need of the times--princely young men. Young men deeply taught of God, using acquired influence for God, obtaining power from God, and with an iron purpose engaging with the enemies of God! We want you to throw your heart into the work of God. O how much remains to be done! Look at the state of the world, the apathy of the Church, the activity of God's enemies--and come forth and engage with all your hearts in this glorious enterprise, We want you to cooperate together. Individual action is good--but combined action is better. You can stimulate, stir up, and encourage each other. Stand not aloof from each other then; have you not all one glorious Captain? do you not belong to the same army; do you not hope to receive a crown from the same gracious hands? Then unite--unite--unite, to do battle with the world.

We want you to do noble deeds. Deeds that will never be forgotten throughout eternity. Deeds that will be published from the judgment-seat of Christ. Deeds that will bring glory to God, honor to Christ, happiness to man, confusion to devils, and eternal credit to yourselves. Arise, then, to conquer for Christ, to win souls for Christ, to raise an army for Christ, and to live solely or principally for the glory of Christ!

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