

February 1, 2008

“The Golden Sword”

Dear Friends & Family,

There is on the person of every Christian a **golden sword**. It gleams in the **sun**. Its handle is all of pearl, the same pearl that comprises the gates of the New Jerusalem. It dazzles the eyes with the beauty of its precious stones, set in platinum filigrees. It is the sword of “sovereignty”. Its sharpness is dependent on that particular saint’s knowledge, understanding & belief in it. All saints believe in both grace & sovereignty, but the degrees of the extent of them both vary from saint to saint, from church to church, from denomination to denomination. If the sword of the Spirit is the **Word of God**, & it surely is, then perhaps its two edges are “truth” & “sovereignty”. Truth must needs be the first edge, or the sovereignty blade to which the Scriptures attest means nothing. In battle, our chief foe, the **“father of lies”**, wields *lies* as his biggest weapon; hence, the “cutting edge” of truth is so necessary to disarm & defeat him. Next in importance, is the truth of sovereignty, that is, our God, Who is the Creator, Owner, Provider, & Sustainer of all things, both seen & unseen, has absolute control of all things. There is nothing outside of His control, as it is an impossibility for Him to create anything He cannot control. This most surely includes the wills of **men & angels**, both before & after **the fall**. Otherwise, God would have to relinquish the title & name of **“GOD”**, which means “Supreme Being”. This simple truth undermines the popular notion of “many religions” with their own gods. There can only be one “Supreme Being”, & it is the God of Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob, Who at **the cross** opened the door for **the Gentiles** to share in His inheritance.

“In The Arena”

The **Sacred Scriptures** throughout not only suggest but declare that God works all things after the counsel of His Own will (Eph.1:11), for His Own glory, & for His Own desired ends. One of the most comforting facts of Scripture is that this “end”, or plan, or purpose which God purposed, was all done in eternity past (Eph.3:11), with the glorification & exaltation of His Son Jesus Christ in mind. Speaking of “mind”, all of the decisions that the **Trinity or Godhead** made so very long ago before time were made via Their perfect omniscience, foreknowledge, & wisdom. Before making His decisions for both **angelic & human** history, our God knew both actual & possible events. He made His decisions or decrees accordingly. His eternal plan, thank God, was made **LONG BEFORE** there were any human beings around to give Him advice about it! This knowledge becomes a veritable battleaxe for the Christian. He knows that nothing that happens to him is by chance, nor by any caprice of men or devils. He knows from the inspired text of Sacred Scripture, that God is not only working out all events, both monumental & microscopic in scale, for His Own glory, but to bring glory to His Son, Jesus Christ. Next, He is working out all things to make His people like unto the image of His Son (Rom.8:29), & finally, for their benefit & welfare (Rom. 8:28). From our standpoint, these three major motivations of God, re: all that He does, become our **“golden trident”** in the **arena** of daily combat. God’s Own glory, His people being made into His Son’s image, & His people’s welfare are the three-prongs, if you will, of a golden trident with which we fight injustices, wrongs, violations, offenses & deep disappointments that inevitably come our way! Each one is divinely ordered. If not, He must come off of His throne. God forbid! When you feel the enemy’s deep, **fiery**, sulfuric-tipped arrows in your heart, burning with their acidic sting, what should you do first? Pull out your golden trident! Despite your reeling emotions, deep-seated pain, despair, & confusion, your very first confession should be these three things: #1 **“Father**, use this for Your glory; #2 **“Make me more like Jesus!”** #3 **“Work it out for my good!”**. Slowly but surely, the sting subsides. Of course, you noticed by using the golden trident,

that you first raised your shield of faith in God's sovereignty, & then wielded the sword of the Spirit, God's Word, & confessed what it declares, despite what we see, feel, hear, or "believe"! This knowledge is your lance in the belly of **the dragon**, your **golden** anchor deeply imbedded on the ocean floor, & your granite **rock** in the **quicksand** of despair!

His Plan All Along

Now, back to the **golden sword** mentioned above. The Lord placed it in the sheath of Isaiah, who then inserted it into the sheath of Hezekiah, Judah's reigning king at that time, **hundreds of years ago**. His people were under siege & threat of disaster by the most powerful man in the world at that time, King Sennacherib of Assyria. He had ruthlessly decimated countless nations before them, reducing them to rubble. They fell before him like wheat before the scythe. None could stand in his way. The Assyrians used to pile the skulls of their vanquished foes in heaps! He seemed invincible, until the Lord revealed to both Isaiah & Sennacherib the "Source" of this wicked pagan king's success!

"Doing his own Thing?"

When Sennacherib boasted of his past victories & domination over the several nations who stood in his way in the past, the Lord gave Isaiah **the divine perspective & interpretation** of the "facts" of history! These facts without this divine perspective clearly "appeared" to prove there was no God, ordering all events, both great & small, but that evil had its way, in whatever it chose to do. Not so, Sennacherib! Not so, O **Evil One**! Here is the Lord's perspective & response to Sennacherib's boasting of his "apparently" unchallenged rampage: "Have you not heard? Long ago **I** did it, from ancient times **I** planned it. Now **I** have brought it to pass, that you should turn fortified cities into ruinous heaps" (Isa.37:26; emphases mine). The outworking of this evil king's conquests was merely the previously determined plan of God. This is nothing new, but a repeated principle throughout all of Scripture. **Joseph's** reply to his brothers' wickedness against him was another classic example: "...it was not you who sent me here, but God" (Gen. 45:8)...to preserve life (vs.5)...to keep you alive by a great deliverance (vs.7)...you meant it for evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive" (50:20). Of course, this principle of God's sovereignty, is most decisively & importantly seen in the atrocious, horrific, & unjust betrayal, murder, & **crucifixion** of the Innocent One, the Prince of Life, the Son of God, via the evil wills of **men & demons** hostile to Him & His Son. But, once again, Acts declares, "...this Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan & foreknowledge of God (the primary cause), you nailed to a cross by the hands of **godless men** (secondary cause) & put Him to death" (2:23). Once again, as with Sennacherib & Hezekiah, evil appears as though it is triumphing over God's people, but they are merely fulfilling what God had planned **in eternity past** for His glory, to make His people more like Jesus, & for their good. This is our "golden sword", Beloved, in the battles our God will send our way. Keep it sharp, keep it polished, & as with the "**American Express**" card, "Don't leave home without it!" **Kim, Caleb**, & I are deeply grateful for all you do for us. Amen.

Michael

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[Please make all tax-deductible gifts payable to: [Elim Fellowship](#), 1703 Dalton Rd, Lima, NY 14485. Thanks!]

[Michael is an ordained Elim Fellowship itinerant home missionary, endorsed by his local church. He supports his family & his ministry by faith.]

Ministry/events for FEBRUARY & those not listed those in last month's newsletter:

Jan. 13: St. James Church, W. Reading, PA: Sunday a.m. family service

Jan. 20: Morgantown, PA: camp directors' mtg.

Feb. 3: Immanuel Church, Wilmington, DE: "Via Dolorosa" team captains' planning mtg.

**Feb. 5: Hopewell Christian Fellowship, Elverson, PA: camp board mtg//pastors
mtg//camp directors mtg**

Feb. 8,9: Eden Resort Inn, Lancaster, PA: marriage retreat w/the Johanssons': attendees

Feb. 10: Acts Covenant Church, Lancaster, PA: Sunday a.m. family service

**Feb. 16: Tel Hai Camp, Honey Brook, PA: 4th annual camp staff reunion banquet: host &
speaker**

Feb. 21: New Covenant Church, Audubon, NJ: Elim area pastors' mtg.

Feb. 24: New Covenant Church, Audubon, NJ: Sunday a.m. family service