



# THE TRUMPET CALL

in the context of

## SPIRITUAL WARFARE



***'When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the LORD your God and rescued from your enemies.' Numbers 10:9***

The above scripture became the rallying call on October 30<sup>th</sup> 2004 to 'blow a trumpet in the land' calling Christians from across the UK to gather at the National Exhibition Centre to pray. Approximately 4,000 people, representatives from every corner of the UK, came together to entreaty God for the deliverance of this nation. It was a call issued by World Prayer Centre, Birmingham.

It was a trumpet call to awake the sleeping church to the imminent and urgent danger already present, steadily growing and poised to overwhelm the nation with increasing wickedness, crime, depression, addictions, family and community breakdown, and a host of other evils flowing from these. It is a call that is being echoed by many others as the spiritual and social foundations of our nation continue to be massively undermined by occult power, political persuasion and ungodly legislation. Steve Uppal's book 'Rousing the Warriors', Maranatha's continual raising of the alarm, and Clifford Hill's latest prophetic word all reflect this cry. It is a call to the Church! While many ordinary people across the land understand at a common-sense level that something is wrong with our society, only the church can do something about it in seeking the face of God and crying out in repentance. Our failure to do this is because we have not recognised the true nature of the problem! As Clifford Hill has recently prophesied, 'Both people and preachers are asleep! Blow a trumpet in the land among my people for the enemy is at your gate. The danger is all around and you are slumbering. You feel powerless so you prefer to sleep as though putting your head under the blanket will cause the danger to go away. Your eyes and ears are closed to what is happening in your land and you are not listening to your God.' He quotes Jeremiah 6:17: '*I appointed watchmen over you and said, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But you said, 'We will not listen.'*

Against this background two further trumpet calls are in process of being announced by World Prayer Centre in conjunction with other Prayer organisations – the first for June 18<sup>th</sup> and the second for October 29<sup>th</sup> - both at the N.E.C. The June gathering will be based on Nehemiah 4:19-20: '*Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!"*

While, presently, there is a limited awakening from sleep in various prophetic/intercessory groups, these are widely spread across the country; and the people are scattered, feel isolated and powerless. It is necessary to come together in earnest, fervent and bold prayer for God to deliver this nation from the hand of the oppressor which we see everywhere. But why the urgency? And why are we asleep? It is urgent because there are 'powers' arrayed against this nation to nullify its destiny by silencing the voice of the Gospel in the land. We are asleep because we have taken for granted the inheritance purchased at the price of blood by martyrs who gave their lives to keep the flame of the Gospel alive in these shores. We no longer 'fight' for the Gospel and the kingdom but expect it delivered on a plate! It was not always so!

In ancient Israel there was really recognition of only two players in spiritual matters – God and man. Man prayed and God answered—or maybe didn't answer! When He did, this was evidence of the righteousness of those praying; when He didn't it was due in the main to the unrighteousness of the prayers. Since there could be no fault in God, it was thought that the fault in any circumstance must always *and only* lie with man. This was the fallacy that undergirded the arguments of Job's comforters, and that lay behind the disciple's question to Jesus in John 9.2 as to the source of the man's blindness, '*Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?*' Thus prayer was a two-way equation.

But in Daniel 10:12-13 this simple equation is complicated – here was Daniel praying and a heavenly messenger arrives and declares, '*Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.*' From the first day Daniel prayed his prayer was heard, but it took 21 days for the answer to reach Daniel. The reason for this was that the answer was opposed, hindered and delayed by principalities and powers in the heavenly places – in this case, the Prince of Persia who opposed the mission and the messenger.

Thus a third agent had suddenly appeared on the scene. Prayer can no longer be seen as simply between God and man, but an arch-enemy is actively inhibiting God's answers! While in this situation Daniel is oblivious of the heavenly warfare occurring around his praying, on other occasions God's people are 'awake' to the spiritual conflict and forces around them i.e. earlier Elisha recognises the invisible forces for good and evil around him .... '*And Elisha prayed, "O LORD, open his eyes so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all round Elisha.*' 2 Kings 6:17; Jesus clearly waged war against the Prince of this world: '*At once the Spirit sent him out into the desert, and he was in the desert for forty days, being tempted by Satan*' Mark 1:12-13; and '*The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*' 1 John 3:8; and later the apostles write clearly of the demonic opposition the Christian churches face in proclaiming the Gospel. See Eph 6.12, 1 Peter 5.8-9, and 1 John 5.19. And, of course, church history records many spiritual battles, both lost and won, that have shaped our present world.

Though, theologically the UK Church might well acknowledge the presence of spiritual warfare, its reality is far from us. The distance that this warfare is removed from us in daily experience is equivalent to the depth of slumber in our lives and across the land. What warfare teaching there is tends to be focused on the individual and predominantly 'defensive' in nature. In contrast, spiritual warfare in those parts of the earth that are experiencing the in-breaking of the Kingdom of God, tends to be corporate, offensive and, indeed, aggressive.

The last 'trumpet call' meeting at the NEC had much more of this 'offensive' culture about it! One Ugandan brother, a missionary to the UK for the last five years and familiar with spiritual conflict in Africa commented that 'this was the best prayer meeting he had been to in the UK.' Why was this? Because it carried urgency, was predominantly corporate, and was actively offensive in nature. The prayer was bold towards God, being convinced we were sounding the trumpet at His bidding, and aggressive towards Satan because we were convinced that the Lord of Hosts ('Yahweh Sabaoth' – Lord of

the Powers) Himself was declaring war on the principalities and the powers that are opposing God's people and purposes in the UK. What we haven't understood very clearly is that when the Lord engages the enemy he seeks the agreement, co-operation and involvement of His Church. He looks for a 'man' (corporate not just individual) to stand in the gap, so His mighty arm can gain victory. Ezekiel 22:30: *'I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so that I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.'*

While ironically the western church has been exceedingly active in 'doing' works, it has been exceedingly passive when it comes to spiritual warfare. Yet Paul declares in Ephesians 3.10-11 that ..... *'His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord.'*

The theological basis for our works has been sound, derived from the self-conscious ministry of Jesus as catalogued in Luke 4:17-19: *'The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'* This is a direct quote from Isaiah 61.1-2 except that the final phrase is omitted – *'and the day of vengeance of our God.'*

Jesus' ministry was rooted in compassion and the love of God towards those who were sick and in need of a physician: Luke 5.31. His conflict on the human level was with those representatives of the 'powers' who managed the structures, laws and tradition which oppressed the people in their own land. His journey to the cross not only released captives, it also brought judgement on the principalities and powers that lay behind the human wickedness that fronted the demonic strategies. *'Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out.'* John 12:31; *'And in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.'* John 16:11

Jesus judged the powers – the day of vengeance of God – but had mercy on the people – the year of the Lord's favour! We have sought to administrate the year of the Lord's favour without executing judgement/vengeance on the powers; we have not understood that this is our role! Psalm 149:6-9 shows the proper relationship of God's purposes and our co-operation: *'Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, To execute vengeance on the nations, And punishments on the peoples; To bind their kings with chains, And their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute on them the written judgment. This honour have all His saints. Praise the LORD!'* NKJV

We execute the sentence that God has written against the enemy! We are not loose canons, but neither are we passive spectators. It is through us that the Lord executes His judgements against the powers that oppress us in our own land; just as He did through Joshua, Gideon, David, etc... Compassion for people must be accompanied by God's vengeance on the powers who wage war against their welfare. That is why the gospel of the Kingdom is a violent in-breaking of God's gracious rule into the non-gracious kingdoms of this world. 'Violence' doesn't describe the content of the warfare but it's nature i.e. 'Where there is hatred we sow love' - the content carries an opposite spirit but it is in violent conflict with the prevailing spirit. It is time to awake to these realities! *'And do this, understanding the present time. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.'* Rom 13:11-14. Interestingly, 'awakening' and putting on 'the armour of light' go together!

Where there has been some grasp of this reality in addressing principalities and powers and seeking to pull down their strongholds, in the west this has often been individualistic, presumptuous, ultimately ineffective and extremely dangerous, or it has been like 'boot camp' against imaginary enemies. There have been many needless 'casualties of war' not necessarily because it is wrong to go to war against such, but because some have gone ill-prepared, unsupported, under-equipped, largely ignorant of the enemy, his location, his powers and his tactics, and outside of God's timing. However, this is a new day, rehearsals are over, God's time to 'awake and put on His armour' is here – but it must be done together; it is time to hit real targets!

One of the pictures the Lord gave at the last trumpet call was of a Goliath-type figure advancing on the people of God. Against him was a small David-like figure who chose a small smooth stone from a stream. He put it in a catapult and hit the giant, not on the forehead but in the right eye (the giant's left eye). So the giant's eye was put out, but he was not killed. As a result, the giant, enraged, wounded and mad with pain, advanced with fury, but his vision was impaired now. Then, the David figure stooped to pick up another stone. As he did so there was fear in the face and remaining eye of the advancing giant, because suddenly he realised that if his other eye was put out, he would be very vulnerable and exposed.

The interpretation was that this first trumpet call had indeed hit and put out one eye, at least temporarily, and those present (representing the church) were the single smooth stone in the hand of the Lord. As a result the enemy's attacks will be even fiercer, but we must persevere to press home the full attack and break the enemy's power; to ensure the first eye does not recover and that the other eye is extinguished too.

What was interesting was that as the enemy's first eye was put out, the light began to come on in the church. Therefore, as the second eye is put out the awakening of the church will continue to spring forth. The enemy will still be powerful and dangerous, but his attacks will be more haphazard and hindered, whilst the church will begin to see clearly. There is a direct relationship between the present blindness and sleep of the church and the enemy's deceptions. But the call to warfare which will result in the blinding of the enemy's strategies will also, at the same time, herald the dawning of new light on the church and an awakening from sleep. *'But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Be very careful, then, how you live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.'* Eph 5:13-17

**This is a time for intimacy with the Lord so that we know His plans; compassion for people so that we express His heart; and vengeance on His enemies so that we execute His judgements. It is a course that will require unity of heart and purpose, persevering prayer and prophetic obedience.**

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Registered charity no: 1072222