

When The Numbers Don't Matter

In II Kings 6 we find Israel on the verge of a potentially devastating assault from the Syrian army. The king of Syria had sent forth *"horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about."* (II Kings 6:14). Israel was surrounded. One of its citizens approached the powerful prophet, Elisha and, seeing the surrounding Syrian troops, cried, *"Alas, my master! How shall we do?"* (II Kings 6:15). Elisha calmly replied, *"Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them."* (II Kings 6:16). He then proceeded to ask God to show the servant the heavenly defenders who were ready for battle and who eventually scored a victory over Syria that day (II Kings 6:17-23).

Elisha's mighty message echoes throughout the pages of the Bible. Paul said it like this in Romans 8:31: *"What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"* Carefully read the context of this verse in the sentences preceding it. Take note of Paul's reference to *"the sufferings of this present time"* in Romans 8:18. Consider Paul's self-confessed battle with the flesh in chapter seven. Get in your mind the picture of a man of God who had suffered greatly for the cause of Christ and who was speaking to Christians who themselves faced tribulation. Now come back to verse 31 and read it again. *"What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"* What can we say about the pressing trials and temptations of this earthly life? What can we say about the sorrows and the sin that we face on every hand? Here's what we can say: *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"* The enormity of our trials, the incessant attacks of Satan and the seeming unconquerable influence that he wields in this world cannot begin to match the power that we have in our God when we stand faithfully with Him. Now consider the converse of Paul's question, which is clearly implied: *"If God be against us, who can be for us?"* Since it's true that if we're on God's side it doesn't matter who is against us, then it's also true that if we are NOT on God's side, it doesn't matter who is FOR us. We could walk in disobedience to God and have millions upon millions of our fellow citizens agreeing with us, but the numbers will not impress the Lord.

"They that be with us are more than they that be with him," Elisha said. *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"* Paul asked. By Divine inspiration John added, *"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."* (I John 4:4). Satan is wily (Ephesians 6:11). He is our adversary who *"as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* (I Peter 5:8). But in Christ we can overcome him. *"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."* (I Corinthians 15:57).

People want to be associated with what they perceive to be a winner. In that pursuit, many simply go along with the majority, rationalizing that "if that many people are for it, it must be right." The Bible says that the wicked are in the majority (Matthew 7:13-14). That being the case, we may find it difficult to stand in the minority of those who do God's will, even though we know it's right. We may look around at the abundance of wickedness in our world and wonder if the Bible really is God's Word or, for that matter, if God really exists at all. "Since there are so many who refuse to believe in God and so many more who say they believe in Him but won't abide in His Word, maybe they're right and I'm wrong," someone might reason. May we hear once again Elisha's prayer for his servant that his eyes would be open that he might see (II Kings 6:17) and may we open our eyes to the Word of God that we might see that there is but one way to heaven and the countless men and women who have ever walked the earth or who will ever walk the earth cannot stand in the path of the one who is determined to go there (Colossians 3:1ff).

Mike Gifford
Gifford7777@yahoo.com