

## LET ISRAEL NOW SAY

*“If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, Let Israel now say...If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, When men rose up against us, Then they would have swallowed us alive, When their wrath was kindled against us”* (Psalm 124:1-3).

In these short songs of degrees there has been a steady progression of looks: From the tormentors and persecutors, to the hills, to the house of God, to the God of the house. Now enough progress is made for the singer to glance backward. History has been made. There is a past, a record of what has transpired, along with the sober realization of what might have happened which our mighty God refused to permit. Something now may be said that could not have possibly been said or seen before. It is a wonderful reality that we seldom know the extent of our peril, the malignant design against us, the sheer magnitude of the powers and forces set on our destruction, the intensity of the enemy’s hostility, and the imminence of being utterly consumed, until it is all past, and no longer a danger. The dawning of this realization is no small part of the power in the preaching of the gospel.

Only Israel may say this. Others have been, and are, systematically being destroyed. There will be no such testimony for them. They never knew their danger until ruined and devastated. Had they known their danger, it would have done them no good for there was no help for them, and they were no more able to save themselves than we. This is a glorious testimony, a history, indeed “His Story” that belongs to the saints alone. We **ought** to say it, think on it, meditate on it, repeat it and sing it and shout it!

This pilgrimage is adversarial all the way. Jehospat’s valley of decision is one that demands the beating of plowshares into swords and pruning hooks into spears. War is inescapable. Sides have been taken, and we are on one or the other. Jesus tells us we are either for Him or against Him. There is no neutral ground. It is a wonderful reality that God has taken sides! And that is the one thing that makes a gospel possible.

Not only have sides been taken in an inescapable war, but the whole thing is decidedly **lopsided!** If we stand alone, we shall be quickly and inexorably swallowed by the enemy. We are no match for him, hopelessly outgunned. But if God is on our side there can be no doubt of the outcome: We cannot lose! He alone makes a majority. But how can God be “on our side”, one of us? He did it by doing just that. He came down in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ, joined the human race, called out His own elect, given Him by the Father, then in a body of flesh exactly like our own with all its weaknesses and desires, yet without sin, took on everything the Devil had, and sent him packing!

That is the gospel. It is our history. We who have been redeemed now see clearly how mightily and mercifully God has delivered us. It is also our present and our future. The battle is won, but not yet over. In spite of the reality of the history, unbelief and faithlessness yet rises. Let Zion now drown out those lying threats with the proclamation. “If God be for us who can be against us?”

-C. M.