

LORD OF HOSTS*

As Commander of heaven's armies, God battles the wicked. He is our Commander in spiritual warfare.

SCRIPTURE†	MUSIC‡
1 Samuel 17 Psalm 24 Psalm 46:1-3; 6-11 Exodus 12 Isaiah 6 2 Kings 6:1-23 Isaiah 45 Psalm 89 / 89:7-13	A Mighty Fortress Is Our God Am I a Soldier of the Cross Be Still, My Soul Be Strong in the Lord Come Christians, Join to Sing God of Heaven (Sorensen) SATB O Church, Arise O Worship the King Onward, Christian Soldiers Our Eyes Are Upon You, Lord Soldiers of Christ, Arise Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus Still, My Soul, Be Still (Koerts) SATB



* Theme corresponds to NWVBC's acknowledgment of **Veteran's Day**, which we schedule as the Sunday *before* November 11.

† Daily preparatory readings shown in **bold**.

‡ Published choral and vocal music shown in **bold**.

PRESENTING & PROMOTING THIS THEME

A MIGHTY FORTRESS IS OUR GOD

Use the Reformation hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” to introduce the worship theme.

(Use reading below.) Sing hymn in response.

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

Almost 500 years ago, probably around the year 1529, Martin Luther penned the words to a hymn that we still sing today. This hymn, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” reflected Luther’s understanding that the reformers were engaged in spiritual warfare as they sought to right the wrongs within the church. In fact, Luther’s hymn was often called “The Battle Hymn of the Reformation.” One of the verses of “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” talks specifically about the battle Christians face:

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing,
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God’s own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth His name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

Lord Sabaoth (sah-bah-OAT) is not a name that we often use to refer to the Lord, but it means “Lord of Hosts” and carries the imagery of God as a warrior or the Lord of war. God is the God of all the spiritual armies of heaven. We must realize, as Martin Luther did, that we are in a spiritual battle and that we cannot win that battle in our own strength. But Christ Jesus Himself is on our side! We are not alone in fighting our spiritual battles, and He has promised us the victory—“He must win the battle.”

DAVID & GOLIAH

Use the story of David and Goliath to illustrate the power of the Lord of Hosts.

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

This title for Jehovah demonstrates His dominion over armies, His role as Divine Warrior and as Commander-in-Chief over all beings. This title generates awe and respect for such a powerful God.

We all love the true Bible story of David and Goliath. We tell our children of David's bravery; he calmly and assuredly faced Goliath, a huge, vicious man. But David's assurance was not in his own abilities—but his confidence was in the LORD of Hosts!

He did not face Goliath in his own name or his family's name. Rather, his confidence was in his nation's God—Jehovah, the LORD of Hosts—the God who had made Israel His nation, had rescued Israel, and showed them His great and awesome power time after time.

“Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou has defied” (I Samuel 17:45c).

HEAVILY POPLULATED COUNTRIES

Use heavily populated countries to illustrate the immensity of the hosts as the Lord's command.

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

When we think of hosts, we think of heavily populated countries: China with a population of 1,330,141,295; India with 1,173,108,018; the US at only 306,745,538. The world's total population is very close to 7 billion. When the Bible speaks of Jesus Christ being the LORD of Hosts, His armies would greatly exceed this numbers. Not only are His hosts innumerable, but their power is all-consuming. And with their omniscient leader, they are invincible. “Hosts may be against us, but we need not fear them if the Lord of hosts be with us” (Matthew Henry). Today as sheltered people belonging to the LORD of Hosts, we gratefully worship Him! “If God be for us, who can be against us?” (Romans 8:31b)

HEZEKIAH'S LETTER

Use the story of Hezekiah's desperation at the armies of Assyria to illustrate dependence on the Lord of Hosts.

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

Hezekiah was the king of Israel. Assyria's huge army was the enemy. Not only did the Assyrians harass the Israelite citizens and soldiers, but they harassed Israel's God. King Hezekiah went into the temple to spread out the enemy's letter before God and pray for his people. "O LORD of hosts," he prayed, "save us from his [the king of Assyria's] hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou art the LORD, even Thou only" (Isaiah 37:16a, 20b). By morning 185,000 enemy troops were dead and Israel was saved! The LORD of Hosts is the Divine Warrior, the Commander-in-Chief, the LORD of the armies! His authority is ultimate! His warfare is just! Today we humbly consider this powerful Deity and worship Him in respectful gratitude.

"OPEN HIS EYES"

2 Kings 6:8-17 | *Use the story of Elisha and the Syrian siege of Dothan to illustrate the meaning of the Lord of Hosts. Present using a dramatized three-reader paraphrase of the passage (or with the single-reader version below). When we focus on our circumstances it can feel like God is losing, but that isn't true. Faith is what opens our eyes. The armies of heaven exist and God is never losing ground.*

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

SINGLE-READER VERSION (SHORT)

Syria and Israel were warring against each other. The advantage seemed to be on Israel's side. They seemed to know everything that was said in the Syrian king's planning sessions. Finally in desperation he asked his servants, "Which of you is for Israel"? One of them told the king that a prophet of Israel, Elisha, could tell the king of Israel all the Syrian plans! So the Syrian king sent "a great host" of soldiers, horses and chariots and surrounded the town of Dothan, where Elisha lived.

Elisha's servant was up early in the morning and saw the huge army! He ran back in panic to tell his master! Elisha calmly prayed--not for help--but to open the servant's eyes to see the help God had already sent. God's hosts were far more than the Syrian army and they astonished the servant. Elisha told his servant, "for they that be with us are more than they

that be with them.” Today we worship the LORD of Hosts, whose army protected Elisha back in Bible times and protects us today!

SINGLE-READER VERSION (LONG)

If I were to ask different people what the definition of a ‘host’ is, I’d get different answers: from a science teacher—an organism that is infected with or is fed upon by a parasite; from a housewife—one who entertains guests. The closest *Webster’s Dictionary* gets to the Bible term is: “a great number of persons or things.” The story in 2 Kings 6:14-18 illustrates this specific title of the Lord.

Elisha and his servant were being pursued by the Syrian army because Ben-hadad the Syrian king felt that Elisha was personally responsible for the failure of the Syrian army to defeat the army of Israel. We find Elisha and his servant in the city of Dothan and the Syrian army surrounding the city.

Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about. And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? And he answered, Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. (My host is bigger than your host!) And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha. (2 Kings 6:14-18)

The servant was very fearful because he was not AWARE of the hosts of the Lord there to protect. Elisha had a calmness about him because he was aware of God’s present help. The army of the Lord was there, and the Lord, Himself, was the One Who was commanding the host. Elisha asked the Lord of hosts to defeat the enemy, and the Lord directed His angelic army in answer to Elisha’s prayer.

We can be at peace, knowing that the Lord of hosts is with us. Psalm 46 says, “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble... The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.” Do not be alarmed by any earthly enemy, no matter how great. We have our Lord of Hosts and His heavenly army as our defense. So we, like Elisha, and eventually his servant, can have peace in the midst of pressing trouble. (Pastor Mark French)

2 KINGS 6:14-17 DRAMATIZED (THREE READERS)

WOMAN Syria and Israel were at war. But the prophet of God, Elisha, was telling the king of Israel of every move Syria made. So, the exasperated Syrian king decided to capture Elisha.

MAN So the king of Syria sent horses, chariots, and a great host to Dothan, where Elisha lived. The great army came stealthily, under cover of night, and completely surrounded the city while the people of Dothan slept.

WOMAN Elisha's servant woke up early the next morning. He began his normal stroll—but then stopped in his tracks when he saw it: the Syrian host surrounding the city with horses and chariots. He ran to Elisha and gasped the news.

YOUNG MAN [out of breath] “Oh, Master! They're here—all of 'em. The Syrians have come and surrounded us. They're all around us, just waiting. It's probably you they want. What are we going to do!?”

MAN [as Elijah, calmly] “Do not be afraid. Our army has more than their army.”

YOUNG MAN [bewildered] “Our army?”

MAN [as Elijah] “Yes, the army with us.”

YOUNG MAN [bewildered] “With us? Dothan doesn't have an army. All I see is thousands of Syrians—and horses, chariots, spears, swords... [trailing off]

WOMAN Then Elisha prayed. He didn't pray for courage for his servant. He didn't pray for God to send an army to deliver them. He just prayed...

MAN [as Elijah] “Jehovah, I am asking—please open his eyes. Let him see.”

WOMAN Then the LORD opened the young man's eyes. He saw...

YOUNG MAN [wide-eyed, pointing] Look! The mountain—it's full of flaming horses, chariots, swords, spears. It's our army. Its... God's army! They're here for Elisha!

MAN [after pause] We are God's people. No matter the foe...

WOMAN No matter their strength, their tactics, their weapons...

YOUNG MAN The army with us—His army—is greater than theirs.

MAN Today, remember the one who fights for us. Worship the Lord of Hosts.

THE SIZE OF THE HOST

Discuss the number of human beings who bow to the Lord of Hosts. (See reading below.)

Promotional Post: [Social media post]

[Insert preparatory Scripture readings.]

The largest gatherings of people in Bible times were armies. The Lord of Hosts, the Lord of armies, the Divine Commander of humans, as well as spirit beings, possesses the power and authority to exert His will over all beings.

Think about when all people who ever lived are gathered in heaven. No one could hide in the crowd because each person would be aware that God knew each intimate thought, every motive or intent.

The instinctive reaction to such a King who knows all things is to bow down. Think of every single person who has ever lived bowing down before God's throne. What a mass of people!

Then telescope your eyes on individuals: Hitler, Pharoah, Joseph Smith, Stalin. Yes, they would be there bowing, too.

Present world population is 7.6 billion people. It is estimated that all the people who have ever lived would be about the same as the people on the earth now.

So think of 13.2 billion people --- each bowing in a 5' x 2' space! -They would cover about 4, 810 sq. miles. (Maricopa County is 9,203 sq. mi.) (Pastor Kevin Schaal)



NORTHWEST VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

nwvbc.org | 623-581-3115 | 4030 W Yorkshire Drive, Glendale, AZ 85308