

Deuteronomy 20:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Analysis

When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, be not afraid of them: for the LORD thy God is with thee, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Military inferiority ('horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou') should not create fear because 'the LORD thy God is with thee.' Divine presence matters more than military advantage. The reminder of exodus ('brought thee up out of Egypt') grounds confidence in past deliverance. God who conquered Egypt's superpower can defeat any enemy. The Hebrew yare (אֶרְאֶה, fear/afraid) is forbidden because covenant relationship guarantees divine aid. This transforms warfare from human contest to divine action. Success depends not on military strength but covenant faithfulness and divine promise.

Historical Context

Israel lacked horses and chariots (expensive, requiring grasslands). Canaanites possessed both (Joshua 11:4; Judges 1:19; 4:3). Egypt's chariot corps was legendary. Yet God commanded not fearing superior forces. Gideon's 300 defeating Midianites (Judges 7), Jonathan's two-man assault succeeding (1 Samuel 14), and David's sling defeating Goliath exemplify this principle—God's presence trumps

human strength. Later kings accumulated horses/chariots despite prohibition (Deuteronomy 17:16), trusting armaments over God. Prophets condemned this (Isaiah 31:1: 'Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots').

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does past deliverance (your 'exodus') provide confidence for present challenges?
2. What modern 'horses and chariots' (technology, wealth, human resources) tempt us to trust instead of God?
3. How do we balance responsible preparation (acquiring resources) with ultimate trust in divine provision?

Interlinear Text

כִּי	תִּצְא	לְמַלְחֵם	עַל	אִיּוֹב	וְרָא	יְתִּ
H3588	When thou goest out	to battle	H5921	against thine enemies	and seest	
	H3318		H4421		H341	H7200
חֶva	וְרָא	מִמֶּנּוּ	לֹא	תִּירְאֶ	תִּירְאֶ	
horses	and chariots	and a people	more	H4480	H3808	than thou be not afraid
H5483	H7393	H5971	H7227			H3372
מִתְּמֻמָּה	לְפָנֵי	אֱלֹהִים	בְּעֵת			
H1992	H3588	of them for the LORD	thy God	H5973		
		H3068	H430			
בְּעֵת	מִמֶּנּוּ	מִמֶּנּוּ	מִמֶּנּוּ			
is with thee which brought thee up	out of the land	out of the land	out of Egypt			
H5927		H776	H4714			

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 31:8 (References Lord): And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.

Psalms 20:7 (References God): Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God.

Deuteronomy 31:6 (References God): Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Romans 8:31 (References God): What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?

Isaiah 43:2 (Parallel theme): When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Isaiah 31:1 (References Lord): Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!

Joshua 1:5 (Parallel theme): There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

Isaiah 7:14 (References Lord): Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

Psalms 118:6 (References Lord): The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?

Joshua 1:9 (References God): Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

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