

Hitherto Hath the Lord Helped Us

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Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. That was the proclamation of Samuel, in the seventh chapter and the twelfth verse of his first book, after the Philistines had been subdued by Israel. And this also was the shout of the whole congregation and assembly of Israel, because the Lord had delivered them from their enemies. Samuel had built an altar and sacrificed unto the Lord. There, upon that stone the people worshipped their God, and praised Him for His deliverance of them. Samuel named that stone Ebenezer; the stone of help. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. That meant that not only had the Lord fought for them against the Philistines now. The people were not only praising the Lord their God for their present victory, but also because the Lord had been with them in the past. Hitherto, from the days of our fathers until now, hath the Lord helped us. And that also meant that they were confident that the Lord would also be with them in the future. Just what then, does all this mean for us, as the people of God, as we approach another new year? Can we also take this same praise of the God of our salvation upon our lips? Can we, and do we? By the grace of God, a child of God can do nothing else. Shall we look for a few moments, across the year that has just gone by. Can we really say that the Lord has helped us? We should be able to say it, with the deepest conviction, from the bottom of our hearts. Oh, it may not have looked that way many times. Things didn't go the way we expected them to. Probably we had sickness in the family. Maybe even death. We had troubles, all kinds of them. Our young men are torn away from us, and sent to the battlefield to be cannon fodder, in order that the lusts and greed of the nations might be satisfied. Shall we still say, the Lord has helped us? Hitherto? How can we say it in the background of all our troubles and all our woes? By the grace of our blessed Lord we can say it. Yes, we can say it. For we remember, we realize, that all these things were sent upon us by the Lord. Praise be to His name. For in and through it all, He has been and is preparing us for our eternal home.

But why must we say, even of all this, hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Oh, we say it because we realize, by the grace of God, that had the Lord not been with us, had He not helped us, then we would surely have given up in despair. For we realize that, as we are by nature, we could not endure all our troubles. Therefore as the sons of God, we turn to the **Lord** and we say: **Hitherto** hath the **Lord** helped us.

But can we say this only of all that comes to pass on this earth, or do we also look upon a higher plane? We do indeed, by the grace of God. Who really is our Ebenezer? Who is our Rock of Help? Truly that rock is Christ Jesus. Therefore, we do not despair, because our help is in Christ. In him is all our hope, and joy and bliss. In Him is our very life. In Him we live and move and have our being.

Yes, it was this very Christ Who was also Israel's only help in their victory over the Philistines in I Samuel 7:12. There Samuel was really holding this very Christ before the people as being their only help. That Christ also went before the people of Israel in the wilderness, and He was the rock from which they drank. Even as the Apostle Paul writes in I Cor. 10:4, "For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ."

Thus we take this confession upon our lips. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Thus we also acknowledge that God is good, and that He has fulfilled all His promises. And we realize that "There is therefore now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8:1. There is no condemnation now, not only, but there never was any condemnation and there never will be

any condemnation for us who are in Christ Jesus our Lord. Yes. Hitherto! hath the Lord helped us. That is our confession, and that is our praise unto God.

Yes, but what shall we say of the year that lies ahead? Until now we have spoken of the year that has gone by. What does God have in store for us in the future? That of course we do not know. Only God knows exactly what He will bring to pass. But this we do know, that we shall continue to suffer as long as we are in this present life. But we suffer for Christ's sake. We shall suffer for the sake of the truth. The world and also those who call themselves church shall continue to revile us, and persecute us and laugh us to scorn. But the Lord will help us even as He has helped us in the past. And we know that our salvation is sure, because Christ has accomplished it over 1900 years ago. Therefore, we praise Him and give Him all the glory. For He was not only our help in ages past, but He will continue to be our help in all the ages to come. Christ Who is our Rock of Help, our Stone of Help. Ebenezer. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.

Originally Published in:
Vol 13 No 4 January 1953