

# Exploits (Daniel li. 32)

by Seth Rees

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*To be strong and do exploits for God, we must know Him personally, trust Him completely, and rely on Him for everything.*

**Scripture:** Joshua 5:13, 2 Chronicles 20:12, Psalm 46:1, Isaiah 40:29, Daniel 11:32, Acts 12:5, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 3:20, Philippians 4:13, James 4:10

**Topics:** "Intimacy With God", "Spiritual Empowerment"

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## Description

Seth Rees preaches on the importance of knowing God intimately to be strong and do great exploits. He emphasizes the danger of reducing Christianity to mere theology and ethics, highlighting the need for a personal revelation of God in our lives. Rees stresses the necessity of depending solely on God's power and presence, rather than on human methods or schemes, to achieve remarkable feats in our spiritual journey and in the salvation of others.

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## Transcript

"But the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits" (Daniel xi. 32).

Someone has truthfully said: "Weakness is a spreading malady; strength is a spreading energy. If we are weak we scatter weakness, we make others weak. If we are strong we impart strength to those with whom we come in contact. If God has commanded us to be strong, we cannot afford to be weak. He has commanded nothing for which He has not provided. Every command carries with it the weight of a promise. He has placed within our easy grasp ample provision for all the strength and success which He expects of us. But there is a determined purpose on the part of many to eliminate from Christianity all that is superhuman and miraculous. The tendency of the age is to exalt man and displace God. If the supernatural could be taken out of the Bible, and its miraculous occurrences explained on the ground of natural causation, many so-called clever people would be greatly delighted. The tall men of our modern institutions of learning have reduced the phenomena of life and the world to a self-acting mechanism, running by so cunning a contrivance of pulleys, and belts, and shafts, and dynamos, that there is no need of a God. The natural man is never better pleased than when he can supplant God.

Christianity is in great danger of being reduced to "a system" of theology and ethics, doctrine and dogma, laws and creeds. Many who "believe in Christianity" look upon it as simply a great institution. Many of them are devoted to its interests, are willing, in some instances, to shape their lives more or less according to its rules, and are most untiring in their efforts to further its interests. But they are not acquainted with its

Author. Their knowledge of Him is indirect and remote. But away with such cold, dead, mechanical theory and practice. If Christianity is not as supernatural as in the days of Paul and Stephen, it is nothing at all. If the power of God is not so imminent and active today as in the times of Elijah or Daniel, it is nothing whatsoever. The system of redemption through Jesus Christ is intensely personal. It is the revelation of a personal God, the reception of a personal Christ, the enduement with a personal Holy Ghost. Christianity requires every moment of the presence and living hand of its Author.

There was never a time in history when the world needed supernatural religion more than it does today. There was never a time when there was more need of the church emphasizing the supernatural element in religion than now. From the day of Pentecost until this hour it has taken the extraordinary, the astounding, the amazing, the astonishing to wake the old world up so that she would attend to religion. Nothing ordinary will ever capture China, India, or Africa for Christ. Nothing human will ever save rationalistic Germany, infidel France, or Unitarian New England. Man was never so great in his own eyes as he is today, never so boastful, never so defiant and rebellious. Intellect never asserted its pride and carnal importance as it does in this the last decade of the century. It is time we had something to humble us and bring us to a knowledge of ourselves. France's greatest pulpit orator, Massillon, stood over the coffin of the great Louis, and amid the assembled nobles said the simple words: "God only is great." It was a sublime moment, and the words struck every heart with solemnity. The insignificance of man, and the all surpassing greatness of the Lord impressed the people with great force, and the people wept and sobbed, melted by the strange seriousness of the hour.

But we ought to be impressed with our nothingness and God's majesty and greatness all the time. A distinguished clergyman was crossing the Atlantic. It was noticed by the passengers that he would sit for hours each day watching the rolling sea. The gay and thoughtless crowd of promenaders passed him again and again, and were often amused at his silent, serious face. At last a young dude stepped up to him and said: "Doctor, what do you see out there that interests you so very much?" The venerable man turned his face full on the youngster, and said in answer: "Nothing but God." The dandy retreated. When we get to a place where we see nothing but God our enemies are forced to withdraw. The text says that "They that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits."

Let us notice for a little time the two words, "strong" and "exploits," in relation to personal experience. When we recognize the utter worthlessness of all things in our own experience we will begin to be strong. We never find God until we get through with everybody else as saviors. There is a time when we are getting saved when we want "just God." One of the mistakes we often make after we are saved is that we begin to depend on someone else. God awakened us, convicted us, and converted us; we acknowledge that, and then inconsistently depend on someone else. We know that God saved us, but we foolishly undertake to sanctify ourselves, forgetting that salvation is of the Lord from first to last. Sanctification is not by works, nor by growth, nor by development, nor by death, nor by evolution, nor by anything but by God Himself.

Each soul must have a personal revelation of God. Jacob was an altogether different man after Peniel. Job's life was revolutionized after he could say, "Now mine eye seeth thee." Moses was never the same man after he met the God of fire at Horeb. Joshua could never have taken Jericho if he had not met the captain of the Lord's hosts. Isaiah never did much prophesying until he saw the vision of "Jehovah sitting upon a throne high and lifted up." Paul was a high churchman, but his life was worse than a failure until he met God out in the "big road" going to Damascus. We must all meet God for ourselves. A personal knowledge of Him will make us mighty. Mountains of guilt will melt away, billows of sorrow and waves of

grief and tumult will give place to "peace that floweth like a river.

In our life work as well as in our experience we must be strong and do exploits for Him. Then we recognize God as all in all and know Him as we may know Him we can take the jawbone of an ass and slay a thousand Philistines. We can down Jericho with a ram's horn; slay a giant with a boy's sling; tumble a cake of barley meal into the camp of Midianites and put to flight three hundred thousand armed men. God can thresh a mountain with a worm; all He needs is a worm --they are scarce.

Oh, if we only knew God! Then we could open the skies in judgment against sin and in salvation for the sinners: we could water three million souls from a flinty rock by the use of a mere shepherd's stick. The crying need is not more brains, money, eloquence, human magnetism, new methods nor better appointments. All we need is to know God, the Mighty God, the Irresistible God, the All-conquering God.

There is a great temptation to get into bondage to methods and appliances. We catch a few fish, and then burn incense to our nets. We succeed in some method, and then decide that that method is the only one. We expect God to duplicate Himself again and again, and when He does not we are disappointed.

Too often we undertake to do things ourselves. Like the disciples on the sea of Gennesaretwe, in our self-sufficiency, undertake to manage the ship, and let the Master lie down to sleep. It is no wonder that we get into storms and danger. After we have awakened Him and He has brought a great calm, we too frequently take hold of the steering wheel again and undertake to oversee the ship ourselves. When we put our hands on we find that He takes His off, relinquishing His generalship to us. If we would only recognize the Christ of God in the person of the Holy Ghost and permit Him to fight our battles for us we would find that "the slain of the Lord are many." "For the battle is not yours but God's." "Ye shall not fight in this battle." "Stand still and see the salvation of God." "Not any man shall be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life."

We must stop depending upon forms and rules and methods and folks and things. We need an invisible force, an unseen but mighty God.

I was sailing on the beautiful waters of Narragansett Bay. In our own harbor among many fine vessels lying at anchor was a large, fine looking, four-masted schooner. A friend beside me said, "Look! There is the 'Walker Armington,' the only vessel of her kind on the Atlantic coast." "What is there about her peculiar?" I said; for in appearance there was nothing to distinguish her from other fine vessels lying in the harbor. But my friend pointed out that her fourth mast served not only as a mast but as a smokestack. She had an engine down in her hull by which she was able to be independent of tugs and tow boats. She could thread the narrowest channels into the most intricate of harbors without spreading sail or making "tacks." I said, "Since God sanctified my soul I am the 'Walker Armington.' I have an engine for personal use built down in my soul. I do not depend on the direction of the wind, nor upon someone of strong convictions and great power to tug me in and out the harbor."

"Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world." When we depend less on outside things and more on God we will do "exploits."

When the temple was consecrated by Solomon and sanctified by the down coming clouds of God's presence, the people had nothing to do but array themselves in white linen and sing and shout. God honored the action, and the Shekinah came down until the priests could not minister. "Being arrayed in white linen," "it came to pass that as the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound to be

heard in praising and thanking the Lord" "that the house was filled with the cloud." One thing the matter with us is that we over estimate our own importance and place. We think that too much depends upon us. We are self-important. Our place is to stand and sing arrayed in the white robes of entire holiness.

When the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir came up against Jehoshaphat and the Lord's army, Jehoshaphat cried to God, and said: "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee." And God answered: "Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours but God's. Ye shall not fight in this battle; set yourselves, standstill and see the salvation of God. Fear not, nor be dismayed, for the Lord will be with you." And Jehoshaphat "appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness." "And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments." It is so today. When we begin to sing and praise the beauty of holiness and stand still expectantly then the Lord sends salvation. Many a time God's servants come into times of awful conflict and in the absence of feeling they begin to praise the Lord, and feeling springs up and great victory comes. Let our praise keep pace with our prayer. Praise the Lord, "for His mercy endureth forever."

We will be strong and do exploits in the salvation of other men when we recognize nothing but God as our power and help. We depend upon so many second class things in this world; why should we not have the best? There are many human schemes and agencies and reforms and projects and propositions, but there is nothing that can save souls from an endless hell except the power of God. The Holy Ghost must convict and we must depend upon Him to accomplish all that is of value in salvation work. Some one has said that we are living in the Highway and Hedge Dispensation."

This is a time of great opportunity in neglected fields. God is working in the slums and in the jungles. He is preeminently active in fields hitherto unworked. We must work where God is working if we would have any success. God forbid that we should thunder away on old battlefields after the war is all over.

The noble founder of the Chinese Mission was sailing from New York to Canton a century ago. The captain asked him scornfully: "So you are going to convert the Chinese, are you?" "No," said Robert Morrison; "but God is." Over against the dark cloud which hangs so heavy over the foreign field is a beautiful rainbow of promise of mercy and hope. If we "know God" all things are possible with God and all things are possible to him that believeth.

An old unlearned blacksmith, out in West New York State, with dark low brow and broad brawny hands, received a conviction that there ought to be a revival in his community. There had been none for twenty-five years. He closed his shop, would not lift a hammer nor shoe a horse, but went down on his knees and cried to God until God answered. Then he took his way to the backslidden pastor and said, "I want you to announce a seekers' meeting; we are going to have a revival."

"A seekers' meeting? I will announce no such thing! There has not been a seeker since I came into this charge, and more than that there is no prospect of any." But the old blacksmith kept insisting until the preacher to get rid of him consented to announce a seekers' meeting to be held at the old man's home at sunrise Monday morning. The preacher in making the announcement was careful to clear himself of liability to embarrassment by saying that he had no faith in it and did not believe any one would be there. But long before sunrise the blacksmith's house was full and the yard overflowing, and hardened sinners, strong men, were lying on the grass weeping and crying to God for mercy. All this was before a word had been said to those who came. A great and lasting revival broke out and swept the country for miles

around.

We may "be strong and do exploits" when in the trials and conflicts and persecutions of life, by depending absolutely upon God. He will open our eyes to mountains full of chariots and horsemen of fire so that we can look at the enemy and say: "They that be for us are more than they that be against us."

In the twelfth chapter of Acts we are told that "Peter was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him." There was something behind that word "but" that was stronger than all of Herod's troops and prison bars. In a brief space of time Peter was not only free, but Herod was a corrupting corpse. God brings difficult things into my life and your life that He may show His power in removing them. Remember when trouble comes into your life that God is standing "within the shadow, keeping watch above His own: to see whether you will trust Him or sink ingloriously into despair. There are two ways of looking at a difficulty: it may be either a barrier to progress or a ladder to lift you to heaven. God put Jericho in Joshua's way that he might batter down her stone walls with ram's horns, and get a victory that would shine through all the roll of the centuries. He permitted Daniel to go into a lion's den that he might astonish angels, baffle devils, and strike a heathen king and all his subjects with profound conviction. He put the Red Sea across the path of advancing Israel that He might have the opportunity of dividing it and leading His chosen people across dry shod. Paul was permitted to go into prison at Philippi in order that he might shake the old prison walls to pieces, save the jailor and his family, set up a church in his house, and liberate all the other prisoners. And when God lets His saints get into prison today it is that they may stand true to Him, and bring someone else out with them. We ought never to go into jail without bringing somebody else with us. We can afford to be bound for the sake of getting an opportunity to liberate other souls.

God sent Paul to Rome with irons on his limbs that he might plant a church in Caesar's household. And many of God's dear people today if they would only submit to being humbled and degraded in men's eyes would be wondrously used and exalted in God's work and estimation.

Let us get through with our own plans and our own power. Let us get on God's side rather than attempt to pull Him over to help us and be on our side. It was a fortunate event when Joshua met the captain of the Lord's host "over against Jericho" and he got down on his face and resigned his leadership and gave the Son of God command.

Let us believe God for greater things. There is a contrivance used by stock herders in the West by which a trough is filled with water automatically. The weight of the animal which is searching for water in the trough presses an automatic spring so that the water is turned on, and the trough is abundantly supplied with fresh cool water. But the animal must be fully on the platform before the mechanism will work. It must be a complete consecration. A conservative old ox who feels his way by placing only two feet on the platform never gets the water. And the complete and unreserved and entire consecration brings a full salvation and a knowledge of God and an abundance of strength, which enable us to do exploits.

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