



# UNITED FÚTBOL MINISTRIES

"Walking with the KING, for the World, through the gospel of Jesus the Messiah"



## WOUNDED WARRIORS -

### The Price of Victory!

**Pastor William (Billy) Elias**

I have been very fortunate over the last seven years to be a student of Dr. Karl Coke, and Dr. John Looper. I was introduced to their studies and incredible transforming ministries by Pastor Edwin Felicie, of Jackson Home Study Group in Jackson, New Jersey.

This past January, I was honored to be present at the annual Minister's and Lay Leader's Prayer & Study Yeshiva, hosted by Restoration Fellowship International. The theme was entitled "Wounded Soldiers: The Healing, Renewal and Empowerment of Leaders." One of the guest Presenter/Facilitators was Pastor Phillip Cook, the Founder and President of Wounded Warriors Ministries International, Inc.

### *Elijah, God's Warrior*

We began our first session of prayer and study with Dr. Karl D. Coke rehearsing the Prophet Elijah's tribal heritage and the account of Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

As we studied this biblical account, I discovered something amazing about Elijah. Although he experienced a tremendous victory through becoming the prophet God had called him to be and by doing what the Lord had assigned him to do, he did so at a great personal price.

In Dr. Karl Coke's Timothy Program International study notes on the twelve tribes of Israel, he writes that "Elijah was a descendant of the tribe of Gad, (גָּד) 7<sup>th</sup> son of Jacob, born of Zilpah. Gad (Gilead) is also called "the warrior tribe". 1<sup>st</sup> Chronicles 5:18 refers to this tribe as "experts in war". (p 18, 19, *The Twelve Tribes of Israel from The Timothy Program International*)

As I have continued to study the life and ministry of Elijah, I have discovered several things that are needful in helping us to recognize today's modern warriors.

The Hebrew word for "God's Warrior" is "*Lochem El*" and is spelled in Hebrew לָחֵם אֱל. It means, "*figuratively to consume; by implication to battle*

(as destruction):—, consume, to prevail” (Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries H3898)

So many times, warriors for the kingdom of heaven experience such awesome victories in their lives, both spiritually and in the earthly realms, that they often forget that it comes at a great personal price. In addition, at many times and in many ways, we are challenged by our fellow-colleagues and superiors – as well as by some of the modern day church doctrines and philosophies. This often minimizes and obscures the victories we have had. As Elijah stood before the prophets of Baal, and triumphed over them by being faithful to who he was in the Lord, and to his call, he gained victory at a tremendous personal cost.

With every assignment and victory to be won, there is a personal cost to be paid! Often, the results are the reverse of the biblical definition of the word for warrior in Hebrew, it becoming our own fate, rather than the fate of our enemies. By being willing to pay the price of victory, God’s warriors are often overcome, consumed, and are prevailed over by the very colleagues whom we have fought alongside of or in defense of. As Pastor Cook pointed out, Elijah took on the prophets alone. The scripture is clear, that with the exception of the gathering of the water, and dowsing of the altar, Elijah rebuilt the altar by himself!

*“Then Elijah said to all the people, “Come near to me.” So all the people came near to him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD which had been torn down. Elijah took twelve stones according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the word of the LORD had come, saying, “Israel shall be your name.” So with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and he made a trench around the altar, large enough to hold two measures of seed. Then he arranged the wood and cut the ox in pieces and laid it on the wood.”... The water flowed around the altar and he also filled the trench with water (1 Kings 18:30 – 33, 35 (NASB).*

Indeed, to his dismay, Elijah did the work of the Lord alone. He took on the prophets of Baal in the strength of knowing who he was in Jehovah, and by operating in his calling as a prophet - one who speaks the Word of the Lord with the fruitfulness of the lips. Sadly, he did so feeling as though he was *zealous for the LORD, the God of hosts; for the sons of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars and killed Your prophets with the sword. And I alone am left; and they seek my life, to take it away” (1 Kings 19:14).*



As the Scripture says, Elijah withdrew after being threatened by Jezebel. He curled up in a fetal position to wait out the political and spiritual storms. He no doubt

experienced the overwhelming fear, panic, and grief of all human servants. He no doubt was mentally and spiritually tormented to the point of exhaustion and giving up, completely.

*“But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree; and he requested for himself that he might die, and said, “It is enough; now, O LORD, take my life, for I am not better than my fathers.” (1 Kings 19:4(NASB).*

Once again, alone, he beseeches God to take his life. He was now experiencing the depths of despair after living through the height of euphoria and victory. After such a great victory over the prophets of Baal, the enemies of both God and Israel, Elijah was distraught and in pain, a man in need of healing, renewal and RESTORATION!



Elijah’s Juniper Tree experience and restoration by God, and the heavenly angels, is an obvious parallel of Jesus the Messiah in the Garden of Gethsemane. *“He lay down and slept under a juniper tree; and behold, there was an angel touching him, and he said to him, “Arise, eat.” Then he looked and behold, there was at his head a bread cake baked on hot stones, and a jar of water. So he ate and drank and lay down again. The angel of the LORD came again a second time and touched him and said, “Arise, eat, because the journey is too great for you” (1 Kings 19:5- 7 (NASB).*

This is where Elijah’s story finds the most fierce criticism by today’s modern theologians. It is often said that Elijah, after his great victory, forgot what God did in his life, and fell victim to the Jezebel Spirit, which seeks only to rob, kill, and destroy. I have heard on multiple occasions that this was Elijah’s spiritual failure, and a sinful moment in the life of this fantastic prophet. I have heard it said that this was Elijah’s “woe is me” period in his life, and this supposed weakness is looked upon with judgmentalism and the harshness rendered by Church polemics and apologetics.

I have often had trouble with this form of theological diagnosis of his spiritual state, by associating it with sin. It wasn’t until after Pastor Cook’s analysis of this moment in Elijah’s life, that it opened my eyes to see what was really going on between the Lord God and Elijah under the Juniper Tree.

As Elijah stood before the prophets of Baal, and triumphed over them by being obedient to his calling and purpose, was also willing to pay the price for the redemption and deliverance of the Lord’s people from idolatry. Obedience often leads to an earthquake, called change! Even today, when many of the Lord’s warriors are empowered and sent out by the Church an aftermath of fear, panic, terror, and even the

loss of hope can challenge the humanity of God's servants. This often happens when leaders do not feel supported by the body of Christ and/or by their ministry colleagues. This leads to a crisis of feeling alone and helpless. Remember, when you come forth fresh from a hard fought victory it is easy (*like Elijah*) to become physically, emotionally and spiritually exhausted and be in need of renewal and refreshing. Often the Church overlooks this need concerning God's Wounded and/or Exhausted Warriors.

### ***Jesus' victory in the Garden of Gethsemane***

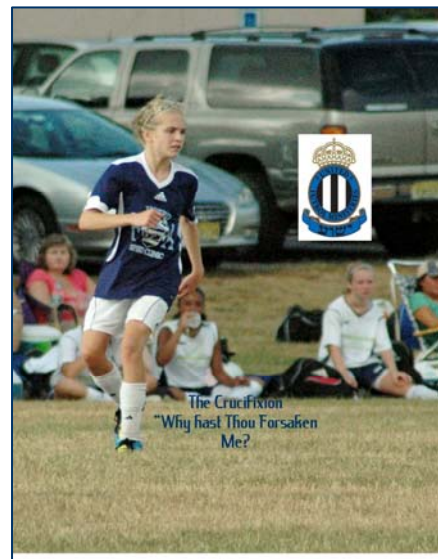
Let us look at the costs. As he knelt before the Father in Heaven, crying out concerning the Father's will for His life, He was at the same time challenged with human fear and by His human will. He felt helpless and alone until his sweat became like drops of blood. As His disciples slept and as fear, torment, and panic overwhelmed His humanity, He fell on his knees again, and again, before His Heavenly Father. Finally, as he won the greatest battle in His life on earth, the Lord comforted and renewed Him.

In my humble opinion, if Jesus had been arrested, prior to Gethsemane, then the cross may have had a completely different outcome. Even the Creator of Heaven and Earth, The King of Kings and the LORD OF LORDS, had to have an internal encounter with Himself concerning the Father's plan for His life! He knew they would try to strip Him of who He was, and who He was called to be! He knew the punitive process He would undergo, and He knew the pain, and suffering the cross would bring. Therefore, He had to choose whose will and whose design He would follow!

### ***Restoration for Wounded Warriors***

While much of the recent minister's Yeshiva was spent discussing the restoration of warriors who had succumb to burn-out or to moral failure in their careers, and of the overly punitive and harsh judgments that have historically been inflicted by the body of Christ, we also dialogued about those who have been victimized by organizational agendas, ministerial jealousy and by the lack of compassion, and understanding?

The answer to restoring the body of Messiah, its leadership and the saints of God, is quite simple. This renewal applies to all fallen warriors, either by their own hand, or by someone else's. We need to minister to them, not condemn them. We need to understand that they are wounded, afraid, deeply



hurt, distraught, and often hopeless. Instead of judging and viewing their state as helpless and hopeless, embrace them where they are, in order to bring them hope and a way out. Instead of looking down upon them as a failure, or someone “weaker” than you, *“have mercy on them unless you also be tempted.”* Listen to what they say, hear their words, and offer comfort first, before counsel and discipline.

As Pastor Cook pointed out in the parable of the “Good Samaritan,” many religious people will pass wounded men and women by. Yet, at the same time, all that injured people want is mercy. It was Dr. Karl Coke, who put the explanation point on the discussion when he made the statement, *“The wounded man determined who his brother was, the Good Samaritan.”*

I beseech the reader of this article to act in grace, and mercy, and to respect those warriors who have fallen, either by their own hand, or by the sins of others. In the cases of those who have sinned grievously and punitive action needed to be taken, may we never forget to also restore them back to health. Don’t pass them by, on the other side of the road! Do not become a critic, but a restorer! Do not discard them for fear that they will “contaminate” you, your ministry, or shame you in some way. Embrace them and fulfill Paul’s charge to those professing to be born of grace, *“Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. For each one will bear his own load”* (Galatians 6:2-5 (NASB). Shalom!

*Pastor Billy Elias is the founder of both Lacey Home Fellowship and United Fútbol Ministries, an international soccer outreach. An ordained minister in Restoration Fellowship International, his ministry features teaching lessons for successful Christian living by emphasizing the Hebraic thought of both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Apostolic Writings. Billy and his wife Peggy and their five children reside in Lacey Township New Jersey.*

