

FACING OUR DUNKIRK

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Texas Eagle Forum Devotionals (#TEFDevo)

A new movie arriving in theaters July 21, will attempt to tell the story of some rather extraordinary events that took place in May 1940. Tragedy of the most extreme type was about to befall the British, with more than 300,000 soldiers trapped in France and surrounded by a German army more than twice their strength. Short of a miracle, these brave souls, comprising the bulk of the British army, were to be captured, killed, or starved. Yet, as any amateur historian knows, the vast majority was safely transported back to England in what is now known as “the Miracle of Dunkirk.”



Hopefully the movie from acclaimed director Christopher Nolan will tell more than the facts of the matter. The true story is that not one, but multiple miracles took place after King George VI called his nation to set aside May 26th as a National Day of Prayer. The King worshiped God at Westminster Abbey. The rest of the British Empire joined him in churches around the world crying out to the true Almighty. This heartfelt prayer certainly had an effect.

We know from the scriptures that when two or more gather in the name of the Lord, God shows up (Matthew 18:20). We also know that the effectual, fervent (heartfelt) prayer of the righteous has great power (James 5:16). These scriptures proved true at Dunkirk. As Winston Churchill observed, “335,000 men had been carried out of the jaws of death and shame to their native land.” How that happened was indeed a miracle.

Reverend David E. Gardner wrote a trilogy on Dunkirk entitled *The Trumpet Sounds for Britain*. He went to be with the Lord in 2002 but MovieGuide saw fit to excerpt his work for a recent article titled *History in the Movies: The Miracle of Dunkirk* (<https://www.movieguide.org/news-articles/history-in-the-movies.html>).

Rev. Gardner explained the miracles that saved the men (quoting the Movieguide excerpts):

“The first miracle

The first was that for some reason – which has never yet been fully explained – Hitler overruled his generals and halted the advance of his armored columns at the very point when they could have proceeded to the British army’s annihilation. They were now only 10 miles away! Later, Mr. Churchill asserted in his memoirs that this was because Hitler undoubtedly believed “that his air superiority would be sufficient to prevent a large-scale evacuation by sea.” That is very significant in terms of the second miracle.

The second miracle

A storm of unprecedented fury broke over Flanders on Tuesday, 28 May, (1940), grounding the German Luftwaffe squadrons and enabling the British army formations, now eight to twelve miles from Dunkirk, to move up on foot to the coast in the darkness of the storm and the violence of the rain, with scarcely any interruption from aircraft, which were unable to operate in such turbulent conditions. The Fuehrer had obviously not taken the weather into his reckoning, nor the One who controls the weather! And, the third miracle?

The third miracle

Despite the storm in Flanders, a great calm—such as has rarely been experienced—settled over the English Channel during the days which followed, and its waters became as still as a mill pond.

It was this quite extraordinary calm which enabled a vast armada of little ships, big ships, warships, privately owned motor-cruisers from British rivers and estuaries – in fact, almost anything that would float – to ply back and forth in a desperate bid to rescue as many of our men as possible.

The Little Ships

*There were so many ships involved in the evacuation that this is the way in which Douglas Bader, the legless Spitfire fighter ace, who sped over with his squadrons from the fighter base at Martlesham, near Ipswich, to help cover the operation, described the scene in *Fight for the Sky*: “The sea from Dunkirk to Dover during*



these days of the evacuation looked like any coastal road in England on a bank holiday. It was solid with shipping. One felt one could walk across without getting one's feet wet, or that's what it looked like from the air. There were naval escort vessels, sailing dinghies, rowing boats, paddle-steamers, indeed every floating device known in this country. They were all taking British soldiers from Dunkirk back home. You could identify Dunkirk from the Thames estuary by the huge pall of black smoke rising straight up into a windless sky from the oil tanks which were ablaze just inside the harbor."

Yet still, to a very large extent, the German air squadrons were unable to intervene. Certainly not in force, nor in the way Hitler had anticipated, for so many of these squadrons still remained grounded. So much so, that General Haider, Chief of the German General Staff, three days after the High Command had so proudly boasted that the British Army was about to be annihilated, was obliged to record in his diary on 30 May that "Bad weather has grounded the Luftwaffe, and now we must stand by and watch countless thousands of the enemy getting away to England right under our noses."



A strange immunity

Even though some squadrons did get through, it seems that yet another miracle happened. Many of the troops on the beaches were favored with a strange immunity. When about 400 men were being machine-gunned and bombed, systematically, by about sixty enemy aircraft, one man who flung himself down with the rest reported that, after the strafing was over, he was amazed to find that there was not a single casualty.

Another man, a chaplain, was likewise machine-gunned and bombed as he lay on the beach. After what seemed an eternity, he realized he had not been hit, and rose to his feet to find that the sand all around where he had been lying was pitted with bullet holes, and that his figure was outlined on the ground."

There was and should be no doubt that miracles took place. In fact, it was so obvious that the British, with such deep gratitude, held a day of National Thanksgiving on June 9 with praying and the singing of Psalm 124:

¹ If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say:

² If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us:

³ Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us:

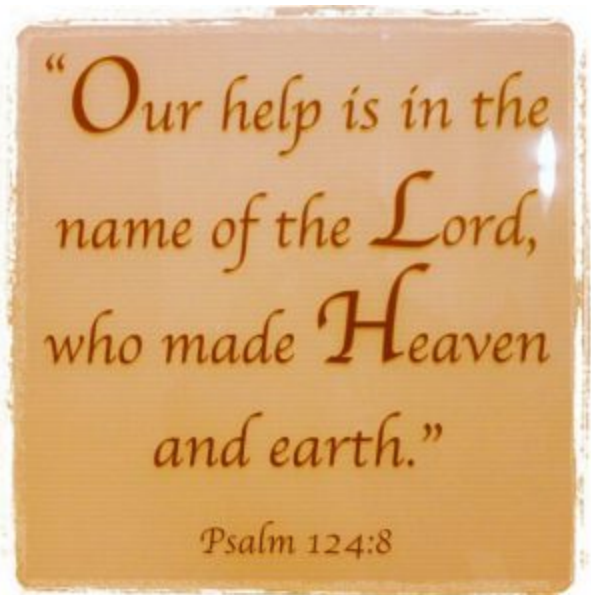
⁴ Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul:

⁵ Then the proud waters had gone over our soul.

⁶ Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.

⁷ Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped.

⁸ Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.



King James Version (KJV)

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So What Lessons Can We Learn from Dunkirk Today?

There are at least three valuable and timeless lessons to take from the Dunkirk Miracle.

First, we must recognize that miracles can still happen today. Sometimes it seems easy to relegate God's hand of Providence to Biblical Times. And then the temptation is to relegate Biblical accounts as simply stories told as if they were Greek mythology or ancient fairy tales. There is no discounting what happened in 1940, however. That history is so well documented that it must be accepted. And that history is absolute in explaining the miracles that took place.

Oftentimes, people will question Biblical accounts because they don't experience modern miracles. Dunkirk gives us reason to not only acknowledge the miraculous in modern times but heartens our understanding of Biblical accounts.

Think about it. We have a nation in an impossible situation. A hostile army of superior strength intent on their destruction surrounded their people. That nation cries out to God and is miraculously delivered through the sea. Sound familiar?

Kevin was recently in Egypt and had the opportunity to learn about the mummified remains of Pharaoh Ramses II. This is the Pharaoh commonly associated with Moses and the Exodus. When the researchers unwrapped him for display at the Egyptian Museum late in the 20th Century, his arms were differently positioned from any other mummy. In fact, the museum officially states that his arms were positioned as if he were holding the reigns to a chariot with his right hand and attempting to hold back an onslaught of water with his left. In addition, x-rays suggest that he died from drowning with sea salt found inside the mummy. Other research suggests that he died around the age of 90. All of this is consistent with the Biblical account of Exodus.

<http://thecairopost.youm7.com/news/142273/culture/ramses-ii-pharaoh-of-exodus-researcher-says>).



God's deliverance is a continual theme in the Bible. Sometimes, this was personal deliverance for individuals or families, as in the case of the three Hebrew children (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego). Other times, it was a miracle to save a nation (such as David vs. Goliath). But the point is that the history of Dunkirk demonstrates that these are more than stories. And, the miracles did not end when the Bible was finished.

The second lesson from Dunkirk has to do with the importance of giving thanks for

God's deliverance.

It is essential to note that the deliverance of Dunkirk did not end the war. In fact, the British were still heavily outmanned and outgunned. The war was going to be taken to their homeland with the Battle of Britain that would start in the next month and last for another year. And, the completion of the war itself was five years away and the prospects remained dire. Britain was about to be tested as never before and they knew it. And yet, they paused on a Sunday in June to drop to their knees in Thanksgiving, prayer, and praise.

For us, we should be careful to give God the glory and demonstrate our own thanksgiving for any deliverance, whether large or small. We must do this even if we don't know or see the final outcome. It is too easy to ignore the miracles we experience daily because we continue to fear the larger challenge. A good example from Exodus is how the children of Israel took manna for granted because they remained in the wilderness.

A New Testament example that shows a lack of gratitude can be seen with the ten lepers who were healed. Only one returned to give thanks. Jesus rightly questioned (Luke 17: 17), "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"

The third lesson from Dunkirk is a reminder that we ought to be crying out for deliverance. What are you going through today where you could use a touch from God? Do you need God's miraculous help with your family, your health, or your finances? If God was able to rescue 335,000 Brits from an impossible circumstance, He is clearly able to deliver you. And, for those of us concerned about the declining culture, the economy, or national security threats, it is imperative that we purposely cry out to God now.

There are so many threats we face as Christians in America. There is the effort to stamp out religious liberty, wherein you are not allowed to demonstrate your faith in the marketplace. There is the threat of terrorism and radical jihadists who want to force Shariah law on our nation. There is human trafficking and child exploitation that hides in the shadows but threatens our children. There are potentially systemic threats to our power grid. And, of course, there are international threats from rogue nations and their leaders. The list of threats is long. Given that, shouldn't we be crying out to God Almighty both individually and corporately?

Sometimes it seems as if God waits for His people to cry out before delivering them. So why aren't we crying out? Oh that President Trump, accompanied by leaders in Congress, would call for a day of national prayer and fasting to ask for God's hand of protection. Oh that each state or city's leaders would do the



same. Oh that we would be unwavering in joining together in prayer groups and Bible studies everywhere, to perpetually and persistently petition God for deliverance for our ourselves, our families, our cities, our states, and our country!

For us, the challenge of Dunkirk is to believe in God, to recognize our utter dependence on his sovereign divine hand, to cry out to him ceaselessly, and to understand that the God of the Bible is alive today and He continues to reign in the affairs of men.

Are you facing a personal Dunkirk where things seem impossible and there is no way out? Odds are, you have just emerged from a serious challenge or are about to enter one. Take comfort! The God behind the miracle of Dunkirk is alive and well, ready to help you in your time of greatest need.

If you appreciate the work of Texas Eagle Forum, please consider partnering with us in prayer and financial support.

*Marnie and Kevin Freeman are full on believers in Jesus Christ. They believe their highest calling to be serving God, their families, their friends and clients, their church, and their communities at the local, state, and federal levels. Kevin, an investment manager and CFA, is an expert on financial terrorism, a NY Times bestselling author (<http://secretweapon.org/>) of *Secret Weapon: How Economic Terrorism Brought Down the Stock Market and Why It Can Happen Again* and *Game Plan: How to Protect Yourself from the Coming Cyber-Economic Attack*, and host of the new television show *Economic War Room with Kevin Freeman* (<http://economicwarroom.com/>).*

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