

# DAYS OF CRISIS

Today Britain is facing a monumental crisis that is not only financial but also moral and spiritual. The new Government will have to make cuts in public services which could lead to social unrest and national bankruptcy. But God promises to bless the nation that turns to him in prayer.

## IF MY PEOPLE

**IF** - you seek me with all your heart I will be found by you, declares the Lord.

**Jeremiah 29.14**

**IF** - at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster that I had planned.

**Jeremiah 18.7**

**IF** - my people who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn away from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will **HEAL THEIR LAND**

**2 Chronicles 7.14**

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Registered charity no. 1129788

# SAVING

## THE NATION

**70<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY**  
of the **NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER**

**26<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2010**

**The Miracle of Dunkirk**  
a turning point in the recent history of Britain



# DUNKIRK

The early days of the Second World War threatened to bring the whole of Europe under the dark cloud of Nazi oppression.

France had fallen to the rapidly advancing German Panzer divisions leaving the British Army stranded on the Continent and desperate to return across the Channel to defend their home land from what appeared to be inevitable invasion.

It was a desperate situation and on **27<sup>th</sup> May 1940** the German High Command announced

*"The British Army is encircled and our troops are proceeding to its annihilation."*

But the dire plight of the situation had already been recognised in Britain. The day before the German announcement, **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> May**, King George VI called the whole nation to a Day of Prayer.

In a stirring broadcast, the King called the people of Britain and the Empire to commit their cause to God. The whole nation responded. Large crowds went to Westminster Abbey. Unable to find seats inside, they stood outside listening to the service and joining in prayer. Churches across the land were full. Immediately a series of miracles occurred.

## THREE MIRACLES

- A spirit of confusion clouded the German High Command. Irrationally, Hitler ordered his generals to halt the advance towards the west coast of France.
- A storm of extraordinary fury grounded the German Luftwaffe on **28<sup>th</sup> May** allowing the British forces to make their way to Dunkirk.
- A great calm followed which settled over the English Channel for several days with low cloud cover allowing an armada of little ships, many of them only river boats, to cross the Channel and ferry the waiting soldiers from the beaches out to Royal Navy warships for the return to Dover.

Amazingly 335,000 men were evacuated from Dunkirk in those few momentous days which were a turning point in world history. This was seen at the time as a direct response to the whole nation coming in humility before God in prayer.

Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister, told the nation that he believed this to be a miracle - an answer to prayer.

In a speech to Parliament he said,

*"I thought, and some good judges agreed with me, that perhaps 20,000 or 30,000 men might be re-embarked. The whole root and core and brain of the British Army seemed about to perish upon the field or to be led into captivity."*



## CONFUSION IN ENEMY HIGH COMMAND

But the safe return of so many men did not guarantee the survival of Britain. The army had had to leave its weapons and equipment in France and now had to regroup, rearm and reposition itself to face the threat of invasion. The spirit of confusion continued to affect Hitler's judgement.

Amazingly, he did not follow across the channel immediately after Dunkirk when Britain was at his mercy. He continued to hesitate throughout **June to August 1940** giving Britain a breathing space and an opportunity to re-group and prepare for the coming battle. Then Field Marshal Goring told his Air Force Commanders that before Germany could invade Britain they had to destroy the Royal Air Force.

# BATTLE OF BRITAIN

On **30 August 1940**, 800 enemy aircraft darkened skies over southern England aiming to destroy airfields.

Within a week Fighter Command was in serious trouble as aircraft and pilots were being lost at a rate far in excess of replacements. By **6<sup>th</sup> September** there were no reserves left. Defeat appeared inevitable which would open the way for invasion.

As if by some prophetic foreknowledge the King and his church advisers had called for **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> September 1940** to be another National Day of Prayer to give thanks to Almighty God for the miracle of Dunkirk. But the Day of Thanksgiving was also needed to intercede for another miracle to turn the tide in what was already becoming known as the 'Battle of Britain'.

Enemy aircraft swept across the Channel in wave after wave both night and day. Aircraft were being destroyed on the ground, vital personnel were killed and landing strips were bombed faster than the craters could be repaired. Once again the situation was desperate. Suddenly, for no rational reason, Hitler ordered the Luftwaffe to switch its attack to London. This actually saved Fighter Command. For the Germans it was a catastrophic blunder and proved to be a turning point in the war.



The Spitfires and Hurricanes took a tremendous toll of the enemy bombers and by mid-September the German Air Force had suffered such great losses that they ceased their mass attacks.

On **17<sup>th</sup> September 1940** the German Supreme Command issued an order,

'The invasion of England is postponed until further notice'.

The Battle of Britain was won. Winston Churchill once again addressed the nation,

*"Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few."*

But the whole nation acknowledged that it was not simply their tiny armed forces, or the skill of their young airmen, that had repelled the might of the enemy but the power of prayer and the faithfulness of God.

