

THE MIRACLE OF DUNKIRK

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The movie Dunkirk has been a summer box office success. It shows the World War 2 story of the evacuation of the British troops from France from a human and secular perspective, but it leaves out any mention of the miracles that transpired through the power of prayer and Divine intervention.

Recalling these miracles gives us hope for America today as it reminds us that God is still sovereign, and He still will hear and respond to our anguished cries.

*The text below is adapted from "The Trumpet Sounds for Britain"
written by Rev. David E Gardner*

May 1940 was a time of grave crisis for the British Empire and for the whole civilized world. On May 10th Hitler had launched his blitzkrieg against the Low Countries and France. By the end of the second week in May, the French defenses had been broken. German panzer forces, led by Rommel and his 7th Panzer Division, burst through, and with lightning speed began a rapid advance across France and Belgium. Very soon the British army was threatened with encirclement, and were obliged to withdraw.

With the entire front rapidly collapsing, the decision was made to evacuate all the forces from the Continent. But Dunkirk was the only port to evacuate from, and that was already being seriously threatened by the Germans. All therefore seemed about to be lost.



But Britain had a godly Sovereign. Seeing this situation developing, King George VI requested that Sunday, May 26th be observed as a National Day of Prayer. In a stirring broadcast, he called the people of Britain and of the Empire to commit their cause to God. Hence the whole nation was at prayer on that Sunday.

In its hour of deep distress a heart-cry from both monarch and people alike was going up to God in prayer. And that cry did not go unanswered. For very soon, at least three miracles were seen to happen.

The first miracle: For some reason Hitler overruled his generals and halted the advance of his armored columns at the very point when they could have annihilated the British army. Later, 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.*"

The second miracle: A storm of unprecedented fury broke over Belgium on Tuesday, May 28th, 1940 grounding the German Luftwaffe, and enabling the British army to move to the coast in the darkness of the storm with scarcely any interruption from German aircraft. The Fuehrer had obviously not taken the weather into his reckoning, nor the One who controls the weather!

The third miracle: Despite the storm in Belgium, 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 ships, to ply back and forth in a desperate bid to rescue as many men as possible.

There were so many ships involved in the evacuation that one British fighter pilot described it this way: "*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.

Yet to a very large extent, the German air squadrons were still unable to intervene. So much so that the Chief of the German General Staff recorded in his diary on May 30th 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.*"

Yet another miracle happened. Even though some German air squadrons did get through, many of the troops on the beaches were favored with a strange immunity. When about 400 men were being machine-gunned and bombed 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.

Truly amazing things were happening. There were signs everywhere that an intervening Power was at work. Officers and men alike had seen the hand of God, powerful to save, delivering them from the hands of a mighty foe who, humanly speaking, had them at its mercy.

On June 4th, Churchill made a statement to the House of Commons. He spoke with a voice charged with emotion when he reported that, rather than only 20,000 or 30,000 men being rescued, as he had previously feared, "*335,000 men have been carried out of the jaws of death to their native land.*" He went on to refer to what had happened as "*a miracle of deliverance*".

So grateful was the nation for this mighty deliverance that Sunday, June 9th, 1940 was appointed as a Day of National Thanksgiving. On the eve of that day, a newspaper article noted that "*the prayers of the nation were answered, and that the God of hosts himself [intervened].*"