

**THE
REMNANT
AT WAR**

**AN EXPOSITION ON REVELATION
12:17**

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AID FOR
THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR

1. Identify the Enemy
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“AND THE DRAGON WAS WROTH WITH THE WOMAN, AND WENT TO MAKE WAR WITH THE REMNANT OF HER SEED, WHICH KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD, AND HAVE THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST.”

The *woman* with whom the *dragon* was *wroth* is the Bride of Christ, the Church of the living God. *Christ is the head, . . . the church is subject unto Christ, “. . . Christ also loved the church, . . . that he might sanctify and cleanse it, . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, . . . We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones., . . and (Christ) shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh., . . This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* (Eph.5:23 to 32) *And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.”* (Rev.21:2,3)

“But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, . . . and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant,” etc. (Heb.12:22,23,24)

*“But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the **house of God**, which is the **church of the living God**, the pillar and ground of the truth.”* (1 Tim.3:15)

The emphasis on these scriptures is mine as it will be in many others.

It is said in the text that these persons, who are the *remnant*, “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.” We must conclude from this statement that, “*they are not all Israel, which are of*

Israel.” (Rom.9:6) Just because some people have identified themselves with various religious societies, does not mean that they are in this war. It is evident by their manner of living that many who have become church members in name only, are not keeping the commandments nor do they have the testimony of Jesus Christ. It looks as if they are still in love with the world and it’s systems. I conclude that such persons are already defeated by the Dragon or that they are fighting on the side of the Dragon within religious circles to destroy all that remains that is Godly. Consider these sobering scriptures. “*Know ye not that the **friendship of the world is enmity with God.**? whosoever therefore will be a **friend of the world is the enemy of God.**” (James 4:40). And, “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; Whether of **sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?**” (Rom.6:16)**

Thus the **remnant** (the remaining ones) not only *keep the commandments of God*, they have **the testimony** (evidence given, report, witness) **of Jesus Christ**. They are those whom the Lord hath said, “*I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*” (Heb.13:6,7) The entire attitude of these courageous warriors seems to be contained here in these scriptures: “*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though **war should rise against me**, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion; in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.*” (Psa.27:1 to 5). Although the **remnant** is engaged in a war with an enemy that has already had his head bruised by the heel of our blessed Saviour, (Gen.3:15), the battle goes on, “*And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.*” (Rom.16:20) This **remnant** is drafted by the Lord into his army. They are said to be **called** in several places in the Scripture (Rom.8:30), (1Cor.1:2). They are to endure “*hardness, as a good **soldier** of Jesus Christ. No man that **warreth** entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath **chosen him to be a soldier.**” (2Tim.2:3,4) The great comfort that we who are engaged in this battle have is that our enemy has no more power over death. (Heb.2:14,15)*

Those who might be lulled into slumber because you understand that Christ has already won the victory be forewarned. Until the Dragon is cast into “*the lake of fire*”, along with his servants, he will do all he can to destroy the church and

the truth that she upholds. The Dragon gets more enraged as his time grows near. The war will rage stronger as the days pass. **This exposition has been prepared to help you with your battles.** *“There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage:...”* (Josh.1:5,6)

NUMBER ONE IDENTIFY THE ENEMY

All too often we spend too much time in our life doing as Don Quixote, the fictional character in a book by Cervantes. He was a simple minded country gentleman who had read so many books of chivalry that he imagined himself a knight. He set out to reform the world. He mistook windmills for giants and flocks of sheep for armies. The many battles that have been fought between brethren in the church, brethren in the ministry, members of the family, and our neighbors are mostly things that this crafty Dragon causes us to be caught in to distract us from the real war. Any spirit that would make you feel superior to anyone else is out of the *pit* and is the major cause of division. Remember this scripture? *“But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.”* (Gal.5:15)

A *The Dragon* (Rev.12:17) *(to look) a fabulous kind of serpent, to fascinate.* (Strongs 1404) The concept the world has put forth as the appearance of this creature is of a character that you would run from the moment you cast your eyes upon him. They say he has horns in his head, a long tail dragging behind him that is forked, a pitchfork in his hand, a sinister look upon a sharp-chinned face, and generally is all red in color or covered with fire from the top of his pointed ears down to his feet. I am positive this Dragon will never come to entice you to do his bidding with such a fearsome appearance. As you look at this Dragon he will appeal to all your natural senses. You will not be afraid of him for he will have such a fascination to you that you will have to use all your spiritual powers to resist him. He is so fabulous that it will be very hard to think you cannot do without him. **Be forewarned: all that glitters is not gold.** Here I will list a few examples of what happened to some very strong Bible characters. Jeremiah tells us, *“Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out.”* (Jer.51:34) This is the real nature of this Dragon and we see the fierceness of his wrath. So even though he is fascinating to look at and to be desired, **he is deadly.** Ezekiel tell us, *“Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that liveth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myself.”* (Eze.29:3) What a liar he is, for God

said, “ *All things were made by him (Christ the Word) and without him was not any thing made that was made.* ” (John 1:3). This Dragon will always promote the biggest lies in the world and make the people think they are dumb if they don’t swallow them. If you don’t think he is still busy doing that, just look around at the lying that goes on in high circles today. This Pharaoh was the same that made bond slaves out of the family of God and would not let them go until the plagues brought against him were so severe that there was no doubt in anyone’s mind that it was the Lord who delivered them in spite of this liar. **You should consider whether this dragon has the desire and power to enslave you if you are not zealous toward God.** John, In the book of Revelation describes the Dragon as being *red* and “*having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.*” Most all the Puritan writers that I have studied make it very clear that they think this *Dragon* is an allusion to **pagan Rome** who later in the book was **papal Rome**, having received her power from this great *Dragon* and is further described with these words. “*Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*” All false religions have their source here and are the offspring of this *great whore*.

B *The Devil , and Satan:* (Rev.20:2) *A traducer* (to lead across, so as to debase by misinterpretation) *false accuser, slanderer*. This is the more common name we use to describe our enemy. So many people joke about the Devil and some even have a saying, “the devil made me do it”, as if that were a good enough excuse for whatever we do that is not right. Parents sometimes refer to their children as being “devilish”. Perhaps there is truth in what they are saying but the point is, our society has become so unafraid of this Devil that they are really thinking that it is only a little offbeat and is really quite cute. So many grow up not being afraid of the Devil. It is so bad that many girls will not give a young man a second look if they don’t think he is a little devilish. What they are really doing is exposing their human nature and have to suffer for it later on. If it were not for the absolute power of God, there would not be a power in the world that could control this devil. Make no mistake: this ***Devil and Satan is the same as the Dragon***. This devil is **deadly**. Consider the definition above and hear what James tells us. “*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am*

tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." (James 1:12,13,14) Many, many verses of Scripture could be brought to the subject here for consideration, but if you are in tune with what has already been written, you will sufficiently understand that this is a real enemy and not an imaginary one. He is real and he is powerful. You cannot half-heartedly expect to overcome him. One of his sneaky ways to get to you is to get you to believe that he is not real. I have heard otherwise good preachers confuse their congregations by preaching to them a watered-down concept of the origin of Satan. These preachers have reckoned that since God, they say, will not create anything but something good and will have nothing to do with evil, conclude that God did not make the Devil. This false doctrine is both dangerous and unscriptural, since John 1:3 clearly states, "All things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made." If God did not make the Devil, then this scripture is incorrect, or there is another creative power that the Bible does not tell us about, or the Devil does not have a real existence, but exists only in the imagination of the mind of sinful man. The latter is the easiest to get you to believe and when you do you will never flee from him. **Do not let these untruths deceive you into getting comfortable with your worst enemy.**

C *The World and its friends:* The worldly system is defined by Strongs correctly as, "The sum total of human life in the ordered world, considered apart from, alienated from, and hostile to God and His elect and church. Satan is the head, his fallen angels and demons are his emissaries, and the non-elect are his subjects, together with those purposes, pursuits, pleasures, practices, and places where God is not wanted. Much of it is religious, cultured, refined, and intellectual, but is Anti Christ and Anti God. It is also all that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to accurately define and seize upon; but it does constitute a real and effective power and **turns moral, or immoral according to the kind of atmosphere it exists in at any given moment.** We are as present with it as the air we inhale and exhale. It includes all who are carnally minded." I hope you are able to see in this definition as you apply it to situations you have experienced in your life, some answers as to why things happen as they do. It explains how a reprobate young man can get religion, join a church and then try to seduce all the young girls he can before being caught. It explains to me how a brother sat and told of his wife running off with his pastor and leaving him with two little children. It helps explain the problem David expressed in the Psalms. "*But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are*

no bands in their death: but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. Therefore pride compasseth them about as a chain; violence covereth them as a garment. Their eyes stand out with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens and their tongue walketh through the earth. Therefore his people return hither: and waters of a full cup are wrung out unto them. And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction.” (Psa.73:2 to 18) So many have so foolishly made a strong attempt to try walking with God in one hand and with the world in the other. They don’t want to separate themselves from God or the world. This scripture has no comfort for any who attempt such a life. Listen, dear ones, to the command of our Lord. “*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty***”. (2 Cor.6:14 to 18) This should especially be taken to heart when young people are to take a mate for life. It should also influence us as to the kind of friends we should have. Look at how your friends are dressing, how their conversation is sounding and whether they are saying anything about the Lord in a positive way. If your friends are not able to get out of the worldly ways, and if you have any respect for what God has said, get away from them as soon as you can turn on your feet and flee from them. Remember, “*Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the **friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.***” (James 4:4) I think we would never want to get into such a fix before our God. When I think of what our beloved John said, “*Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.*” (1 John 2:15,16), I have to

tremble at the weakness I feel in my own flesh knowing that if the grace of God does not hold me up, I could be swept away in a moment of weakness. This war in our text of Scripture would bring you to this end and enslave you to the pleasures of sin. We are constantly in a battle between the spiritual and the carnal. Paul reminds us, “*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*” (Rom.8:5 to 8) This world and its system is what God will destroy in the last times. Something so ungodly will never be acceptable to God and He will destroy it. Peter said, “*But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,*” so I trust that our treasure will not be found on this earth, but in heaven. (I believe that Christ is my treasure, for if I am His and He is mine, everything else is of no consequence)

NUMBER TWO THE BATTLEFIELD

A *The Soul:* In all the scriptures considered here, the *soul* is from the Greek that means, *the breath, i.e. (by impl.) spirit (the animal sentient principle only:)* It is not the rational and immortal soul, nor the mere soul meaning vitality. This is the *soul* which may be separated from the body at death. This is the only soul that we may save by our help in winning this war. The **death** that is the result of sin (James 1:15), means the *soul* is separated from the body. So many people think, that since the scripture speaks of *saving a soul*, they are to help them get saved eternally. They are not aware of what they should be saved from and don’t seem to know that all the work in the world combined can not save one to heaven. Most of the work done in *soul saving* is misdirected and thus the time really is not spent where it would do some good.. Now will you consider with me what the **real** work is and how desperately we need to fight for the **saving of the soul**. Peter admonishes us thus; “*Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lust, which **war against the soul**; . . .*” (1Pet.2:11) Peter calls these people “*dearly beloved and strangers and pilgrims.*” They are among the elect of God and loved by Him. This world is not their home and that is why they are *strangers and pilgrims*. There is no way these people are going to lose their heavenly home, their salvation in Christ Jesus. However it is evident that while they sojourn in this world and life in this mortal body, they are susceptible to *fleshly*

lusts, which war against the soul. Don't you agree with me that the devil knows this, and what better way to destroy your usefulness in the service of God than to get you caught in a trap designed by the devil with these fleshly enticements? The word *war* here is defined in part as, "to contend with carnal inclinations:" It is a military term and means that we should consider ourselves in the *war* to overcome this enemy as a soldier. We do our battle when we *abstain* from these things that would destroy us. God never said it would be easy. No real war is easy. This is a real war for your *soul*. You may now want help in your warfare. One of the ways to get help is to be a helper. Watch for people who are caught in this trap and try to help them out of it. That will be about the most difficult thing you will ever have to do, because most of the time the person is so far into the sin that you are the last thing they will want to listen to. May we be encouraged with the words of James: "*Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins.*" (James 5:19,20) Matthew asks us this question, "*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mat.16:26) Do you see what a really hard task you would have before you if you did meet this man while he was so wrapped up in the world and its ways and ready to be consumed upon his own lust. This person already thinks that he knows more about everything than anyone else, for his pride in his accomplishments and his temporary riches will feed that part of his carnal mind. You will not be able to help this man without a genuine love for the souls of the people of God and without the wisdom God will have to give you if you are able to do any good with this kind of man. Dear God, would you help us in these kind of battles? We need one another but we need you more than all.*

B *The Mind:* I thought about putting the *mind* first, because that usually is the way the *soul* first gets into trouble, but I felt it right to put it here. Do not think this is a less important part of the *battlefield* than the *soul*, for the war rages on in both, as well as the other things I will deal with later. I do want to say about the *mind* that it is something like a computer in that if you only fill it with garbage, then garbage is about all you will get out of it. I am not one who condemns the T.V. and other forms of entertainment as completely bad. However, I do feel that most of us are not strong enough to control these things rather than letting them control us. You will have to make that determination for yourself. I might add, if you know more of the schedule of the entertainment stations and the scheduled times of your favorite ball games and other sporting events, etc. than you do about where the books of the Bible are then you are in trouble. If you know the names of your favorite sporting team better than you do of the apostles and mighty warriors in the Bible, you are in

trouble. Paul tells us in scripture, “*I see another law in my members, **warring** against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this **death**?” (Rom. 7:23,24) From this we see the great conflict within the mind. This is a battle raging from the mind to control your body. My hand will not take hold of anything that my mind will not direct it to do. My eyes will not look upon things harmful unless my mind directs them that way. My feet will not walk in certain places that is wrong unless my mind directs them there. So don’t you see how important it is for the adversary to have the upper place in you mind? James tell us; “*From whence come **wars** and **fightings** among you? come they not hence, even of your lust that **war** in your members?*” (James 4:1) I believe this is a description of the same **warring** that is mentioned by Paul in Romans 7, and we see here the result when it is not brought under control. Paul again shows us how wicked the mind can be when he says, “*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled.*” (Col.1:21) I am so glad that there is no case that is too hard for the Lord. God, please help us to think upon divine things, and keep our minds pure so that we may not be overcome in this great battle?*

C The Flesh: This battlefield is probably where most of our personal warfare gets its start. The mind seems to be where the plotting to satisfy the flesh goes on, and the soul is where the injuries take their toll. As all of us are born “*dead in trespasses and sins*”, (Eph.2:1) we find out very early in life that the flesh craves for many things, most of which are not good for us, but are wanted in order to satisfy the fleshly longings. We do not stop having trouble with this when we are *born again* (John 3:7). Jesus recognized this and said, “. *the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*” (Mat.26:41) I have observed over the years how some young Christians who have no experience yet in fighting this great war will be so full of zeal that they can hardly wait to get at the Devil. All too often they will get wounded so badly they will give up the fight. Please don’t let that happen to you. Remember this scripture and be forewarned. It matters not how much spirituality you have and how knowledgeable you are, even when you are able to bring it all to your use, **the flesh is still weak**, and can trick you. I think Paul stated it very well in his letter to the Galatians. “*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*” (Gal.5:17) I believe the **things** are things both good and evil things. The flesh hinders the good things the Spirit would have us do, and the Spirit likewise the things the flesh would have us do. Thus we have the everlasting conflict, the **war** that rages in the *flesh*. “*For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death.*” (Rom.7:5) It is true that the ones who are born again are

delivered from the law, that is the law has no binding upon their eternal life, until the flesh is *changed* in the resurrection we will still have to contend with its weakness. So we see then how the battle is drawn for your soul, mind, and now, your flesh. It is summed up in this expression, “*For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do **mortify** the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*” (Rom.8:13) I have thought for many years when pondering this verse, that we are either putting sin to death in our flesh (body) or sin in our flesh is putting us to death. What a war, and how much we need the grace of God to help us fight it. The cravings in your own flesh should teach you how powerful your enemy is; however, Hallelujah! what a Saviour who is more powerful.

D *Political Powers (Natural & Spiritual)* One would think with all the above personal and inward battlefields that we wouldn't have to contend with any others. However we see that we have many outward battlefields to wage this war upon as well. Our enemy has a great supply of weapons and he will use any or all of them to get the victory over you. I don't know what you think of politics, but my opinion is that the ordinary soldier has to fight many battles for the politicians and not for the right and wrong of issues. What I understand of the war between the States indicates it was a political war and most of the ones that did the fighting didn't have slaves nor were they able to purchase any. So many died on the battlefield just so the politicians could make their point. My grandfather said to me, before I was 12 years old, “ If a half dozen people on both sides of the war had been hung, there would never have been a war.” I don't know if he was right or not (He lived through it, I didn't.) However, it does point out the thought that at least some wars are political, although very deadly. Paul, writing to the Ephesians brought out a couple of points for our consideration; “*Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ..*” (Eph.2:2) and, “*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*” (Eph.6:12) The church of our God has suffered much in the hands of people, preachers, deacons, etc., who wanted to run things their way and were not interested in submitting to the inspired Scriptures. We see these conflicts all throughout the Old and New Testament, and they are placed there for our learning. (Rom.15:4)

E *False Teachers:* Who has not been the victim of false teaching at one time or another? Thank God for those of you who have not fallen on this battlefield. We have many warnings in the Scripture about this, so it must be a very important aspect of our lesson. The person who takes the attitude that it really doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you believe something **is your enemy**. Peter has much to say about this. “*But there were false prophets also*

among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgement now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not". (2Pet.2:1,2,3), and further he said, "For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." (2Pet.2:18,19,20,21) It cannot be said any more powerfully than it has been said by Peter here. False teachers are deadly for you. Jesus, when teaching on the mount, said, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves". (Mat.7:15) I am of the opinion that most of the TV evangelist are of this sort. They all have a glitter about them that is so worldly and their followers seem to be in a trance. The doctrine they teach does not ring true with the apostles' doctrine. They have their large crowds, but do not let the size of the crowd fool you. Jesus did not have a very large crowd following him when he was preaching his own everlasting gospel. Paul, when teaching the young preacher Timothy gave him a warning, "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron:" (1Tim,4:1,2) Ezekiel had the inspiration to describe some of these false teachers for us. "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy, and say thou unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts, Hear ye the word of the Lord: Thus saith the Lord God; Woe unto the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing! Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying Peace; and there was no peace; and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar: So I will break down the wall that ye have daubed with untempered mortar, and bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof: and ye shall know that I am the Lord." (Eze.13:2,3,5,10,14) This actually happened to the Jews and their religious system during the times of Christ, and it was because of false teachers

getting a foothold among them. I do not see that it is very much different in this day. There are many, many false teachers spouting the name of Jesus who do not know Him. There are many so called churches who are only social organizations who use the name of Christ to take away their reproach, but want to “*eat their own bread (gospel) and wear their own apparel*” (practice), and are not at all interested in the true gospel and practice of the New Testament church. The false teachers have made a convincing argument that it is too old fashioned, confining, puritanical, and demanding to worship the apostles’ way, and besides that they say they can’t get enough people to come if they don’t adopt the ways of the world. God, have mercy on us; we are so weak and this great enemy has almost swallowed us up.

F *False Brethren:* This battlefield is perhaps the one that will cause you more heartache than any others. It is so sickening when you find out that one for whom you would lay your life down, turns out to be a cowardly devil in wolf’s clothing. This cowardly wolf will desert you when you are engaged in the battle. The wolf only wants to devour the sheep. Keep looking beyond the dressing to see the real person. It is not easy; it wasn’t easy during the early days of the church. Paul, writing to the churches of Galatia had this to say, “*And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you” (Gal.2:4,5) Paul also makes reference to this in his letter to the Corinthians: “*In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren:” (2Cor.11:26) You don’t really think your warfare will be fought without this being a part of it do you? You are not an apostle, but your survival is determined how you handle these *false brethren*. Jude gives us a further description of them. “*These are spots in your feast of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds: trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame: wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*” (Jude 12,13) Just the language used here is enough to make me tremble as I think about such persons being amongst us and how vulnerable we are to them. Thank you God, for your ability to expose them and to help us in spite of them. Reader, do not get hard and unfeeling toward all brethren just so you will not be injured by a few, just be careful and remember that this is one of your battlefields.**

G *False Churches:* I could not possibly list all the problems that are created in your warfare as a result of *false churches*. Just as the enemy always tries to

deceive with facsimile, he does his best work right here. The devil's doctrine will tell folks that anyone who thinks they are right and others are wrong is being a bigot of the worse sort. The problem is **never** stated as it should be. All churches, including mine and yours that have left the foundation doctrine and practice of the apostles, after they are called upon to *return* and do not, become *false churches*. Some start out that way, not wanting anything to do with the old paths. When Jesus was here he said, "*And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" (Mat.16:18) It did not say, churches (plural). Jesus never set up more than one church order. The Devil started to setting up *false churches* with his *false brethren*, teaching *false doctrine* and observing *false practices* almost from the very start. Most of the Devil's churches have prospered mightily in material things, but not in spiritual things. They still promote all the *false* things even to this day. So many people have learned to settle down comfortably within them and have lost any zeal for the truth. As long as they are respectable and the crowds are coming, then say they, the end justifies the means. It is comforting to know *the gates of hell* will not prevail against it, but be warned, the *gates of hell* will open wide to swallow up all that will not turn to the true and living God and repent of their worldly ways. All the churches of Asia spoken of in the book of Revelation were called upon to repent and given the certain doom of their refusal to do so. In this day we live in they are all gone. They are swallowed up in their own sins. The point must be made that it will not be destroyed everywhere, but it could be in our communities if we do not heed the admonishments of the Lord. Our enemy knows this and is ready to make great war on this battlefield. As we look further into the Scripture to support this concept of only one church we see this, "*One Lord, one faith, one baptism,* (Eph.4:5) We can not come up with so many beliefs and methods of baptism unless we are off the path somewhere. **I am not advocating the so called "land mark" position here,** but neither should we get duped into thinking that **everyone has a right to believe and worship as they please.** Somewhere between these two extremes lies the true path to the true church. I feel a statement that I read in Hassel's Church History (1886), introduction page 18, explains what each of us should look for: "As for a nominal, natural, outward, or mechanical succession, the God of providence and grace, eighteen centuries ago, forever buried all such claims in the dark, impenetrable gulf of the *seculum obscurum*, or obscure age, immediately succeeding the death of the leading Apostles and the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, and extending to A.D. 100, as freely acknowledged by the ablest scholars of Europe; the irreconcilable inconsistencies and contradictions of the leading Roman Catholic authorities in regard to the pretended Romish succession during this period furnish a sufficient illustration of this fact. According to the entire tenor of the New Testament Scriptures, what we are to look for is, not such outward succession, but a spiritual

succession of principles, of inward, vital, heartfelt religion. **Names are nothing, principles are everything,** in the true kingdom of God.” My heart really goes out to a young Christian who begins to *seek first the Kingdom of God*, when all the *false* religions in the world are out there to confuse them. It causes them to spend a good many of their early years searching when they could be productive. Some have already given up, being disillusioned with what they have seen and learned. Satan seems to have gotten the best of them in this great battle. Isaiah, when he prophesied of this problem sure described what has come to be the norm in our time rather than the exception. “*And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*” (Isa.4:2) None of these seven women are the true Church of the Living God. The true church will always want the true bread, (Christ and the doctrine He taught) and to wear what her husband has furnished (The practice of her body). The number of members do not have one thing to do with whether a church is a true church or not. Neither does the amount of money, programs, pastors, kind of buildings, etc. All these things are man made and do not promote truth to the soul of one of the Lord’s sheep. I will finish my writing upon this part of the battlefield by drawing your attention to some scripture in Revelation. “*And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgement of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, **MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.** And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration. **These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.** (Rev.17: 1 to 6, 14) This is a description of the battle that goes on the battlefield of *false* churches and the doctrine of Jesus as expressed in Romans, *Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.*” (Rom.8:30) Commonly called the doctrine of election and justification.*

NUMBER THREE

THE WEAPONS

I try to think of the difficulty a soldier has when the battle begins, if he is not equipped with the latest weapons. I know our God is able to take a stone and sling in the hands of a David and fell a giant like Goliath with all his weapons and protecting shields, but I do not think our God teaches us that we should wait till things are that desperate before we prepare ourselves. The lesson is that we cannot fail, because God will get the victory one way or another. A farmer who understands full well that he can work as hard as anyone could, yet if God did not give the increase, he would not be able to produce any crops, does not sit down and reason that since he can't do anything without the power of God being in it, he will stop doing what he can and expect God to do it all. This farmer would be a sluggard and foolish and his farm would grow over with weeds. So it is with those who are called to be in this great war with our enemy, Satan. We cannot defeat him on our own. However if we do not do all that we can we will be defeated. Our *weapons* are a vital part of this *warfare*. It would seem foolish for a man to know he was going to have to fight in a battle in the natural world, to just go out to the battle and stand there and look around and have no *weapons* to conquer the enemy. You can rest assured that our enemy will be using everything at his disposal to conquer you. The danger here is our thinking we can use the same weapons as the enemy, only try to get larger ones, then we could overcome him. Nothing could be farther from the truth. I want to emphasize before listing what our weapons are, what they are not. Here is a most important scripture: “*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the **weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;**) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.*” (2 Cor.10:3-6) Thus, we are not to try to use carnal weapons. Now I will list the weapons that I hope you will seriously consider in your warfare.

A *The Whole Armour Of God.* There are a couple of things that are so obvious that I want to focus upon them before continuing on. One is that we are to *put on* this *armour*. It does not tell us that God is going to dress you. God will provide you with the *armour*, but **you** are told to *put it on*. (In the Greek the emphasis is like putting something into a sack. You are to be sinking down into it, so as to be covered up by it.) Too, it is the *whole armour*, as opposed to just a part of it. You cannot think that you will just put on the portion that you like or are that with which you are comfortable. To be able to cover up completely, you must put it all on. If you leave off even one piece, you will not be protected. You will be worse off than the motorcycle riders

who refuse to put on a helmet but will put on a good leather jacket to protect the other parts of the body. Three, it is *God's armour*, and not *carnal armour*. (See the above paragraph about carnal weapons) We will further expound upon this subject under the heading of "how to overcome". This scripture is from Eph.6:11to18.

B *Your Body Members*: As I think about parts of my body being a weapon in this *warfare*, I think about a book I read several years ago, by John Bunyan. It was set in the time when the man fell in sin. It spoke about the enemy getting into the city (body) of the man through various avenues of his body, like the *eye gate, the ear gate, etc.* Such warnings as given to us by Mark, "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out ..." . (Mark 9:43 to 48). Paul gave us a good hope to use the body as a weapon against the enemy when he said, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." (1Cor.9:27) He also admonishes us, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." (Rom.6:12,13) Our God has given us the ability to *let not*, and to not *yield* to the wrong thing but be able to yield to the right things. That is a powerful *weapon dear soldier* as you struggle in this battle!

C *Wisdom*: It is said that Solomon was the wisest man that ever lived, the exception being Jesus Christ. He had riches, power, long life, prestige, and just about anything else one could hope for in this life. He learned through experience that all these things did not help him in his warfare. Some even harmed him. He summed up all the things as being but *vanity and vexation of spirit*. This great wise man did give us one bit of information that we may use as a *weapon* in our struggle with Satan. "Wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good." (Ecc.9:18). The wisdom that is from above will help you to outfox the fox. It will help you to use the small things the Lord has given you to get a great victory. Men and women do a lot of stupid things that bring them to much grief. This wisdom can spare you from all that. Use it with all your ability. Remember, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." (James 1:5)

D *Truth Or The Word:* Have you ever thought of how much God communicates with us. He gives us his *truth* in the written word (Scriptures) and in the preached word. Some soldiers in a natural war get cut off from any communication from their headquarters and can't figure out what is best to do, and the enemy gets the upper hand. I am told by students of natural wars that back in the days of old the first thing that the enemy would try to put down was the flag bearer and the drummer or bugler, because then communications would be cut off and the entire army could not fight as one unit. One of the favorite tactics of our adversary is to try to divide first and then conquer the scattered people one by one. The Scriptures and the preaching of the gospel will aid you in not getting scattered in your war. I fear too many have already fallen because there are so many divisions. To illustrate the power within the written word to fight our adversary I will recall to your mind the time when the Devil came to tempt Christ for forty days as he fasted in the wilderness. "...and when they were ended, he afterward hungered. And the devil said unto him, if thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread. And Jesus answered him, saying, **It is written**, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God. And the devil, taking him up into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind me, Satan: **for it is written**, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence;" (Satan now tries to use the same tactic against Jesus) "For **it is written**, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee: And in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, **It is said**, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (Lu.4:2 to 13) I am persuaded that Jesus dealt with this great battle this way to show us that we can use the same weapon that He used, "**It is written**." Jesus could have commanded ten thousands of thousands of Angels to come to his rescue, but he did it this way for our learning. Much could be said about how the preaching of the gospel is a good *weapon* for us in our warfare, but I will give you what the apostle Paul said about it in only one place, "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise?"

where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” (1Cor.1:17 to 21) If you are in your Bible go ahead and read the rest of this chapter, It is good and shows how the *gospel* points us to know where we get our power and our wisdom and that we are able to overcome even in weakness when He is with us. Praise His Holy Name!

NUMBER FOUR EVIDENCES OF DEFEAT

The subject of apostasy is one that the theologians have discussed with many differences still existing among them. I have no desire here to debate the subject of apostasy, but to point out that when a person makes a stand to serve the Lord, and turns back, according to the Scripture, there are serious consequences. To say the least, it shows a sign of *defeat*. I have heard terms like *backsliding* all my life and I am sure the term would have some application to the person who was suffering *defeat*. The writer to the Hebrews said more about this vital subject than anyone else, the reason is because the book was written to Jews who had embraced Christianity and after being enticed by inward fears, outward threats, family and friends pleading with them to return, and political pressure, many of them did, thus the book of Hebrews was written. We read there, “*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*” (Heb. 6:4-6) I understand this writer to be telling these Jews that if the Christ that they have already embraced is not sufficient for them to cling to, then they would have to find a new Saviour and crucify him afresh. Many Jews are still looking for the Saviour and have not embraced the one we have as the only begotten Son of God. If Jesus Christ is not a sufficient cause for you to remain firm unto the end, and even if we could renew you , you would fall away again all for the same reason as your first *defeat*. This writer also called upon these converts to serve by doing, “*Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke to love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgement and fiery indignation, which shall devour the*

adversaries, . . .” (Heb.10:23-27) As you look about in the world you see so many people who used to attend church regularly and are now just going on special occasions or not at all. They are *defeated*. They are warned here in these and other verses. God is serious about this and you should be.

A Rebellion: Children against parents, Wives against husbands, Men and women against Christ, Laborers against their employers, Citizens against governments, and vice versa. Any of us with any degree of *rebellion* in us have all the signs of *defeat* written all over us. I think this is one of the crowning works of the Devil. The scriptures tell us that “*rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry*” (1Sam.15:23) and “*An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.*” (Pro.17:11) Paul when writing to the church at Ephesus, brought to the saints there the importance of controlling our *rebellion* by telling them, “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.*” (Eph.6:1 to 9) So many young brides in this day don’t even want the word *obey* put in their wedding vows because this rebellion is so engrained into our society. It is hard to go up in defense of the truth and the church of God which is the pillar and ground of truth, when you start your life in *rebellion*. What a sad **evidence of defeat.**

B Divisions (Heresies): As I stated previously, a tactic of our enemy is to divide us so that it is easier for him to *defeat* us. Many churches lay waste where once the songs of Zion were heard and the prayers were offered up to God and the preaching of the gospel was done, because of these sinful divisions. We must not fall to this tactic any more if we are to survive. We are commanded of the Lord to separate from the world, but not from each other. Too often we separate from one another and run hand and hand with the world. Paul in his first letter to the church at Corinth had this to say, “*Now in this I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. And, Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink*

*this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you and many sleep.” (1Cor.11:17,18,19, 27-30). These people who are *weak, sickly*, and want to *sleep* their life away cannot fight a good warfare. To get into this sad state is one more of the evidences of *defeat*.*

C *Partaking Of Things Offensive:* Our enemy would have you think that it should not make any difference to anyone else, how you might conduct your life. You might take the attitude that if they don't like what I am doing they can just put up with it or forget it. I am not advocating for us to become men-pleasers just some would never offend anyone, for we are to expect to be offensive to those who do not love the truth. This is speaking of people who would walk together in the fellowship of the truth. There are people who strive to live and love the whole council of God, and sometime our careless action might serve to weaken them. All too often people will do what they want to do regardless of what the results in fellowship will be. I will now call to your mind a situation that Paul the Apostle mentioned to the church at Rome. This lesson is around a simple thing like eating and drinking. Apparently some thought it was all right to eat anything while others thought some things, especially things that were offered in sacrifice to idols, were not to be consumed. They had a difference of opinion. Here is how we are taught to handle it then it shows the evidence of *defeat* in your life for you had rather have your way than obey God. The lesson is, “*Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.” (Rom.14: 13- 21) Some people think it is all right to drink beer and wine as long as they don't get drunk. Others think it is wrong to partake of things that can lead one to sin. Who can say what is right. I encourage you to consider what this scripture has to say, and hope our God would not find you*

defeated in being so prone to partaking of *offensive* things.

D *Attending Services At The Temple Of Idols:* It does weaken your fellow soldiers if they see you attending such services. I know this is not much of a problem among some people, but in other places it is a big problem. It is kind of like a soldier in the natural army going over to feast with the enemy. I think the lesson here is about feasting where a false gospel is being preached. Peter was weak when it came to this problem, and according to the letter to the Galatians, it caused Barnabas to be carried away. *“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not upright according to the truth of the gospel,...”* (Gal.2: 11-16) It is evident that Peter was wrong about trying to be identified both with the Christians and the Judaizers in their feast. It was because of his fear of the Jews. Paul said that the walk was not *upright according to the truth*. A good soldier, Barnabas, was *carried away* (seduced) because of it. Do you see how that they were showing evidences of *defeat* before they were corrected? Paul thought that any bread (gospel) fed to the people that was not true should be *accursed*. *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be **accursed,**”* etc. (Gal.1:6 to 12) Remember, if you have any influence at all among the elect of God and for whatever reason you find yourself frequenting a place where false doctrine is preached, your influence will cause your brother to *fall in defeat*. Your excuse may be, Oh! I am going with them so that they will go with me. Or some of my relatives are on the program and I want to go and support them and let them know I love them, and on and on. All these reasons are poor when you realize the damage that it is doing. Paul put it another way, *“Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak. For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol’s temple, shall not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols: And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak*

conscience, ye sin against Christ. (1Cor.8:7-12) I think some who read this will probably think I am making too much out of this point, but I do not think my case is nearly as strong as the one Paul has made for our consideration. You could stand tall for truth here or become one who is making a practice of *sinning against your brethren and Christ.*

E Turning Back To The World: Just as the children of Israel wanted to go back to Egypt when the going got rough, many times the soldiers of Christ will want to give up and go back to their old way of life. I think of Peter so often when I am on this subject. At one time he said that he was willing to go anywhere, do anything, even lay his life down for Jesus. We see him in the garden with his sword drawn in defense of the Saviour. That was before Jesus allowed himself to be taken, and the dark hour during his mock trial and crucifixion. Next time he is mentioned, it says, *“Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.”* (Matt.26:74) Also even after Jesus had commanded them to go into the whole world and preach, etc. We find Peter saying to the other disciples, *“I go a fishing.”* (his old way of life before Jesus called him to be a fisher of men) *“They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing”*. (John 21:3) What a defeated bunch of soldiers, licking their wounds, we see here. Thank God, they were not left to themselves in this condition. I hope you do see the danger of turning back and how it affects others around you. Paul addressed this weakness when he said, *“how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.”* (Gal.4:9,10,11) We lose enough of the brave soldiers of the cross of Christ by natural death, let us who have any strength not turn back into the bondage of our old life, but press on to victory through Christ our Lord.

F Unsound Practice: Building for the glory of God is one of the labors of a soldier of Christ. When our enemy gets us to the place where we are as willing to follow false practices as the true ways of God, then we are surely showing *evidences of defeat.* It is almost like we had joined the other side to fight against the truth. You can build in the wrong way and many will be ready to join with you, but remember, *“Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.”* (Psa.127:1) Be careful that the building you are doing, is for the Lord and not against Him. When I think of the wasted energy spent building our life on false and unsound principles, I am reminded of the words of Jesus when He said, *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;*

and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it." (Matt.7:24 to 27) The building of this house is the same as you and your life. If *unsound practice* is the way you are building, then you are building upon the *sand*. It is a clear truth that the *rain, floods, and wind* will come upon your life regardless of whether you are building on the *sand* or on the *rock*. If you *fall*, then your life is wasted and you are *showing evidences of defeat* all during the years of your life. To be a good soldier of Christ, you must build your life upon the *sayings of Christ*. Paul in his second letter to Timothy pointed out to him how the enemy would try to overthrow the true worshippers by telling him, "*This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lust, Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2Tim3:1- 7) Churches who are not skilled in the word enough to spot these evil men, who indeed have *a form of godliness, but in fact are there to lead them captive*, are showing *evidences of defeat*. Peter also warned in his writings of this problem by saying, "*But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you, & etc, These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lust of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." (2Pet.2:1,2,3,17,18,19) Dear soldier, can you not see the danger and the *evidences of defeat* upon those that have been trapped with the music of these *false teachers* who have taught the people *false practices*? The scriptures teach us that it is the "truth" that "shall make you free" Evil men will bring only part truth, no truth at all, or just sometimes when they are in trouble. It is all right to follow some men who would lead us into truth, but be very careful that you don't get so close to the man that you cannot see the truth, or the lack**

of it that he is leading you to. The writer to the Hebrews teaches us the right way to follow in this verse: “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. and Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” (Heb.13:7,17) These are like our commanders, just above us in the line of rank in the army of God. We should all take our instructions from the one who is our Chief Captain, Jesus Christ. He has given us lesser Captains to help our everyday life struggles. Every time we follow one of the false teachers we get into trouble and show *evidences of defeat*.

G Feeding Spiritual Ignorance: It is shameful to see how much *spiritual ignorance* has blossomed out in our time. It has overtaken most of the media, and their numbers and financial growth are astounding. Many might think there must be something to all this for it to be so popular. That should be your first warning. “It is so popular”. When Jesus Christ was here, he had only a few people who were wanting to follow him for the truth. Oh, yes, when he was healing their natural ailments and feeding their natural stomachs, many followed after him. But when he began to teach the truth, they all left him except his disciples, and I perceive that they might have if they had anywhere else to go. So be not swallowed up with *spiritual ignorance*. The best way I know to *feed spiritual ignorance* is by not reading the Bible for yourself and praying that God would give you understanding of what you are reading. If you were a person who wanted to find a scripture that you could use to satisfy your excess of forbidden things, you might look into the Bible and find, “*The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!*” (Luke 7:34). In ignorance, you might think that would allow you to do the same since you read it in the Bible. The point I am trying to make is that you should read carefully all the scriptures and not just a part of them. To further point out the problem with *feeding spiritual ignorance*, I will point out what the Apostle Paul said about testing spiritual gifts. “*Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to battle?*” (1Cor.13:6,7,8) When one who is called to the battle does not see any need to prepare for the battle, it *shows evidences of defeat*. The reasons for that are all mentioned in the scriptures found in all this 14th chapter of 1st Corinthians.

H Lack Of Fervent Prayer: James said, “Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. **The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.**” (James 5:16) If our adversary can get us to be weak in prayer, or to a point where we don’t pray at all, then we are *showing signs of defeat*. A whole book could be written about prayer, and some already have been. It is one of God’s most precious gifts to you and it is the most ignored. The transfer of power from the throne to your life usually comes to you through prayer. A person who does not exercise in prayer is a person who does not feel at the time they need anything more than what they already have. If you are like this, you are *showing signs of defeat*. I will give you a couple of scriptures that will let you know what the Saints of old thought about it. One is, “Peter therefore was kept in prison: but **prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.**” (Acts 12:5) and “**Pray without ceasing.**” (1Th.5:17) If you were studying any book on how to prepare for warfare, I think you would have to agree, if you are not one who really believes in fervent prayer you are *showing evidences of defeat*.

I Not Assembling With The Saints: I am not going to say very much about this part of the lesson except I know it is a real problem with some people. I know many people who claim to believe in Christ and love the truth, but for some reason, they do not assemble with the Saints. I will not try to figure out all the reasons. I only want to call our attention to the scripture which says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”, etc. (Heb.10:25 30) I did not quote all these verses, but please read them all, and may God give you understanding. People who are not attending the assembly of the Saints seem to be just wanting to stand on the side lines while the battle is being fought. They don’t seem to be willing to be wounded or to have courage in their heart. I might recall to your mind what was told the warrior Joshua as he was about to go over into the promised land, “Be strong and of a good courage.” (Jos.1:6) If you who are able to comprehend the seriousness of our text, I pray God will give you the same courage and strength that he gave to Joshua. If you are not moved to assemble regularly with the saints after these scriptures have been brought to your mind, you are *already defeated*, and I think beyond help, although with God all things are possible.

J A Bellyaching Lousy Attitude: Some folks seem to have never risen above this problem. Whatever anyone does, they don’t like it, even though they are not likely to do anything themselves. They want to change everything to suit their particular ideological notions, and if all others are not willing to go along with them, they think they have risen to heights above the others and will soon seek out a more enlightened place that will listen to them. These kind of people cannot be relied upon in the heat of battle. I believe we should work with them

and do all we can to help them improve their attitude, but until we see evidence of that being done, do not expect this kind of person to help you at all. I heard a man say one time that if we had eleven commandments, the eleventh one should be *thou shalt not bellyache*. He may have something. Whenever a person is pulled into this kind of situation he is showing *evidences of defeat*.

I have listed above very many *evidences of defeat*. The sad thing is that I have not listed all of them, but only the ones that are so apparent to me. The Devil will always have more tools in his inventory than you could ever imagine. It is his task to weaken, deceive, confuse and destroy you. God help us to believe that there is a cause worth fighting for and a God who will enable us to fight.

NUMBER FIVE HOW TO OVERCOME

When Jude wrote his short epistle to those who are *sanctified, preserved, and called*, he said, “...it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Jude 3,4) I hope you who read this have not laid aside your weapons, become lukewarm to the things of God, and quit the battle. I know it is a hard battle, and we have a strong enemy! If you have the heart though, God will stand by you and help you with strength that you will be amazed to experience. It takes courage and determination. Many times you will think you are all alone in your struggles, even as did the prophet Elijah. If you get into this battle for any self glory, you will not last. You will be very disappointed. If you have the heart, then do it all for the glory of God. There are some specific things we must be doing to overcome. I will list the ones that seem to be important to me. There are others that may be more important to you than the ones I will list for your consideration.

A Grow Up Spiritually: You cannot fight in the army if you are still an infant and have to be spoon fed, and carried about everywhere by someone else. If we see in the natural world a young adult still sucking on a bottle for his food, we will think it strange, and it would be. I knew a young boy many years ago, who was about twelve years old. This boy would get a bottle out of the refrigerator as soon as he got home from school and suck the milk from it. If there were any visitors in the house, he would hide behind the door to drink, because he was ashamed to be seen doing it. I am not making a judgment upon that boy, but I am saying I don't think he was fit to fight many battles. I do

think many Christians are similar. They are not growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth as they should, making them weak and sickly, and not suitable for warfare. The scriptures address this problem with these words, “*Of whom (Christ) we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (Heb.5:11- 14) There have to be many judgements made during warfare. People who have grown up spiritually and can eat of the *strong meat* are the only ones who are able to make sound and good judgments. I have witnessed so many divisions within churches because the congregation was not able to make a sound judgment. Many were such spiritual infants that they judged according to “feelings” and/or looking around to see who was voting which way and voting with them, and worst of all judging because of “man made traditions” and thinking about how Ma and Pa would have done it; never considering what the Bible said. This type of people will not want you to confuse them with facts, because they already have their minds made up and they will not hear anything that will cause them to think. Paul in his letter to the Ephesians had this to say about the subject: “*And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” etc. (Eph.4:11-16) So, my dear would be warrior, “*Quit ye like men and fight, be strong, stand fast in the faith.*” (1Cor.16:13 & 1Sam.4:9) And, “*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*” (1Cor.13:11) If you are full grown in body, I pray you may also be in spirit. You may be old enough to commit yourself to a long term contract in the world, but are you spiritually strong enough to “...commit the keeping of your soul to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.” (1Pet.4:19)?**

B Put Off The Old Man & Put On the New Man: We will never be able to

fight the good fight of faith with the *old man* as our influence. We have to put him off. The words are the same as taking off an old suit that has served its purpose, is worn out and not suitable any longer, and putting on a new one that is fresh and suitable to wear wherever we are going. Not only are we to put off the looks of the *old man*, such as our proud look, lying tongue, lustful eyes, and wandering feet, but also we are to get rid of the *former conversation*, that is the former manner of life as well as what comes out in our speech. We are taught that it is not what goes into a man that defiles him, but what comes out of him. The *new man* that we are to put on is God's creation just as Adam was. Paul, to the Ephesians said, "*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lust; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*" (Eph. 4:22-24) Please take the time to read in your Bible this chapter four in its entirety. I want to give God the glory for making it possible that we can put off and put on as we are taught here. I do want to say, that God did not say he would do the exchange for you. His command is for you to do the putting off and the putting on. If you would be a soldier of the cross, then get busy doing this.

C *Put On The Whole Armour Of God:* After we get our body, our soul, and our mind straightened out, we need our uniform/armour to put on if we are to survive the battle. This will be as important as anything I have said to you who would fight this battle. You may have everything else you need when you go into battle, and if you do not have your armour on, you will be so vulnerable it is unlikely you will come from the battle alive. I will spend a good bit of time on this, so bear with me. It is meant for our good. "*Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*" (Eph.6:11) To *put on* means literally, "a sinking down into it, covered up". The idea is really getting into it all. In your mind's eye allow yourself to think of the old suits of armour. Each person who wore armour in those days had theirs made especially for them. They could not wear someone else's since it would not fit properly. If it did not fit properly, one could not properly do battle in it. Since the armour that we are to put on is *of God*, we may rest assured that God has designed our armour for us and it is just what we need to wear into battle. It is said that the *whole* armour is to be put on. We are not at liberty to take just the part that seems to us to be what we need. We are to trust the Lord to know just what we need, and put the *whole thing on*. The *whole armour* must also include all the parts such as the shield, sword, helmet, and other parts as well as the suit of armour. If we go into battle without any of it, we will be exposed and subject to defeat because we did not heed our Captain's instruction to put on the *whole armour*. The *armour* is defined thus; "The whole of the family, with the implements or utensils or tools of it, for offensive battle, weapons." When we take *the whole armour of God*, we are fighting under the banner of

King Jesus, and the banner over us is love.(Song of Sol.2:4) As long as you are a defender of truth, the Lord will allow you to display the banner. (Psa.60:4). It also means we are fighting for the whole family of God and not for ourselves only. If your only reason to fight is to protect you, your family members, and your closest friends, you will not be able to endure to the end of the battle. As soon as your near relations forsake you and begin to fault you for your stands and inflexible positions, if you are not fighting for the glory of God and for the defense of truth, you will tire and give up. Most of these weapons are offensive weapons. That means we are not to stand around waiting for the battle to come to us but we are to go wherever the Lord opens the door for us to drive out the enemy in order that the truth may be established. Most anyone will put up some sort of a fight when they are cornered and have no where to go. I get the feeling that the Lord suited up His warriors to be moving about in the world. Preaching soldiers should know how that is for they are commanded to go into the whole world and preach the truth. It is apparent according to this verse that as we go we are soon to come face to face with *the wiles of the devil*. That is the reason we need the armour. If we are locked away in a place we think to be safe, the devil won't bother us because we are doing nothing to bother him. To *stand against the wiles of the devil is where the front line of battle is raging.*

Against means, "A direction, usually in relation to place, time, occasion, or respect, which is the destination of the relation, motions towards". If you make a blunder as General George Custer made at the little Big Horn River, when he was fighting the Indians, then you, like Custer will suffer defeat. You have to determine where the battle will be and when it is to take place. If you read throughout the Old Testament Scripture, you will see, time after time, where the Lord enabled his people to get great victories when they followed Him. Also there were times when they were not listening to the Lord and tried to do their own way and they were slaughtered. The *wiles* of the devil are the ways he traps us. The *wiles* are the "methods" (trickery, lying in wait) at which the devil is so proficient. So, soldier, *put on the whole armour of God* and you will be prepared. "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.*" (Eph.6:12) Wow! that list makes me tremble! Do you not feel like the ones who saw the giant Goliath when he defied the army of the living God in Saul's day? You, who would be Davids, will need the same Lord that David had to give you the victory. I will not try to define all these listed things, for you can read them for yourself, but I do think it will be wise for us to remember who our enemy is. It is *not flesh and blood*. Let us get away from the petty fights that could be defined as with flesh and blood, for the major things are too many and too strong for us to think they are so petty. These *wrestlings* (conflicts with friction against opposing forces) are *against principalities*, (Those who have the principle

authority, the magistrate, chief, rule) and include our governments. It will take great wisdom for you to be able to obey God by being “.. *subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates...*”. (Titus 3:1) and to obey Jesus when he said, “*Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s*” (Mark 12:17). Jesus proved this can be done. His life is a good example of a great warrior who won the greatest victory that was ever won over all the greatest foes of the universe. You too may resist and submit the same way Jesus did, with the help of God. *Against powers* would be any kind of power that is not from God directly. We should be careful to “... *try the spirits to see if they are of God:...*” (1John 4:1). These *powers* are many and they are varied and they are very powerful. The truth that tells me, “... *greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world.*” (1John 4:4) and the place where it said, “...*But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:*” (Rom.5:20), all are much comfort to me as I struggle to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The *rulers of the darkness of this world* are the ones who are completely given over to Satan. Men (in nature) love darkness more than the light, because their deeds are evil. The more wicked men become, the higher they are carried up the ladder to the top of the dung hill. And much of this is “*spiritual wickedness in high places*”. These wicked persons are entrenched in just about every religious organization in the world. It seems that the bigger the organization, the more wickedness. Many have left the true doctrine. Many are no longer able to maintain godly discipline in their assemblies. Many have substituted all kinds of deceptive programs for the absence of Truth. What an enemy we have and how great is the need for strong warriors. I pray that our God would come and strengthen us before the beautiful Sion is in ashes. We need God’s direction to know how to combat this enemy. We need for God to stir up his people and to do it now. “*Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*” (Eph.6:13) Much of this verse is a repeat (it is important enough to repeat) of verse eleven. It does add the expression, “*withstand in the evil day*”. This *evil day* is the day of “violent opposition and temptation. the assault by the dragon (Devil) (Serpent). The tense of the verse is; “At once, and for all time.” Our enemy will not let up until he is destroyed. This violent day has been upon us for a long time. The times are perilous and the warriors are few. “...*but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.*” Matt. 10:22), so I will take the position that when you *have done all*, if you are still *standing* then you have won that round with your enemy. Do not get at ease though. Your enemy may attack you before the rising of another sun. “ *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*” (Eph.6:14). The *loins* in this verse recall much to consider. *The loins* include the “hip” area and by extension of meaning is the *procreative power* of the soldier. You will lose your future if you do not have the *loins girt about with truth*. You must teach

your children and your children's children the truth of God's word if we are to survive. If we should take the Old Testament as good truth and admonition for our generation, we learn from it that it only takes one generation raised up without being taught, to not know the Lord. "*And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.*" (Judges 2:10) In our nation we are very prone to leave the education of our children up to the government, and they are the very ones we see listed as part of our enemy. This is so important for you to try to understand. Covering of the *loins* was part of being prepared to move at the bidding of the Lord. An army should be ready to move at any given moment at the command of the Head of it. To have to look around for that part of our armour will waste precious time and shows that we are really not prepared to go to war. (Exod. 12:11) The *loins* are the place where the enemy loves to strike you, for it will keep you from rising again. (Deut.33.11) The *loins* are the part of the body that has the procreative organs, of which we have already mentioned. (Gen. 35:11 & Acts 2:30) We are taught to *gird up our loins*, and that is for fighting in a standing position. Our *loins* are what we use to do that. If our *loins* are weak and wounded, then we would not be able to ready ourselves for the battle (Job 40:7 & Acts 2:30). Even the *virtuous woman* in Proverbs, *girdeth her loins with strength*. I take this teaching to mean the women have a vital part in this war and should be as ready to put on the armour as the men. While the conflicts of the woman are somewhat different to the man, they are nevertheless as hard to endure. To *gird up the loins* means to have a *girdle* about the *loins*. It should not be a loose fitting one for it will be a hindrance to you in your fight with the enemy. The Lord's soldiers are comforted with these words, "*None shall be weary nor stumble among them; none shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken.*" (Isa. 5:27). Luke tells us that as we are seeking the kingdom of God, we should let our loins be girded about, and our lights burning (Luke 12:31-40). We should be careful to consider the *loins*, and be sure they are *girded* at all times. We are to *gird our loins about with truth*. Since this *truth* is what we are to *gird about* us, we should not think that we are allowed to just "try it on" to see if it fits well. Truth has no substitute. Half truths won't do. At the bar of justice those who are called upon to be a witness are sworn to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help them God. After listening to some of the lying that goes on, it is hard to find a soldier among them who will really do that. They usually practice what the "humanist" calls situation ethics. That is, whatever seems right at the time, do it. As vital as the *loins* are, we should be careful that we only want the whole truth to gird us. It means we will have to be true in our doctrine and in our profession. We will have to speak it and abide by it. We will have to hold to it at all costs. Next, the verse says; "... *and having on the breast plate of*

righteousness;...” (Eph.6:14) We are to have on this *breastplate*, not just *have* it, or be in possession of it. We may have it and not have it *on*. This reminds me of stories I would hear when I was a child, how some people would die on the streets of Atlanta because of malnutrition and bad weather. Some of these people had large sums of money saved up and stored in their humble abodes, but starved to death because they would not spend it. I believe in saving for necessities, but I think it was far past the right time to spend some of their money on food and clothing sufficient to withstand the natural elements. The moral of the story is this; it didn’t do them any good to have the means to survive if they would not use it. So is it the same with this *breastplate*. It is not just good enough to *have* it, but to *have it on*. The *breastplate* is for the covering of the chest. It is sort of like a corset, in that it covers the front and back of this area. This *breastplate* would be a defensive weapon, because it is designed to protect you. It is said to be, *a breastplate of righteousness*. Not just any kind of *breastplate*, but one of *righteousness*. This means, “to meet or equal just causes, (equity of character or action), espec: Christ’s justification, imputed to us”. One will never know just how many times the Lord has delivered some out of trouble, if it were not that they were trying to put forth righteousness as a part of their outward appearance to others. Not very many people will carry on sinful things around you if they perceive that you are a righteous person. They will have a tendency to leave you alone. They would rather run with their own kind. Our Saviour had this *righteousness* on when He was in the world. “...therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, ...” (Isa.59:16,17).

Next, we are told, “*And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*” (Eph.6:15) Our feet are what we walk about on. All God’s children seem to be tenderfooted when it comes to this aspect of our being suited for warfare. Horses and mules cannot work effectively when they are not shod; and, it seems, neither can we. We put steel shoes on the animals, but our shoes although somewhat strange in description, nevertheless are vital to us. I think it should interest us to find out what Paul means in his description of these shoes we are to walk in. *Preparation* is a key word here. It means, “having prepared, provided, made ready”, and is an internal fitness. So if we are to have shoes that are *prepared for the gospel of peace*, how may we *prepare*? I will list four points that I think are needful, though there could be more than these.

No. 1

We should never be ashamed of the *gospel*. Paul said, “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*” (Rom.1:16) Most of the great warriors of the Bible finally lost their lives for the gospel’s sake. If we draw back in shame because the gospel is not popular in the world and

among many so called Christians, we will not be good warriors.

No. 2

We should be ready to do what this *gospel* tells us. Much is said in the Scripture about people who are hearers only and not doers. *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves,...”* (James 1:22-25) And, *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:...”* (Matt. 7:24 -27) A large portion of the *preparation* is to *prepare* to walk in the light of the gospel.

No. 3

Be ready to support those who preach this gospel. The devil will work on you about this if you will listen to him. It is always easier to expect someone else to take care of the preachers. You can easily reckon that you are in worse need than the preacher is. We are guilty in many ways and in many areas of the nation of strangling the truth to death in the very mouths of those who would preach it. I will hope these few words are sufficient to the wise. There could be an entire book written on this subject alone, but it is not my burden at this time. Please consider what the Bible says, *“For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ. Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”*. (1Cor.9:9-14) All support is not of the monetary kind. Sometimes it becomes necessary to defend the man because of the gospel which he preaches. Paul brought the churches of Galatia this strong admonition. *“I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”* (Gal.1:6,7,8). I have experienced over the years certain brethren who would encourage me to stand firm on a point of the gospel that I had made, and when I did and repercussions came as a result, those brethren would not stand with me. Most of the time it would have cost them more than they wanted to pay to uphold the gospel they had encouraged me to uphold, so I would be left to take the heat alone. We must be willing to support those who are willing to pay the cost to uphold the truth.

No. 4

Do not support those who do not preach the truth. This way the false teachers can really get a foothold in the churches. When a false teacher (who usually has a very charming personality) comes among the people, and they are so carried away with the charm and do not listen to what he is saying, then you must be prepared to expose them for the truth's sake. I know there is a right and a wrong way to do this. You had better not jump on a heretic about their false doctrine unless you are prepared to do battle. You might get wounded in such a battle even if you are prepared, because sometimes the people would rather have a murderer released among them than to have the truth proclaimed. One of the best ways to make the cross of Christ of no effect is to support preaching that is with worldly wisdom. (1Cor.1:17)

Next, we will discuss verse 16, “*Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*” (Eph.6:16) *Above all*, means “over the rest, in order, time or place”. If you get all the other parts of the armor right and do not get this right, you will be vulnerable. This *shield* is used both offensively and defensively as you do battle. Thus it is your most important device. It instructs us to *take* it and sets forth the “urgency, in order to use it, at once, for all time”. We should never lay it down and forget to take it with us everywhere. This *shield* is “large, as door shaped”. The Roman shield that Paul was making reference to as a natural shield was one that was large enough to cover the entire body. It was not one that could be small and moved around like a little shield. It could be set on the ground and the soldier could get behind it and protect himself from all the arrows that were sent raining down upon him. There are several places in the scripture where the *shield* is spoken of. I will only mention one here, for it is the one that I have most rejoiced in for years. “*The neck is like the tower of David builded for an armoury, whereon there hang a thousand bucklers, all shields of mighty men.*” (Song of Sol. 4:4). The vision I have of this verse is where the head, Jesus, connects to the body, the church, is this *neck like the tower of David*. All these *shields of mighty men*, are there on display, gleaming in the sun, at the readiness for battle for the defense of the body, or the honor of the Head. The shields of old usually had some sort of specific insignia upon them and were different, but united. Each ensignia telling the particular exploits of its bearer. I trust our God will make you and me that kind of warrior, so that when we fall in our battles, the generations following us will be able to look at our shield and know what kind of soldier we were. It is said that this was a shield of *faith*. *Faith* is “persuasion, conviction, especially; reliance upon Christ for salvation, constancy, fidelity”. These are great and noble words, but God will, by His grace enable us to have that kind of shield. I cannot visualize a wishy washy kind of person fitted with this shield. Much could be said about *faith*, but I will only quote you one very important verse: “*But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that*

diligently seek him.” (Heb.11:6) Since the *darts* of Satan are said to be *fiery*, the best way to handle them is to *quench* them. To *quench* them means to “extinguish” them, or put them out by neutralizing their effect. They are *fiery* because they have been “kindled, ignited, be inflamed with anger, grief and lust.” Peter tells us, “*Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*” (1 Peter 4:12,13) And what of the wonderful story of the three Hebrew children that were thrown into the fiery furnace as described in the third chapter of Daniel? This story is told over and over to children of every generation. It is now time for us to realize that we are the ones who will next be put to the test in some of the same ways and for some of the same reasons. I hope our God will give us that *shield of faith* that was given to them, for truly this fire was quenched. It is said that these are fiery *darts*, meaning that they are like “missiles, spears, or arrows” directed towards you. They are many. They are varied and have much force behind them to cause them to penetrate through if they do not hit your *shield*. They are said to be of the *wicked*. The *wicked* means the Devil and also all those that would do his bidding. Combined, they are, “hurtful, evil in influence or effect, vicious, and with malice.” It is said in the Scripture that there are wicked people everywhere. In the world, in the church, and in every other area of our lives. It seems they are like the weeds that keep coming up in the garden. We are never finally rid of wickedness as long as this world stands. (Matt.12:45, 1Cor.5:13, 2Thes.3:2, 2Pet.2:7) So, we will have to fight it the Lord’s way or we will be overcome by it and them who promote it. Next, we will consider verse seventeen, “*And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*” (Heb.6:17). The *helmet* is “that encirclement of the head”. Paul tells us further that this *helmet*, is the *hope of salvation*. (1Ths.5:8) Our head is where we have our brain, ears, eyes, smell, and taste. Most all of our natural senses are there in the head. The devil would use all of these to defeat you in your warfare. This *helmet* that God will give you is something that you must *take* and use faithfully. We should be remembering that we are saved by the grace of God, and that we were not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Jesus. It should help us to resist the devil if salvation is always before us. The truth of salvation is a mortal blow to the devil. When Peter and John taught the people and preached to them *the resurrection of the dead, through Jesus*, the priest and Sadducees were much grieved about it, and imprisoned them for it. (Acts 4:1,2,3). Instead of us being filled with *wrath*, we will find ourselves being a *comfort* to one another and also *edifying* one another. Satan would have you full of *wrath*. Your *helmet* will help prevent that. We are also told, “*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation,....*” (Heb.2:3) The answer is; we cannot escape unless we have on this *helmet of salvation*.

We are to *take the sword of the spirit*. Would you take this *sword* up and quit running from this enemy and turn to defend the cause of Christ? If you will you will have to become skilled with the *Word*, not just a few verses that you may have put to memory as a youth. You will have to eat it as a roll as did Ezekiel. It will become your creed and guide. The truth will be more important to you than all other things you may be blessed with in this life. You will have to defend against all the great powers mentioned at the start of this lesson. You will know you are ignorant and will never know anything as you ought, but you will be called upon to defend it against worldly minded men with large and noble degrees after their name. Don't let that trip you. God will give you what you are to use and it will be to his glory. Sometimes this *sword* must be used within the congregation when it will be necessary to *rebuke with all longsuffering, etc.* Sometime you will be in such a minority and your points of doctrine will be so simple that some will try to laugh you to scorn and make you feel as though you do not have the ability to do anything. Do not despair. God uses simple things and the weakness of His servants to confound the mighty. I often think (perhaps foolishly) that all the time that I spend studying the *Word of God*, that God is letting me sharpen my *sword*. I do want my *sword* as sharp as God will allow me to have it. I would like to be able to cut away the errors that have crept in among God's people so swiftly and completely that it is done even before the enemy realizes it has happened. God help us be a good and faithful bearer of this *sword*.

The above parts of the armour are all that I will go into here, for that is all that is mentioned in this part of the scriptures. Any one who is reading this will be sufficiently encouraged if they have a heart to battle. Any who have become so wounded that they have laid down their armour, I pray that you will be encouraged to take it up again. I hope some of these thoughts will help you stay ahead of the hounds of hell that continually snap at our feet. Paul ends his lessons on this subject by calling on the Ephesians to be "*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak as I ought to speak.*" (Eph.6:18,19,20). While this book is not about prayer, I cannot emphasize it enough. It is past time that we had younger people to take up this cause and fight the good fight to the end. Get serious about serving our God. If you are sleeping, may God awaken you before these things are gone from our presence.

In conclusion, I have thought that some might recall the scripture that says, "*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received at the Lord's hand double for all her sins.*" (Isa.40:1,2) Oh! what a beautiful expression of God's mercy to poor sinners. Anyone who reads this little book and thinks we are fighting to get our

iniquity pardoned has missed the whole lesson already. Jerusalem, as a natural city has already lost the battle that I speak of. Some call that city and country the holy land. Nothing could be farther from the truth. When Jesus said, "*Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*" (Matt.23:38), people can do all they want and say all they want about it being a holy place, but Jesus left it to them and there is nothing left about it that is holy. It was finally destroyed, and to this day has not arisen up. But thanks be unto God for *New Jerusalem, the Bride, The Lamb's Wife*, which the enemy would do the same thing to that he did to the old city and temple, but the gates of hell shall not prevail against this church. By the grace of God you may be a vital part of it being active in your area, by your willingness to take up your place in the battle.

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