



# SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Volume 5

Joseph A Cortes



# Table of Contents

<b>Why Demons Attack Us</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Why Satan Attacks the Temple of God Part 1</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Why Satan Attacks the Temple of God Part 2</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Why Satan Attacks the Temple of God Part 3</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Why Satan Attacks the Temple of God Part 4</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Satan Wants Your Mind</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Angelic Warfare</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Withstand</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Angels on Guard</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>Having Done All Part 1</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>Having Done All Part 2</b>	<b>101</b>

# Why Demons Attack Us

This part of the Spiritual Warfare series has been focusing on the latter part of verse 12 in Ephesians 6, the wicked spirits. These demons came from the giants, fallen angels breeding with the daughters of men producing the Nephilim, the giants. When those giants died, as we saw in the Book of Enoch, their spirits were left behind roaming this earth with the purpose of oppressing, assaulting, bringing lamentation, and so forth; and it is what they have been doing for thousands of years.

Ephesians 6:10 begins, ***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.***

***Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [or the methods] of the devil.***

***For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, [Paul reverses it, blood and flesh] but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness [wicked spirits or evil spirits] in high places [in the sky and air around us].”***

The last part of this verse, ***“spiritual wickedness in high places”*** has been the focus for several chapters. I laid out in detail who those beings are and where they came from. These wicked evil spirits have come to be known as demons; however, fallen angels are not demons.

Those who chase ghosts and try to explain the paranormal, have no idea what they are dealing with. These demons do not have to respond to you. That is why so many of these exorcisms fail, even though I do not like the word. We must know our enemy. Believe me, if ghost chasers got that close to these evil spirits and did not have the blood of Christ protecting them as a covering, and not come in the name of Jesus, they are just being toyed with. Eventually I fear for their lives. I know it sounds drastic, but they do not know what they are dealing with. They are playing with fire. These are wicked evil spirits; these are demons.

So why do these demons attack us? The Book of Enoch tells us it is to oppress, to assault, to bring troubles into our lives under their commanders, which are other principalities under Satan's control taking orders from him. There is a hierarchy even in the evil side of the heavenlies; the beings that God created. Thank God, there are only about a third of those spirits under Satan, and about two-thirds still under God's control, obedient and truly servants that never drifted away from their purpose, which is to praise and worship God, and carry out His bidding throughout the universe. I know who is fighting for us, and how outnumbered Satan really is.

The only way he gets a foothold into our everyday life is because we give him that permission. Unless we are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ, sin allows them to enter. That does not mean I do not sin. I sin every day, more than I like, but I have a covering that tells Satan ‘hands off’ if I keep faithing and trusting in God, in Jesus and His blood. I am now imputed with righteousness and righteousness only dwells in a container that has the Holy Spirit. So in a sense I am a marked man and you are a marked man or woman if you are covered by the blood of Jesus Christ. Even though Satan does not let us and his evil beings assigned to destroy us, we have more on our side

fighting for us than I think we sometimes even imagine.

But why do these demons attack us? They do not just attack Christians and. They also attack people who do not even believe in faith of any kind. Why do they attack? In this chapter, I will give several different examples of how they do this. It is by no means a full list; I will just give a few examples of how they attack and how those attacks affect the mental aspect of the body. However, before that, let me read something.

***“If Satan cannot defeat you by deceiving your mind, he will then try to destroy your body. As the serpent, he deceives; as the lion, he devours. If we believe his lies, then we will destroy ourselves.***

***But if we resist his deceit, then he will attack our bodies. Job is the prime illustration of this kind of attack. He lost the fruit of his body- his children.”***

If you have never read the first few chapters of Job, you should. It will show how Job after seeing his family destroyed, his wealth taken away, his own wife turning on him, telling him to curse God and die, he was still able to hold on to his faith. Even his friends, whether they realized it or not, were trying to lead him astray by being super spiritual in trying to figure out what was wrong with Job and how he drifted away from God, but that was not why the attacks came. The attacks came because Satan saw that Job was a faithful steward and a faithful man of God that he could not turn against God. Therefore, Satan accused God of keeping a hedge, or protecting shield around him so Satan could not touch him. As a result, God dropped His shield. Never forget, Satan is like a lion seeking whom he can devour and destroy.

With that, back to this author:

***“But if we will resist his deceit then he will attack our bodies. Job is the prime illustration of this kind of attack. He lost the fruit of his body- his children. [They died.] He lost the means to sustain his body- his flocks and herds and wealth. And he lost the health of his body when he contracted a loathsome disease.”***

That consisted of blistering boils, open and painful sores all over his body. He even used broken pottery to scrape the wounds off his body to relieve some of his pain. He was in a terrible state of mind.

***“His friends sat in silence for a week, for they saw that Job was in great agony. Even Job's wife was so overwhelmed by her husband's trials that she suggested, ‘Curse God and die!’ [Job 2]. Satan did a thorough job of attacking Job's body and all that related to it. When you read the Gospel records you discover that Satan, through his demonic helpers, attacked and sought to destroy the bodies of various people.”***

That is why Jesus had so much compassion. So let us now look at examples we have in the Gospels of how Satan attacks us physically. Many of these attacks come through all five senses; sight, hearing, smell, taste, and feel or touch. You may not think so, but demons have the power to attack the human body. Job is a case in point, and even if we are covered by the blood of Christ, that does not stop the onslaught of the devil or the demons assigned to break us down, or



distract us from focusing on other things causing us to drop the shield of faith around about us. If that happens, we can no longer stop the flaming arrows coming in because there is nothing there to stop them. Satan and his demons continually try to distract us daily by causing things to make us concentrate on other areas rather than the most important area we should be focusing on every day, which is how to keep our faith strong in God's Word and Christ Jesus. Satan knows if he distracts us, he can attack our five senses. I have never met anyone in my lifetime who has complete 'amen faith,' as my mentor used to say, 100% of the time, every day of the year. There are moments of opportunity for these evil and wicked spirits to do their damage, but once we recognize what they are doing, we have a fighting chance to defeat what they are trying to accomplish. That is just the way it is. You can try to super spiritualize it all you want, but that is what spiritual warfare is all about.

People ask why I teach so much on spiritual warfare. Except for the subject of giving and prophecy, there is no other subject matter spoken about more than spiritual warfare. It begins in verse one in Genesis,

***“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; [Something happened to destroyed it.] and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”***

Because of that verse, we know even prior to Adam ever taking one-step on this planet, there was a spiritual battle, a war going on in the heavenlies. Whatever God created prior to us, these fallen angels were able to influence whatever existed here that it became so bad and so evil that God had to destroy the first creation. Then verse three begins describing the second creation of earth and the rest of the chapter explains how He did it. Right there in verse two Genesis begins with spiritual warfare. Just go book by book through the Old and New Testament, to the Book of Revelation, and everything in between. The devil has done a wonderful job blinding preachers and pastors across this world to ignore this subject to the point where they hardly ever teach on it. Well I am not going to make that same mistake, which is why I spend so much time on it. I throw in faith messages and other interesting subjects along the way, but probably until the day the Lord takes me home, I will never let up on this subject. In Ephesians 6, Paul warns us and wants us to understand how these spiritual weapons work for us. They are spiritual weapons we never get to take off. We do not have the luxury at the end of the day of taking off our armor so we can rest in comfort, but fortunately, God brings us comfort; God brings us joy; and God brings us hope.

Let me say right now, most spiritual warfare teachers make it sound like there is no hope and no joy in doing battle against such an enemy. Well there is plenty of hope if we are energized by the Spirit of God and the weapons listed in Ephesians 6 become energized by that Spirit. I am not some hypocritical Christian who will not say that I get plenty of joy in battle against the enemy, even though I do not like it. Once I get myself in tune and on track knowing what it accomplishes, I get joy in doing battle against God's archenemy. For example, some of you have children. If somebody did something evil to your child, I know some super religious Christians would say, “Well, I will pray for them.” However, we are not supposed to be a punching bag for Jesus. Real men and women get some kind of satisfaction in reacting with the proper response needed at the time of battle. I am not a super spiritual Christian living in another realm that will

tell you there is no satisfaction in battle. Once I know what my purpose is in the particular struggle at the time, which is to give some pain back to the devil and his demons who work for him. In other words, I want to strike the enemy using the spiritual weapons God has given me to use against the unseen forces that come and do battle with us continuously. We have evil angels and demons that are looking to destroy our faith, but we also have God's protection. We have angels under the control of Christ fighting for us in the unseen realm and we definitely have the confidence that we are covered with the blood of Jesus and no weapon that is formed against us will stand or be victorious against us in accomplishing their evil ways.

With that, we know the devil attacks the five senses: the sight; the hearing; the smell; the taste; and touch. There are plenty of examples of this in scripture, especially in the Gospels. Jesus dealt with it time after time. Therefore, here are a few examples of how the devil attacks the sense of touch. Go to John 20:24, which is about the disciple Thomas. After the resurrection, Thomas still doubted; he was still the Thomas who had no belief or faith that God the Father could resurrect Christ. Verse 24 reads,

***“But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.”***

The Greek word here for ‘believe’ is *pisteuo*. Unless Thomas could see the holes that pierced His wrists, he was not going to believe. Thomas was in a state of unbelief, a state of no faith whatsoever in what Christ said He would do. Thomas declared to these disciples, “Well, it's one thing that you believe in it, but I'm not going to believe it or faith that it happened until I see it for myself. The hands better have holes piercing through, because if they don't, it is not Jesus.” And here comes the touch, the feeling part. Can you just imagine this faithless individual at this time? Thomas could have seen it, but that was not good enough. He had to feel it; he had to touch it, and not just by putting a finger through the hole, but by thrusting his hand into the side of the wound in Jesus' glorified body left for our sake and for Thomas' sake. At the end of verse 25, Thomas states he would not have faith that everything Jesus said He would do and everything He came here to do was not accomplished until he saw the wounds for himself. In this instance, Satan used sight, and touch or feel to attack Thomas' mind to bring him to such a non-faith existence and unless he saw and felt the wounds for himself, he was going to stay in that state of non-belief, non-faith. This is an example of two of the senses Satan uses. A lot of us are like that; unless we see it, we will not believe it. Some need a miracle to be convinced that God exists period.

In verse 29 we read, ***“Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed [faithed]: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed [faithed].”***

Even after spending all that time with Jesus, Thomas' mind at that point was still controlled by the devil and the forces of evil assigned to him. They had more control of his mind than all the teachings and miracles that he saw and heard from Christ Jesus. These were disciples, who walked and talked for years with their Lord and Master, but Satan was able to get in and manipulate their minds to believe a lie, and if they did not have a change of mind, they would be

damned.

Here we see a God of mercy who used Thomas as an example, and with this experience gives us even greater faith today, I believe, because He really says '*blessed*.' *Makarios* is the word in the Greek, meaning "...*blessed* [or *fully satisfied*] *are the ones bathed in the blood that have not seen and yet faithe.*" That is, you and me! Some of us are harder to penetrate than others. Some can faithe with very little evidence. They hear the Word and something touches their heart, and they know it is true. On the other hand, some need demonstration after demonstration, miracle after miracle. They are more similar to the children of Israel who kept seeking miracles never faithing before the miracle arrived that God would actually perform it. Now God might not perform a miracle of your choosing, but the greatest miracle, if you truly faithe, is that it has already happened for you and that is the opportunity, if we faithe in the blood of Christ, to live throughout eternity. However, you must faithe by hearing and hearing the Word of God. Many think, "I can't see it; I can't feel it; I can't smell it. All I am doing is hearing it." That is all you are doing. In the oldest available manuscripts, the Greek is very clear: faith comes by hearing and hearing. It is a continuous thing that never stops. Stop hearing the Word of God and stop listening to the ones presenting it the right way, and I guarantee faith will slip. Faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God, which is why we need to keep hearing the Word of God. We need to be consistent and persevere just as much as the demons do. They are continuously attacking our body day in and day out to break us down. Yes, they attack our minds, but this chapter is not about that. We need to continuously hear and apply faith through His Word. That is the only way to offset and come against these attacks from evil spirits. If there is no faith in His Word, we cannot energize those weapons in Ephesians 6, and without those weapons, we will not stand a chance.

Beginning in Matthew 9:32, we see how Satan attacks the body. Then I will get to the reason why the enemy does what he does. In Matthew 9:32, Jesus heals a mute. These verses are getting into demonic possession. In fact, all examples we will look at are about demonic possession. How Satan attacks the body. This does not mean that people born deaf or with tendencies of mental illness are demon possessed. The body breaks or has birth deformities sometimes because we do not have a glorified body the way God originally created us before sin. We have a body that is in a degenerative state of being. From the day we were born, in some cases while still in the womb, our body starts failing us. The cause could be genetic or some accident that happens in life; we are crippled and there is no known cure for it, but I still believe Jesus can cure. That is what healing is all about. As my mentor would say, "We must get to that 'amen state.'" It is not that easy to get there, and it is not that easy to stay there, no matter what many Christians say.

For example, I remember having a cold and I sneezed in the presence of a Christian. She said, "God bless you," and I said, "I think I caught a cold." She replied, "Oh don't say that. If you say it, then you give Satan opportunity to further do damage in your body with that cold. Deny you have a cold and you will be healed." How stupid and ridiculous that was. Once I recognize what I have, then I know how to direct my prayers and my faith in dealing with the problem. In this case, it was a cold. I would not pray to God, "I really don't want to acknowledge that I have a cold, O Lord, because it shows no faith that you can heal." That is the stupidest thing I ever heard. It makes God sound dumb. Instead, pray, "Lord, I have a cold (or whatever the ailment is) and I need your healing touch. I need your help and your healing hand on my life." Then He will

take care of whatever the ailment is. Denying a sickness because it will show lack of faith in God, therefore there will be no healing is so dumb in my eyes; yet you would be surprised how many Christians still practice that kind of theology today.

Just the same, I do not believe every ailment, illness, and disease is because of demon possession. I will give examples in this chapter, but not all of those problems come from demons. In the past, there were some who believed that if someone had any physical problem, like epilepsy for instance, people thought it was because of demon possession. No, it is not and it took modern science in the health arena to figure out how some of those problems are created in our bodies. Even though there might not be a cure for the problem, in some cases, it can be controlled through medication. Unfortunately, some still today that believe if someone has cancer, it means there is demon possession. That is stupid and dumb and has cause Christianity and Christian faith to be mocked. Then, there are cases where demon possession does cause ailments, personal injuries, suicidal tendencies, physical defects. There are legitimate cases of that and Jesus dealt with some.

Here in Matthew 9: 32 we read, ***“As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.”***

'Dumb' is *'kophos'* in the Greek, meaning the man was deaf and possessed with a devil. There Satan is using hearing, one of the five senses. These people did not have the luxury of all the books and material that could help increase faith or the resources to read about Jesus. In fact, Jesus had not even gone to the cross at that point and they could not even go to the temple and hear the reading of the Torah and other manuscripts. These types of possessed people did not have that opportunity.

Verse 33 and 34 go on to tell us, ***“And when the devil was cast out, [he] spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. But the Pharisees [the religious world] said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.”***

People thought this man did not have the ability to speak. You may have seen examples of a person who could not hear try to speak; it may not make much sense. Therefore, in this verse, this man could not hear, which obviously limited the ability to communicate, but when he was able to hear, he spoke. In verse 34, the Pharisees say that the prince of devils cast out the devils. Why would Satan fight against himself? Why would the principalities controlling these demons to do damage to your physical body cast himself out? What would be the purpose? These Pharisees, these religious groups of Jesus' time, could not do heal this man and since they could not do it, they did not want anyone else healing this man. They did not want any relief or deliverance for this individual. They did not want to be upstaged in their eyes by anyone, especially Jesus. They would rather have this person deaf with no ability to speak for the rest of his life, possessed with these evil forces, but Jesus had compassion and He healed this individual. With this example, demons had the power to bring a person to the point where they could not even hear or speak, but do not misunderstand me, these problems are not always because of demon possession. This person in Matthew was healed from demon possession that stopped the ear from functioning, which then interrupted the ability to communicate. Jesus came along,



rebuked the demons and cast them out. The multitude marvelled and the religious world tried to explain it away as the devil casting out devils.

Matthew 12:22-24 gives us another example of how the devil attacks one of the five senses to interrupt progress and growth in Christ that increases faith in His Word. Verse 22 begins,

***“Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.***

***And all the people were amazed,*** [The Greek makes it very clear, *they went out of their minds*, wondering how this could be possible.] ***and said, Is not this the Son of David?***

***But when the Pharisees*** [the religious groups] ***heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils,*** [or demons] ***but by Beelzebub the prince of devils*** [The one in charge of these demons.]”

Once again, the Pharisees do not make any sense. Why would the principalities, or Satan himself, fight against his own army to prove a point? I have not found any commentary, or any other source, that could explain why the devil would cast out himself, or at the very least why he would cast out his own army that is doing his evil bidding for him? What would it prove? There is more satisfaction in his demon activity in a person's possessed body. They do not want to leave it. They are roaming this earth looking to find those they can possess. Remember they can never have a body again, but they are looking for a body. That is why, when Jesus cast out a demon, He asked his name. They said, “Legion.” A legion consists of an army of 6,286 demons. That is a lot of demons in one person's body and they asked permission to be cast into swine. They seek a body to possess, whether an animal or an Adam-like being.

In Matthew 12:23 we read, ***“And all the people were amazed...”*** because Jesus healed someone who was possessed with demons that caused crippling of their sight, hearing, and ability to speak. Once again, Christ had compassion and He used it as an example for us to be forewarned about what Satan and his demons attack in our physical bodies. Now he does attack the mind so we are deaf to hearing the true message of faith, but that is how he affects the mind. I am talking about just the effects of the physical body at this point.

Mark 9:17 shows another example of Satan’s attack with personal injuries through demon possession. Here, Jesus heals a boy with an unclean spirit.

It begins, ***“And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;***

***And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him*** [or *dasheth him*, in the Greek]: ***and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.***[They did not have the strength to prevail to cast him out.]

***He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me.***

***And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.***

***And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.”***

This boy was suffering for a long time, since he was a child. Satan and his demons [unclean or wicked spirits] were able to inflict personal injuries on this boy. Through control of this boy's body, these demons, not Satan, were actually able to 'tare' at it, cut it to pieces, bringing torture on this boy. That is why I mock some of these ghost and paranormal shows. They do not even experience a fraction of what the paranormal really is about; these are vicious, wicked, evil spirits.

Moving on to verse 22, we read that these evil spirits also bring on suicidal tendencies. ***“And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters [This is the same boy. The evil spirits made this boy cut himself and they also had control of his body and his mind.], to destroy him [in a sense to commit suicide]: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.***

***Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe [the Greek word is *pisteuo, faith*], all things are possible to him that believeth. [In other words, if thou canst faith that I have the power to do this, then it will be done.]***

***And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I faith; help thou mine unbelief.***

***When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him. [Christ rebuked the spirit!]***

***And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.***

***But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.”***

Once again, the crowd all marvelled at what He accomplished. These verses illustrate how demon possession attacks sight, hearing, cause personal injuries, and can bring on suicidal tendencies. They convince you through the torture that it is better to die than to live an existence of these horrible experiences! It is horrible what demon possessed people go through. In most cases, they are not just dealing with one demon, they are dealing with multitudes of demons possessing a body to carry out the work of their master Satan making sure that the individual never has the opportunity to be called or chosen.

Another example in Mark is in chapter 5:1, where the Gadarene demoniac is healed.

Verse 1 begins, ***“And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.***

***And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,***

***Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.***

[This demon possession brought personal injury and gave him supernatural strength.]

***And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones. [The personal injuries.]***

***But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,***

***And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? [This demon knew who Christ Jesus was, more so than his disciples.] I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.***

***For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.***

***And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.*** [Over 6,000 demons.]

Once again, demons are allowed to inflict their damage through personal injury. They also affect the hearing and ability to see, and bring on suicidal tendencies.

Satan also brings on physical defective deformities. Go to the last example in Luke 13:11 where Christ heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath.

Verse 11 begins, ***“And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.***

***And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.***

***And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.***

***And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.***

***The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?***

***And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bound on the sabbath day?”***

Once again, this was possession crippling a person, and even though most people think these scriptures are not part of demon possession, they are, and they are the worst type of demon possession. The Greek makes it very clear; Satan was involved in this particular possession. We do not really know why he chose this woman in particular, but we know Jesus knew where she was and He released her from the infirmity that crippled. Verse 16 makes it very clear when Christ asks, ***“And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?”***

Verse 17 continues, ***“And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed [as they should have been]: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.”***

Now the question is why does Satan want to do this? Even though in case after case, we see Jesus deliver individuals from their bondage and control, there is a reason why we are marked people whether Christian or not. The fallacy and arrogance today is Christians thinking they are the only ones attacked; that Satan and his demons have no interest in the ones not following God. That belief is a grand mistake.

Now I believe the attacks and the intensity of those attacks changes to a greater degree once we are trusting in and faithing in God. Yes, the enemy steps up the attacks; yes, they become more

intense; yes, they seem to bring us almost to the breaking point over, and over, because Satan has no joy in seeing us connected to God through Jesus. Satan wants us so he can declare to God, “See! They are following me and not you. They are more interested in me and not you. Why shouldn't I be above you; why shouldn't I be exalted. I have more down here exalting me than you have exalting you.” There is a purpose behind his attacks and attempts to possess a person before they become a Christian.

Let me read something:

***“God is invisible; the world cannot see him. Jesus Christ has returned to heaven and cannot be seen. [today] But we Christians can be seen, and it is our conduct [I circled the word 'conduct' because I do not agree with that.] in the body that glorifies and exalts the Lord.”***

I was reading along in this book and I was excited up to this point. I did not get very far in the book and I wondered why this Christian arrogant society think there is anything we could do in the flesh to glorify God. What glorifies God is faith.

***“But we Christians can be seen, and it is our conduct in the body that glorifies and exalts the Lord.”***

That is not true, Matthew 5:16 makes that clear and it is worth revisiting. These verses are about the salt and the light and verse 15 and 16 state:

***“Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”***

I can understand why many think this is about our conduct, which many other verses also translate this way, let me translate this the way it should be. Verse 16 should say;

***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works....”*** 'Good' is 'kalos,' not 'good works' and 'works' is the Greek word 'ergon,' or *the employment of something*, whether it is in the business world; whether it is works of getting something accomplished; or whether it is the employment of the Word of God. Most of the time this word is used in reference to employing of the Word of God in the original manuscripts. Therefore, a better translation of this verse is, ***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your precious [a better translation than 'good'] employment of the word, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”*** Our works do not glorify us; instead, they glorify the Father with the precious employment of the Word. That is what Satan and his demonic army are trying to do continuously, and does with more intensity to Christians, and before we become Christians, he never wants us to get to the point of even understanding that. He does not want us to have any part of salvation because he knows that once we are saved, we join a different kind of army – the army of God. Then we become a good commissioned soldier of Jesus Christ. We all have the capacity of doing something, whether called to preach as I am, or whether called to support a ministry to get the message out there. Either way, we will get our rewards in heaven.

That is why I disagree with this author who states, “...*we Christians can be seen, and it is our conduct in the body that glorifies and exalts the Lord.*” No, it is not. It is our understanding of how precious the employment of the Word of God is that glorifies my Father in heaven. Nothing else substitutes that type of glorification to the Father. It is definitely not any of my pathetic works. I disagree here.

To continue with this author,

***“God wants to use your body as a vehicle for revealing him to a lost world. Unconverted people are not likely to read the Bible to learn about God, nor books of Christian theology; but they will read our lives.”***

That is true. I Peter 2:9 states,

***“But ye are a chosen generation [meaning this applies to everyone living under the new covenant.], a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people [A better translation of this is, purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ and chosen. We are a purchased and chosen group of people.]; that ye should show forth the praises [or the virtues] of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:”***

Whether we like it or not, Satan and his demonic army are trying to keep us from understanding that we have a purpose in life; that we were purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ; and that we were chosen to show forth in the capacity we are called. We do this to, “***show forth the virtues of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light....***” so others can also have the opportunity to come out of the darkness to dwell in the light. Returning to the author,

***“This means that when Satan attacks your body, he is attacking the one means God has in revealing his grace and love to a lost world. Creation reveals the power, wisdom, and glory of God; but Christians reveal the grace and love of God.”***

All of Romans 6 deals with how we are dead to sin, no longer can sin reign in our mortal bodies, and we should try to not obey the desires thereof. Romans 6:13 tells us, “***Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness....***” There are many different explanations of what unrighteousness is, or what God’s righteousness is. Romans 4 reads we get righteousness by faith and Paul uses Abraham as an example. When Abraham put his trust in God, it was counted for righteousness and the righteousness of God was literally imputed into his being. So if faith produces righteousness in you, then unrighteousness is having no faith, none whatsoever.

In Romans 6:13 Paul writes, “***Neither yield ye your members as instruments [really weapons or tools] of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments [again weapons or tools] of righteousness unto God.***” In that verse, he is telling us we are given the weapons or the tools to use and implement in the members of our body (as in our mouth, our ability to speak) for the cause of Christ so God’s righteousness can be delivered to mankind for the teaching and preaching of faith.

Paul also writes in verse 14, ***“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”***

Our members, our bodies, have weapons, which is why it is so important to finish this teaching on Ephesians 6:10 through 18 that goes into the weapons available to us. With those weapons, we have the members to do battle against unrighteousness, the state of non-faith. If used properly, they will bring us under righteousness unto God where sin shall have no dominion over us. If we have faith in God's Word, we have God's righteousness. God does not look at everyday sins because the blood of Jesus Christ covers us. He has removed our sin. That is the beauty of faith and what faith does for us; faith in His Word, faith in His Son and what He did for us, and why we have the opportunity to have salvation because His blood was shed on that cross. Now there is no more dominion of sin in our lives because we are not under the law, we are under grace.

II Corinthians 10:3 says, ***“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:”*** This tells me, I am not warring after my flesh. If I war after my flesh in my own power, I know I can never have victory over it; only Christ can have victory over my flesh.

Paul writes in verse 4, ***“(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;)”*** Any weapons we use in our own power are all carnal and will do us no good. That is what Romans 6:13 describes, however, when God is in control of the instruments (or tools or weapons) that brings forth righteousness, they are mighty. They are weak in the flesh, but mighty in the Spirit. Verse 5 goes on to tell us about the strongholds. It says,

***“Casting down imaginations [or ‘reasonings against faith,’ anything that brings *apistos*, no faith at all], and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God [of which Satan is the chief], and bringing into captivity every thought [every evil purpose is a better translation] to the obedience [actually submission] of Christ;”***

Through Christ, we have access to these instruments, these tools mentioned in Romans 6:13. That is as long as we are alive in Christ and dead to the flesh, knowing what Christ did for us on the cross, freeing us from sin, and now we be dead with Christ, we faith that we should also live with Him. Moreover, if we are living with Him, God has given us members and the weapons to deliver His Word because we are faithing, we are living a life of faith that brings righteousness into our being and now the Spirit of God can dwell in us by means of the Holy Spirit. Whatever demonic attack comes against us, we can sustain and have victory over it if we stay in Him because our weapons are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of all these strongholds.

II Corinthians 10:5 talks about rationalizing why we should not have faith, which brings us to the point where we exalt ourselves above even the knowledge of God – Satan's first sin. However, if we bring into captivity every evil purpose to the submission of Christ, we will be in Christ. Now Satan and his demons attack our body and attack the members of our body to try to bring an understanding that faith does not exist, especially faith in God. These demons want us to believe that we do not need faith because it does nothing for us. That we should not believe that Christ



went to the cross, or that His spilled blood was redemption for man, that it is all just nonsense and a fable, and they will use any means to get that message to us.

We have seen that Satan will make us deaf to reach that goal. He will also work on our mind, how we will hear but will not be able to understand the Word of God. Faith comes by hearing, but we will not be able to hear any faith at all if Satan has made us deaf to the Word of God. He brings on personal injuries; he brings on suicidal tendencies; he will bring on any defective deformities to take our mind away from God's help that is there to help in situations. These demons do not possess bodies just to have a body again. Their chief and commander has given them the instructions to do whatever it takes to keep a person from seeing and understanding what God's Word says He will do for us.

I have given examples of how he will physically try to keep us from the Word of God. Now I will go into how Satan attacks the mind. Satan has a vast amount of knowledge on how to attack us. He knows our weaknesses and in some cases, he will use some of the examples in the New Testament to physically attack. All he has to do is penetrate our mind with his thoughts and his exalted knowledge rather than God's, to achieve his purposes. Again, this is why I am adamant we understand the tools and weapons of righteousness God has given us for battle against these evil forces in Ephesians 6. If you think we do not need these weapons, you should not be a Christian because you have no understanding that you are up against evil beings trying to keep you from having faith in God, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. Once you understand that these weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual weapons, mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, you will have every evil purpose that these demonic forces are trying to achieve brought under the submission of Jesus Christ.

We get our victory through Him. They submit to Him. We saw in each example from the New Testament that they submitted to Him. They had to obey Christ, and obey they did. They came out, in some cases over 6,000 of them in one body alone. Never forget the enemy is trying to keep the ones who have not seen the salvation of the Lord from ever seeing it. To the ones who have seen Christ's salvation, he wants to destroy their faith. In today's modern world, that is through distracting our focus from Christ into some false doctrine that leads us astray and down the road of no return.

We are in a fight with the unseen world. It seems like wherever I turn, they have their plan of attack ready for me. I also know, as this chapter began, there is a lot more looking after my well-being, whether it is angelic or Christ Himself through His blood which makes me more than a conqueror if I stay in Christ Jesus. They are no match for Christ. That is the good news. However, if we leave the realm of faith and try to implement our fight, the devil and his demons using the weapons of our carnal self through the members or the instruments of our unrighteousness, we will lose. We are no match against those kinds of forces without the instruments, the tools, or weapons that God has given us through faith. Then when our enemy sees us in the battle, these demons understand we are a person filled with the Spirit of God and God's righteousness is in us. We might not think so at times because we know how wretched of a human being we are without Christ. Do not insult our Lord Jesus Christ, do not insult God the Father, and do not insult what we cannot see and that is the Holy Spirit in our life. In a sense, we have a certain arrogance coming against these evil spirits; not arrogance of the flesh, but

arrogance in knowing that the Spirit of God is in us; God's righteousness is in us. When I am faithing in Him and all these things are working with each other, they are no match for my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That is why we should not run in fear. Even though fear keeps saying to, we should not run in fear when the devil or his demons attack. We have someone greater than all these forces combined fighting for us.

That is why the disciples in the New Testament failed at times to cast these demons out. They were just going through the motions not understanding how powerful the name of Jesus Christ alone was. You must have faith in that name to be able to deliver some of these wicked spirits, especially the ones more vicious and powerful than others were. 'In the name of Jesus' is not just a catch phrase. It is an opportunity to step out in faith and demonstrate to the unbelieving and unseen world that our confidence lies within His Word and lies within what Christ did for us.

You must learn how to fight against these evil forces; you must understand why they attack us; and you must understand why they attack non-Christians. His whole purpose is to keep as many as possible away from Christ and His salvation power. He wants to take as many as he can with him to the lake of fire. Nevertheless, I will keep on preaching that we serve a God and a Christ who is greater than all these forces together. I will learn how to use my tools and weapons given to me because of God's righteousness and because of faith in His Word. I will learn as we march through Ephesians 6 how to energize those weapons so they can be spiritual instruments and not carnal instruments to do battle and to be victorious in the name of Jesus against the unseen enemy.

I have just begun on this particular segment of this Spiritual Warfare series. Soon I intend to show how the enemy attacks the mind in addition to the physical being to bring us under his submission so we cannot glorify God. It is important you do not confuse this with other ailments that have nothing to do with demon possession. There are many more of those situations than there are with demon possession, but when Satan and his demons want to prove a point or to make examples, he goes to the extremes to get it done. We should then go to the extremes that God has granted us with the wonderful opportunity to get the message out about how these types of individuals who have been attacked physically can be delivered.

That message is the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and how faith is developed in one's life, how to increase it, and how to have the mind of Christ to keep growing so we can keep fighting and be victorious, having victory after victory against the onslaught of attacks that come in our life continuously. That is what it means to be a light and not put it under a bushel so no one can see it. We are a precious chosen group of individuals meant to get the message out and one of the ways we combat Satan and his enemies. Once you begin that, be ready for all hell to break loose. When you are employing the Word of God in your life correctly, there is not just a legion, but also an onslaught of legions continually trying to break you down so they can interrupt your employment of the Word of God. Do not let your light be dimmed. Be a beacon for the rest of the world in the way God has called you whether association with a ministry or preaching it yourself.

I know this chapter included many different scriptures, but understand our weapons are not carnal BUT MIGHTY through God, not through us. Through God, we pull down strongholds

[plural]. The enemy will give us all the rationalizations why we should not have faith, but he will not succeed. Because of our knowledge of God that we continuously seek out so we grow in Him in that knowledge, we will be able to bring others out of captivity and the evil purposes of Satan's demonic beings bringing them under submission through Christ Jesus so others will have the opportunity to finally see who Christ is.

The whole goal of this ministry is to bring others to the knowledge of Jesus Christ and to deliver them out of their captivity of all the evil purposes of Satan and his army. However, Christ makes them understand that even though they are still roaming the earth, they still must submit and obey our Master just as we do. Then they need to back away from us when they hear the name of Jesus because we faith in that name and we faith in that blood.

Now I want you to remember and to take to heart the later part of Romans 6:13, ***“and your members as weapons of righteousness unto God [or for God].”*** This means we are not a Christian who just sits around loving everybody to the point that they are no earthly good even for Christ. We are called and chosen for a purpose. We are chosen and our member, our body, is chosen as a weapon of righteousness to do battle for the cause of Christ. That is why Paul said to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and war a good warfare with the weapons of righteousness, as Romans 6:13 tells us, that we get righteousness by faith. Then, because of faith, God imputes it into our body so the Holy Spirit is able to come in and dwell in that righteous body. Whether we think our body is spiritually righteous or not, God does. It is as if we are a lump of clay, but God sees us through His spiritual eyes and by faith, He sees us as somebody that is in line and in tune with Him. Then He puts His righteousness in our inner being so we are now a soldier of Jesus Christ, ready with the weapons of righteousness to do battle against evil forces.

We do not need weapons of righteousness for anything else but the battle. The word ‘instruments’ in that verse is a bad translation. The Greek word is ‘weapons,’ so the verse should read, ***“and your members weapons of righteousness unto God.”*** That is why it is important to have faith. Without faith, our weapons will only be carnal weapons that are no match against these wicked beings, these evil spirits, these fallen angels, and Satan himself. When we are armed and ready to do battle with the weapons of righteousness for God, not for ourselves, see what God does for you. I challenge you.

I will make one more point about this verse in Romans 6. Satan and his demonic army have one purpose. He knows the message of Christ change lives and put a person’s purpose back on Christ or for the first time puts it on Christ. Because of that, Satan loses another piece of the puzzle, another person out of his camp into God's camp. He knows all that. That is why this verse is so important. He knows that he can hinder God's work by attacking God's workers. However, even before we become God's worker, he attacks people with the same intention in mind. He never wants us to become a worker for God. When I say 'worker,' that is one who employs the Word of God in the capacity called and the enemy does not want us to ever get to that point, whether we are a Christian or not. In this case, in Romans 6:13, he is going to attack with everything he can to make our weapons useless. Just as God the Son had to take on a human flesh body to accomplish His redemption work for us, the Holy Spirit needs our bodies. That is why Satan is trying to take control of it, whether physically or through our mind. He needs our bodies so he thwarts the opportunity of the Holy Spirit of ever having control of our life or our body. Just as

the Son needed a body to accomplish the redemption, so the Holy Spirit needs our bodies to carry out the Word of God. The members of our body are the weapons in the Holy Spirit's hands to help build and sustain the church of Jesus Christ.

Never underestimate the importance of what you might not like when you look in the mirror. God uses our body to carry out the commission, so if the Holy Spirit does not indwell in us in this new covenant age, and God's righteousness is not imputed in us to energize the weapons needed to carry out the commission, then there is no hope. Never underestimate your body and its members. It has been called, it has been chosen, and it has been purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ to carry out the employment of the Word of God. That is why Satan tries to stop it from ever seeing the true light of the Word of God before becoming a Christian. Once you become a Christian, he intensifies the attacks to sidetrack your progress and growth in how you understand what faith does in a person's life and why it is so important to keep on hearing it and hearing it and hearing it.

# Why Satan attacks the Temple of God

## Part 1

Open your Bibles to 1 Peter 5:8 in the New Testament. It reads, ***“Be sober, be vigilant.”*** The Greek word for *vigilant* simply means to be on the alert. How many Christians walk around always on alert? ***“Because your adversary...”*** The translation for adversary is fine, but there is a Greek word, a legal word, that here simply means *opponent*. That is right. You are in a fight, and you have an opponent. He is your adversary, and he is the devil. ***“Be sober, be vigilant, [be on alert], because your adversary [your opponent] the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”***

Peter knew what this was like. He was devoured for a short period, starting from his denial of Jesus Christ. This adversary devoured him. When a lion roars it usually means that they are sending a message. Lions and other animals know that this is their territory. Satan is marking his territory in this world. He puts everybody on notice saying, “You are going to line up with my will, doing what I want you to do, and I might or might not devour you.” Now, as I said, Peter knew exactly what it is like to be devoured. Let us read the story in Luke 22:31: ***“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, [That is Peter] behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat.”*** Circle the word *desired*. In Greek, it simply means to “ask permission to claim you back.” Therefore, Satan was asking permission to claim Peter back. I believe Satan had an idea what was going on, and why Jesus chose certain individuals, and what their commission would be. The devil did not like it. He knew there would be an invasion of his territory even after Jesus was gone. The disciples would become Jesus’s instruments to bring the Good News to a spiritually dead world.

Many people go around saying, “I am soul-searching this and soul-searching that.” I do not soul-search the way others do. This message on spiritual warfare, and the next three, is going to focus on how Satan tries to defeat us by trying to deceive our minds to break the connection that we have with Jesus Christ. If he does not succeed, what will he do next? He will try to destroy your body. As I said, I will not call it soul-searching. I have been scripture searching. I have been trying to put together a battle plan together for myself this last week, so this message is really for me, and I am sharing it with you. I do not think Satan has been able to deceive my mind and destroy it to break my connection with God. However, I have no doubt that he has been also trying to destroy me in other ways, including physically.

In the Book of Genesis, he deceived Adam and Eve as a serpent. Since then, he has been like a roaring lion seeking whomever he can devour. If we believe his lies, then we are on the path of self-destruction. Most of the people listening tonight are probably not on that path, so Satan finds other ways, and he has many to attack us. If we resist his deception, my friend, you see it over and over in the scriptures; he attacks our bodies. Read the first few chapters of the book of Job in the Old Testament. I have preached about this before. Job is probably one of the best examples in the scriptures. He lost the fruit of his body, his children. He lost the means to sustain his body, his wealth, which consisted of his herds, his flocks. Then when that did not work, Satan attacked

his health, the health of his body, and he contracted an awful, terrible disease. Whatever it was, it was terrible. Then he had friends come by, and the situation was so grim they just sat around for a week and did not even say a word to Job. The situation probably should have stayed that way. Even his own wife told him to curse God and die. There was no support coming from his her. Job was in great agony, and Satan did his number in attacking his body. Nothing is new. Fast forward to the Gospels and you see Satan still using the same methods through his demonic helpers/assistants. You read repeatedly in the scriptures how they attack individuals to destroy the bodies of people in the New Testament. Let us look at a few examples.

Matthew 9:32: ***“As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.***

***And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. [Of course, the Pharisees could not see what Jesus did as an act of God.] But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.”***

So here, we see demons, Satan’s helpers, attack an individual and cause one man who was possessed by demons to become dumb. I am not talking about a word that most people use in their everyday language today. He did not have a physical ailment from birth, a genetic deformity. No, he could not speak because he was a man possessed by demons.

Another example:

Luke 13:10: ***“And he [Jesus] was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. [Teaching on the Sabbath.]***

***And, behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. [She was bent over. Whatever this disease was, this infirmity, it caused her to be bent over. She was disabled.]***

***And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman; thou art loosed from thine infirmity.***

***And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.***

***And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.”***

They were worried about some legalistic law. They did not care for the well-being of this woman. She had been suffering for 18 years. By my count, that is 6,370 days. These Pharisees did nothing to help her. In my opinion, what probably happened is they just kept criticizing her, and here comes Jesus. Instead of being thankful that a woman was healed after being in this infirmity for 18 years, or 6,370 days, they attacked Jesus. “Well, you could have done this on another day.” Jesus was there at that point and time; why not do it then.

***“The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?***

***And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham... [Moreover, here is the point I want to make. This woman had this infirmity for 18 years. Who kept her in this infirmity?] And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, [Satan kept her in this***



infirmity.], ***lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?*** [*Loosed* meaning “be set free.”] Christians do not think this way, but the devil sure does. I can guarantee you that because if Christians had that principle in their minds 24/7, which relates to a practice in your everyday life, his job would be a lot harder. Now, nobody confuse what I am saying. This has nothing to do with salvation. Let me make something very clear. This has nothing to do with salvation. What I am talking about is that you are a steward of God’s temple, your body, which is not yours or mine.

***“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body...”*** The scripture does not say glorify God in your spirit, even though it says that in many other ways in so many different locations in the bible, but here it says in your body. Then it also says, ***“And in your spirit, which are God’s.”***

Paul separated body and spirit here just in case Christians try to lump it all up down the road in a spiritual sense, only putting a spiritual application on it and not including the physical body. Paul is saying, “Wake up, friend! You are a temple of the Holy Spirit, so start glorifying God in that temple, both body and spirit!” God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are all invisible beings. We cannot see them. Jesus is no longer here. He left two thousand years ago and is in glory. So what is left? If we are one of the chosen ones to be a disciple of Jesus Christ-which is a privilege, since the world cannot see Jesus, but we as disciples of Jesus Christ can be seen we are going to need a body as an instrument that He can use. I am talking about a physical body, an instrument that He can use to glorify and exalt Him.

Matthew 5:16, If you do not believe what I just said, then scratch out this verse or somehow justify it in your mind that it means something else.

Verse 16: ***“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,*** [there it is the Greek word for works, *ergon, your good employment of the Word.*], ***and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”***

***“Let your light so shine...”*** How is it going to shine? Through this temple, where the Holy Spirit lives, that the world sees in physical form and reacts to it. So what am I saying? God wants to use your body. He wants to use my body, as a vehicle to reveal His rightly divided Word to a lost world, my friend. I have referenced other scriptures many times; we are ambassadors of Jesus Christ.

As I have proclaimed many times, faith comes by hearing, and hearing the Word of God. Paul could have easily said, faith comes by reading my letters, or reading the Gospels, or reading whatever. He did not say that. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing the Word of God. I am sure there might be a few, but I have never met anyone who reads the Bible, and becomes saved by grace, or other theological Christian books you find in Christian bookstores. What do they read? Our lives. This life that preaches, your life that shares if you are not preaching it or been called to preach it. Our lives! This temple of God is what people see and read. What does it mean? When Satan attacks your body, he is really attacking one of the means that God uses to reveal His Grace, His peace, His love for a lost world. Go to the Book of Romans. Creation reveals the power of God, creation reveals the wisdom of God, creation reveals the glory of God, but that is

all it can do. Disciples of Jesus Christ reveal the grace, love, and peace of God, but that is not all.

### **Your body is God's weapon.**

You can put in the margin of your bible weapon – instrument – tool. One, you are God's temple; two, God's weapon – instrument – tool. You are His possession in both counts. You are not your own. You are bought with a price.

Romans 6:13: ***“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 [or to God].”*** Circle the word *instruments*. The Greek word for it has several different meanings. I have already told you what they are. ***“And your members as weapons”*** and they are not unarmed weapons. Go to Ephesians 6 and see how it is armed. ***“And your members as weapons [write instruments and tools.] of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”***

God uses people throughout history, in both Old and New Testaments. When God wanted to build an ark, He used Noah and his family. When He wanted a tabernacle built in the Old Testament, in Exodus He used Bezaleel, Aholiab, and their assistants. What did Jesus do? He used the hands of His disciples to distribute bread and fish in the New Testament. He used their lips to preach the Gospel as far as He wanted them to take it. See, if God is going to get anything done, He uses us; it is a principle in scriptures. It is His principle. He could do it with a snap of His fingers and get it all done, but that is not what He chose to do in scriptures throughout history. If God is going to get His work done in this world, He will use us. We are His ambassadors.

Now, Satan is no dummy. He has been around a long time, before the fall and after the fall. He knows that he could hinder the work of God by attacking God's instruments, God's weapons, God's tools, and God's workers in the harvest to put their weapons out of commission, to put their instruments out of commission, to put their tools out of commission. Just as Jesus, the Son of God, chose to take on a physical body like ours, except that it has sinless blood, unlike ours, He chose to take on that physical form to accomplish His work here on this earth. Guess what. He is still accomplishing it through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is just not floating out there accomplishing things, the Holy Spirit is looking for individuals who trust in Jesus Christ, so the Holy Spirit can use them to do His work here on this planet earth. What am I telling you? The Holy Spirit needs our bodies, and Satan knows that.

Anyone who has listened to me long enough knows that I am a biblical detective. I research the scriptures. Lately I have become a food detective also. Anyone who spends any amount of time reading labels would be amazed that through our food, he is able to destroy our bodies in the long run. I have been ill for two years. However, over the last few weeks, I concluded, that I was going to get this instrument, through God's help and the knowledge that He gives me, to improve this temple as much as He gives me the strength and the knowledge to do so, to be used as His weapon.

Do you ever wonder why they call doctors' offices a general practice; it is because they are just

practicing on you. I am not saying all medicines are bad. They aren't, but we are an impatient society, and we want shortcut remedies to all our ailments, so we go to doctors to see if they have a pill for this and a pill for that. Based on my research, there is no drug that doesn't come with some side effects. Some side effects are worse than others depending on the individual's reaction to the drug. Sometimes you have to take a drug to deal with the side effect on top of the drug you are taking to try to deal with a problem. The drug never really cures the problem. It just controls the symptom. It is a vicious cycle. Now, there are places for medicine and procedures. If you have appendicitis and it is about to burst, you remove it. I have no problem with that. I have no problem with certain drugs either, the more I research them, but it is becoming a common practice to get the prescription pad out and just write a prescription that might or might not work, never stopping for a moment to ask ourselves, "What can I do to help myself too? God, show me!"

The Holy Spirit needs our bodies. That is what God chose to use as His instrument. He could have chosen other ways. He could have chosen himself to do it the last two thousand years. He chose to use our bodies, and most Christians never even think once in their walk with Jesus that Satan is going to attack their body and destroy it if he can because he knows it is God's temple. If you are a serious Christian, you are going to be a weapon, you are going to be a tool, you are going to be an instrument. You are a weapon and an instrument, and the members of your body are tools in the Holy Spirit's hands to help build what? The true church here on earth.

Unfortunately, I did not get this knowledge at a young age. Usually, it takes something drastic in your life to start considering things. Never minimize the care of your body, friend. If you are a young person, better start early, instead of waiting for damage and decay which could be avoided. You are going to grow old. You cannot stop it. How you grow old will be determined by how we care for God's temple. You are a steward of God's temple. Treat it as one. This is what I have been saying to myself. "Well, I am too old." You are never too old. The disciples of Jesus Christ, who are careless about their health, and know that they are careless about their health, are really playing right into the hands of the adversary, the opponent, and he knows it.

### **Your body is God's treasury.**

2 Corinthians 4:7: ***"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."***

Another translation: ***"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels so that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God, and not from ourselves."***

When we were saved and we started having faith in Christ Jesus, He put that wonderful treasure of Himself into our bodies. We have Jesus; we have the very life of God within us. I have it within me. Did God give us this treasure, so we could just simply protect it in a fragile vessel? If you really think about it, and you understand what an earthen vessel means; it is not a very safe place for a treasure to be kept in. The treasure is not placed within us so we can just protect it as best as we can. That is not why He gave it to us. He gave us this treasure that he might invest it through you for the benefit of the lives of others and not only your own life. In the scriptures, you read in 1 Timothy that Paul invested this treasure in Timothy when he responded to the Word, the message.

1 Timothy 6:20: ***“O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:”***

Another translation: ***“O Timothy, guard what has been intrusted to you.”*** What has been entrusted to him?

2 Timothy 1:14: ***“That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us.”***

Another translation: ***“Guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us the treasure which has been entrusted to you.”*** Timothy in turn was to invest this treasure in the lives of others.

2 Timothy 2:2: ***“And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others [or one another]...”*** To teach others or one another.

So what is Paul saying? He is saying that the safety and success of the spiritual treasure investment are in the hands of weak humans. This treasure is a fragile earthen vessel, and Satan is aware of that. Satan can rob the world of spiritual wealth by attacking the bodies of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Do you understand that? It is a spiritual war we are in, folks, a spiritual war to deceive our minds and, if that does not work, to destroy our bodies.

### **Your body is God’s testing ground.**

1 Corinthians 9:24: ***“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.***

***And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.***

***I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:***

***But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection [Paul did not say spirit there.]: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”***

The image that Paul paints here is that of the Greek games of his day. In Greek games in those days, each participant had to qualify and keep the rules, or he was not allowed to compete. After he won the prize, if he was found guilty of breaking the rules, his prize would be taken away from him. It was just the rules. Well, Satan can rob you of your rewards by attacking your body and getting you to break the rule. It is not a matter of salvation, so do not confuse that message. There is nothing that we can do to merit salvation. We cannot earn it. This is a spiritual warfare message. This is about the rewards for the faithful service that Paul was writing about. In the Greek games, the athlete did not lose his citizenship because he broke the rules. He only forfeited his reward, which was a shameful experience to go through.

What I have been trying to emphasize tonight is that your body is important to God. I have just gone to some passages, and as God’s disciples, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we have to care for our bodies. I am telling you to be over obsessed about your body. No, you can take that too far too, but you have to care for it. You will never be concerned about how you have to care for it, or even be concerned with it, if you do not recognize what I have covered so far, starting with it is

God's temple, not yours, and these bodies need to be cared for. Why? To be used for the glory of God. Anything that interferes or keeps us from doing our best, if you think about it, must be abandoned or eliminated. Have you ever seen a good mechanic take care of his tools? Well, we are tools. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have to take care of the tools of His body, not ours, His.

I am not done. I plan to add more later, but this is a message that I have been working on for myself. Maybe it will help some of you who have been mistreating your body way too long, not recognizing it is God's temple, not yours. Why are you treating something that is God's so poorly? Furthermore, you know it. Oh, you will complain, and you will moan and groan saying, I have gone too far. Have I? Have you not been following the scriptures that I have been laying down? He wants us to be aware that we have a body that He is working with, and He plans for us to do some work concerning the care of His temple. It is His, not ours.

We are His weapon - His instrument - His tool. We are bought with a price. When you join the military, especially during boot camp, you have to polish what you wear. Well, we are wearing His temple. It is better to start understanding that; stop neglecting it and start polishing it, not going overboard. Do not let it be the focus of your life, but start paying attention to what you are putting into it, which can destroy it and causes problems not just now but also later in life. I wish I knew this information 30 years ago.

We are God's treasury. For some reason, He chose this fragile vessel, an earthen vessel, to put His treasure in His Holy Spirit to be His ambassadors.

Finally, Satan attacks our bodies because it is God's testing ground. One of the ways that Satan can use is our lack of knowledge of what we put in our bodies. Food is one example. He has deceived the world in so many different ways that you do not even give it a second thought. He is working on things that we never even imagined he would be concerned for or care about, but if he knows it can eventually destroy us or weaken us as weapons and instruments of God, he will try to achieve his dastardly deeds.

I went through some more tests this week or early last week. The results came back, and my blood glucose level had gone up. My risk for heart disease had gone up, but not bad enough to put me on any statins. The conversation went to whether they would put me on statins if it went up any further. Over my dead body, until I have tried everything, I can alternatively first. Statins are especially destructive for males, and if they can be avoided, and in some cases they can't; it is the last thing you want to do, but doctors so easily prescribe them. Thank God I have a doctor I can talk too who is retired and was part of the early research teams on HIV and AIDS. She gave me options to try to explore and get my problems under control. Once I have all the necessary information I will try everything I can, not so much to preserve my life, but so I can continue living and living as His instrument until God takes me home. I am with Paul. It would be great if I get to go over there, but it is better for you if I stay here. As long as God has me here, I am determined, and some days are better than others, to take as much as I can away from Satan in his attacks to this body. I do not underestimate how he tries to attack this mind. That is a daily attack, but I have news for him: ***“Greater is he that is in me, than he that is in the world.”*** Just as He can also enlighten me in the spiritual knowledge of His Word, He can enlighten me on the

knowledge that is necessary to deal with all my physical ailments. If He chooses to heal me of all my problems by snapping His fingers, glory to God, but until then I am going to do my part in turning it around. I do not want to give Satan the edge. I am tired of him using my lifetime of mistakes concerning this body, and it is time to turn things around. With God's help, whatever route he chooses, Satan has lost.

To be continued...





# Why Satan attacks the Temple of God

## Part 2

Open your Bibles to Luke 22. Many of you know for the last two years, I have been ill off and on with all kinds of problems. I had to do a lot of soul searching so I called last Wednesday night “Joe's Story” and how I processed, with the Lord's help, the illnesses that I was dealing with by going through the scriptures. At times, the only thing that really got me through some of those dark moments was God's word. I would put on good face in front of the camera. My wife and son know some of those dark moments, sleepless nights, could not move in some cases, but I am here and I plan to still keep preaching until Jesus comes or He takes me home.

Through my search through the scriptures I have come to the realization, which I started last Wednesday night, I have not taken care of this temple very well. Most people take it for granted. Therefore, I had to do some scripture searching and I had to do some praying and studying through God's Word to get me through. In that process, I came to realize I am God's temple and I have treated it badly for most of my life. I took for granted that I would always feel like I did in my 20's and 30's, and maybe even early 40's. I got a rude awakening. I got the shock of my life. I was very sick for several months when I was 26 years old and God got me through that but I was younger. I was much stronger than I am today just because of the age factor. I am not really an old person. I am only 56, but as you get older, you can tell the difference between your 20's to your late 50's. However, for the most part, I was healthy up to about the end of my 53<sup>rd</sup> year and then problems came one after another.

Through that process, I have never shared with anyone what I went through. I did what I know to do which was dig into God's Word. I was enlightened why we should not treat our bodies as poorly as we do. “Well, we are going to get a new one.” That is true, but God still has a purpose for this earthen vessel that is so fragile yet He put His treasure in it. He still has a purpose for this one, and as I pointed out, we are God's temple. Most people preach this and they try to lay some guilt trip on you that you should not smoke or you should not do this or that to God's temple. That is a decision you are going to have to make. I am not your judge what you do with your body; correction, God's body. You are bought with a price. You are not your own in a spiritual sense and in the physical sense. Most people do not apply it in the physical realm, just the spiritual. You are bought with a price. Jesus paid that price and you are not your own. You are now God's temple and I took us to the scriptures showing that last Wednesday night. Being God's temple, then I moved on to being God's weapon and we looked at the scriptures regarding that. You are God's weapon, you are God's tool, and you are God's instrument for His purposes.

If you have health, do not take it for granted. If you are not healthy, do what you can to change what you need to change to see if things will not turn around. In addition, let's not forget first and foremost, put God up front and communicate to Him, make that connection and ask for a physical healing. After that physical healing is given to you, do not take it for granted and go back to the same old ways that got you in that physical mess to start with. Listen, I went to Paul, but first I went to Jesus, then I went to Paul and I pointed these things out. It is there. It leaps out

from the pages so it is not some Joe Cortes' twisted scripture to try to get you to change. While I care about you, whether you change is between you and God. I was telling you my story and the process I went through over two years of getting where I am today.

So we covered God's temple, God's weapon, which is what you are and, of course, I related this all into the Spiritual Warfare Series that I have been preaching off and on now for years because it is really a spiritual warfare message. Then we moved to the truth that we are God's treasury.

Let's just start at Luke 22:

Verse 31, ***“And the Lord said, Simon, Simon...”*** Ever talk with someone and say, “Oh Bill, oh Bill,” because you know you are not getting the message across and you are kind of disgusted, shaking your head, “what I have to tell you, unclog your ears and get the information into your brain to realize what is really going on.” That is what I think Jesus was doing here. ***“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan...”*** Of course, relating it to a spiritual warfare message as I did Wednesday night, he is behind most, but not all, of our problems and the way he manipulates us to get there. ***“Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you...”*** I had you circle the word desired. In the Greek, it means *ask permission to claim you back*. Satan has done this with all of his ex-warriors because now we are soldiers of Jesus Christ, disciples of Jesus Christ. We are his ex-warriors and he wants us back in his fold.

I was telling someone earlier, I am so tired of hearing testimonies of how bad these people were and thank God, He saved them. Of course, if they can come up with a terrible beginning to their testimony on what they have been delivered from, it is a very effective way to communicate that even God can save you. It frustrates me what the church community has not taught. I do not care how bad or good your testimony is concerning how bad you were before you were saved by grace. Who cares, because the more important issue is before we were even born, in that womb, we had sinners blood. I have taught on all this in the communion messages. Go to the Teaching Center and listen to the video format. We already were pathetic. We were already sinners, worthless, corrupted, good for nothings because of sinners' blood. If people really knew and understood the definition of a sinner with sinful blood flowing in their veins before Christ removed that sin; if they really knew the true meaning and definition of it, to call someone a sinner is the ultimate, worst cuss word that you could ever call someone. There is nothing lower. It is beneath bottomless if there could be a physical description of it in a location. Christ has raised us up from that with His precious blood. How did I get off on that? I do not remember, but let me get back on track.

Satan asked permission from Jesus to claim Peter back. I do not like it, but I believe he has done that to all disciples of Jesus Christ asking permission for whatever process that he uses to get you back into his fold. One of Satan's methods, and it is a very often used method, he wants to control the circumstances around your physical body so you as a disciple of Jesus Christ can suffer. He wants to be able to get hold of your body and create suffering. If you do not believe that then you do not believe many of the scripture stories that I pointed out Wednesday night. I just did not go to the Old Testament sources, I also went to the New Testament sources, and how Satan attacks the body. If he cannot get to your mind and deceive that, he is going to attack your body.

Of course, I used the example of Job in the Old Testament. He attacked the fruits of his body. When it did not work, he then attacked his body with a horrible disease. He was in a painful, suffering condition. He could look upon his external body and see the suffering and the condition he was in. He probably could look within and see the miserable condition he was slowly drifting into because of all the fiery darts that were firing at him; missiles more like nuclear weapons, figuratively speaking, coming at him and landing. He was taking an awful blow. You cannot blame him for looking up and saying, "Where are you God? Have you forsaken me?" If you have forgotten the Job story, you should refresh your mind and read it again. You can leave out all the friend parts because they were not friends, but the first five or six chapters especially. God did not forsake him. Job maintained somewhat of his faith in God and then he was honored at the end when Satan could not break him. If you read the Job story, make a note to yourself and in your Bible that God was always in control. He gave permission to Satan, He knew exactly what Job was going through, He finally intervenes, He gets Job back on his feet and then He honors him with even more wealth, more children, and so forth.

God is always in control. Satan could not attack Job unless God gave permission. Jesus says the same thing here in Luke 22:31, "***Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath asked permission to claim you back,***" For what reason? "***that he may sift you as wheat:***" So we have examples both in the Old and New Testament that Satan and his minions cannot touch God's chosen without God's or Jesus' permission. I think He grants that permission for several reasons. However, when He grants that permission, if we keep trusting in Him one thing is certain, God is in control and He knows where your breaking point is and He will be there right before that happens if you stay trusting in Him.

Therefore, we know that God has ordained it and God controls suffering. Now, what does God not control? Not that He couldn't, but He chose this route. What God does not control in the scriptures is how we respond to the suffering. If you lose faith, good luck. You are going to be sifted as wheat and that is where Satan gets his edge on you. I am here to say do not let that happen; do not get to the point where your response is something other than faith and trust in Him. Do not listen to the naysayers that say, "Curse God and die." Do not listen to these people that say, "Where is your God now?" Just tell them, "He is where He is supposed to be. He knows my situation and I am going to trust Him for the outcome."

You cannot just generalize suffering in one category. There are several types of suffering in the life of a Christian. Now, there is what they call natural suffering. What is natural suffering? Natural suffering is the kind of suffering we experience just because we are human beings. We cannot prolong the gradual breakdown of this human flesh forever. We are going to grow old. We can try to delay it as much as we can by not abusing God's temple, but you are eventually going to grow old, which might result in sicknesses. There are sufferings in the natural sense of suffering where you might even suffer an injury. Death comes to all eventually. Unless we are living in the last days and waiting for that last trumpet to sound, we will all experience death. You cannot avoid it. No matter how much science tries to figure out how to prolong death, it will come knocking and you will have to answer to that call.

Too many people like to blame the devil for that kind of suffering. Most people do not put it in

this frame of reference. I say you can because if you believe your suffering of pain, illnesses of the body and diseases is because of Satan, you are right. As long as you are thinking in this way, sin created it. If Adam and Eve did not sin, we would not be experiencing some of the things that we are experiencing now. There would be no pain and suffering, illnesses and diseases. The disease of sin, among other ways of describing it, would not be able to penetrate this body and affect it the way it does. I do not agree with the saints who say, "I have a pain in my elbow. Satan must be attacking me," and they are 85 years old. Chances are you probably have the beginning stages of some kind of arthritic problem or if not an arthritic problem in itself, maybe some type of inflammation problem that causes those pains. Most of the time those pains probably are related to how old you are and how much your body has broken down over the years, whether by abuse or just because of use in general.

So do not go blaming the devil for everything. I do blame him for getting Adam to fall for his tactics and in his introduction of sin in our lives, and he fell for the bait that created a domino effect on all physical and spiritual things that we deal with through life. That I do contribute to Satan. Therefore, when I do have that pain in my knee, I do not care if I am 25 or 75, I realize it is because of age. Why am I aging and feeling these pains? It is simple, because of Satan and sin. I guess what I am saying is, I just do not throw out that this is Satan's fault. I want to know why it is Satan's fault. I need to understand why. I am just not interested in catch phrases you see Christians use and when you ask them why is it Satan's fault, they say because he is attacking them. Well, my friend, the attack started the minute you were born and the aging process began. Moreover, why is that happening? Once again, sin.

We see in Romans 8:18 through 23 that all of creation is going through the same thing as we are. Paul makes it clear what is happening if you look at the scriptures from verse 18:

***"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.***

***For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope;***

***Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption..."***

Hallelujah on that one. I have to read that again. ***"Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.***

***For we know that the whole creation..."*** Some translations will read *that every creature*. Not just us. ***"For we know that the whole creation [or every creature] groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."***

That is Paul writing in his day. Well, in 2015 the clock is still ticking.

***"And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption [Of what?] of our body."*** Our bodies are also groaning, waiting for that day and of a promised a new body. Hallelujah!

I have worn out this one, some of it stupidly, some of it not knowing how to treat it at times, and

some of it because of age. When you put all three of those together, you have a firecracker ready to go off. This is still part of my story. If some of you are not interested, watch something in the archives. I am just telling you my journey for the last 25 months.

Now, does God sometimes allow His disciples to suffer? Yes, for the reason that He might discipline them. I do not like hearing that either, but He loves us so much that He allows suffering to happen because He will not permit us to be rebellious and live a life of a rebel. Once you come to the knowledge of the truth, you have to make a choice. Keep living a life of a rebel or let God take control. Scripture says He chastens us so He might conform us not into what we want, but to His will for us.

Hebrews 12:5, ***“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:***

***For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”***

Think about it. We are not to despise it. Despise what? The chastening of the Lord. ***“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...”*** *He disciplines* is a better translation. ***“For whom the Lord loveth he disciplines, and scourgeth...”*** *Scourgeth* is a Greek word which means *to whip*. He whips you in shape. He whips you back to be conformed to His will to mature you as a son or daughter of His; a child of His. He is not out there to try to persecute you. He is out there trying to perfect us. Well, I need a lot of perfection and I am the first one to admit it. Discipline is not the work of an angry God or an angry judge that punishes a criminal for instance. Jesus already took on our blows. We do not have a criminal record, but we get off track on occasion and suffer because we decide to drift off and do it our own way. We suffer because we become rebellious.

If you want to look at someone in the Old Testament that had this problem, you do not have to look any further than looking into David's life. He sure spanked him on occasion when it was necessary. I do not think God has a problem with spanking His disciples if they rebel or refuse [I do not use the word repent. I use what it truly means in the Greek.] To have a change of mind that leads to a change of heart. In the Old Testament, David sinned against God and on one occasion, he tried to hide his sin for a year or more. All you have to do is read Psalms 32 to see how David suffered both physically, emotionally and spiritually because he would not submit to God in periods of his life.

Now, there are other times where God allows suffering in our lives to simply build us up and help us mature as saints. Jonah is one of those stories. Anyone who is a Christian knows the story. He disobeyed God and refused to go to Nineveh. He found a ship that was heading in the total opposite direction. Instead of going east, he went west and not just any place west, the furthest point he could get a ship to go to, Tarshish. God had different plans and He interrupted Jonah's plans. He found himself in a storm at sea and eventually in a whale's belly, or whatever the beast was. You know the story. God could have let him go and found someone else to go to Nineveh, but He didn't. What did He do? He chastened or disciplined Jonah for being disobedient. One of the reasons for Jonah's storm was for correcting God's servant who had been disobedient, but there are storms in our life that come our way because we are obedient. That is why you cannot box in suffering in some general category and try to define it because when you



search through God's Word, it is described in so many different ways. You just have to look for it. Jonah suffered because of his disobedience. I believe, and I have preached, that he died and came back to life and was used for God's purposes. Nevertheless, he still was not happy that he was going to Nineveh. He would get there, he would preach, but Jonah thought it was a waste of time. However, this time even though he had those thoughts, he was obedient, not disobedient. He was not going in the opposite direction. He was going in the direction that God wanted him to go, but it took some serious discipline and some serious whipping by God.

As I said, other storms come in our path because we are obedient. I had to come to that realization. "Why am I in this storm?" I am yelling out to God, "I am not being disobedient [At least I did not think so.] So why do you have me in this storm?" He had to remind me through His Word that being in this storm is no different than others who have experienced storms because of their obedience.

One storm is recorded in Matthew 14. This leads up to the walking on water story after Jesus feeds the 5,000 people.

Verse 22, ***"And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, [So they were supposed to go there before Him.] while he sent the multitudes away.***

***And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.***

***But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: [So they found themselves in a storm.] for the wind was contrary.***

***And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea."***

You know the story. They found themselves in a storm. They had just experienced a miracle of feeding thousands of people. These same people wanted to make him king at that point. He sent the crowd away and finally gave instructions to His disciples to cross the Sea of Galilee in a boat. He went up to the mountaintop and when the disciples sailed away, a fierce storm arose and almost sunk the ship. You can read the full story and get its entire flavor in the Gospel of Mark and in John, besides here in Matthew.

Concerning this message, that you need to take note of is they were not in this storm because they were disobedient were they? They were not being disobedient to Jesus. On the other hand, Jonah was being disobedient to God and he had to be disciplined. He had to be corrected. He needed an adjustment. The disciples did exactly what Jesus said and they found themselves in the storm because they obeyed the Lord, not disobeyed the Lord. Therefore, what was the Lord's doing? What was the storm's purpose? I finally came to realize that He was testing and perfecting, bringing their faith closer and closer to completion. We will never be completed until we get over there. In the meantime, we have faith tests, and they make our faith stronger. They make us more mature as saints to be used for God's purposes. This storm was a testing ground and a way that He could complete part of their journey in their faith walk with Him.

If you read the rest of the story, He came and stilled the storm, but what did this storm reveal in their lives? I do not think there was one exception. We go around saying, "I have faith that can

move mountains.” When those storms hit, you really get to see what your faith is about and how strong it truly is. How firm it stands against the roaring waves that are coming against you with the design to sink your ship. I have taught on this before, when they get to the other side, there were some serious demons that Jesus had to deal with and I firmly believe when they got across to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus dealt with those demons. Those demons were trying to keep Jesus from crossing over because they knew what their destiny was going to be after He reached the other side and delivered these demonized individuals. Therefore, what do these storms reveal in the disciples' lives? How weak their faith really was. Sometimes that happens to us also and lets us know we still have some growing to do in the faith.

Without going any further into that subject matter, I want us to realize that sometimes we suffer because we are just human beings with decaying flesh. Other times we suffer because we are disobedient, as Jonah for an illustration, and we need to be chastened. But other times, we suffer that God might complete our faith and bring us closer and closer to the maturity of faith that He wants from us to be His weapon for His purposes. He has ordained the suffering and He controls it. He will not control how we respond to the suffering. I hope that we respond knowing that part of the suffering, and that is what I had to come to realize, is because He wants me to see where I am still weak and grow from that point on in the faith still trusting in Jesus, but realizing that I have some growing up in the faith to do. I could be 80 years old, but I will still have some growing up to do. I will never arrive in this body, but I will keep striving to get closer and closer and closer. If I am in His will [not the way it is treated loosely in Christian circles], by denying myself, taking up the cross and following Him, realizing I am not my own. I am bought with a price and He has given permission to have Satan and his cohorts throw things at me; the missiles, the fiery darts as a means to see how my faith is tested, then so be it. I know what the final result will be if I do not take my eyes off Jesus and I keep living in His Word and keep trusting and faithing in Him.

In Job's life, Satan brought on his kind of suffering. Satan used all his weapons to bring on his suffering and that is what Job experienced. I am sure his friends came up with all the reasons why these calamities happened in his life if you read the story. There must be a perfect explanation that takes it out of the supernatural realm. The Sabeans took the oxen, took his cattle, and took his donkey, fire from heaven, which was probably lightning. I can just hear his friends now preaching to him. Fire from heaven was nothing but lightning that burned up the sheep and the rest of the livestock. The Chaldeans took the ones that were not burned up. Of course, a tornado knocked down the home where all his sons and daughters were partying in and killed them all.

There is a natural explanation for it all, not recognizing that Satan was behind all the events in this case. When God gave the permission, Satan can use people and the forces of nature, my friend; even the forces of nature to accomplish His purposes. As trusting individuals of Jesus Christ, whatever category of suffering you are in, remember God is testing your faith and He is in complete control. I repeat God is in complete control. When Satan lights the furnace, God has His hand on the thermostat.

When you read the story, there is no inclination that Job knew what was going on behind the scenes. He did not know about that meeting when the sons of God presented themselves at the

throne of God where Satan asked permission. He did not know what was going on. He had no idea that God was permitting him to suffer. For what reason? So Satan might be silenced. If you really think about it, the real battle was in the unseen world. That goes back to Ephesians 6 again, what we are wrestling against and what we are up against. That is why we need our armor and not armor we wear when it is convenient or on occasion. It is a 24/7 365-day armor that is uniquely designed by Jesus for you to wear. In Job's case, Job's home and body was only the arena that the two combatants, God and Satan, were struggling against each other. Why would God struggle? Because we are in the picture. Job was in the picture. God wanted Satan silenced, but there still is a possibility that Job would have reacted like his wife and eventually would curse God and kill himself. What Satan wanted was to use Job's body because he could not get Him any other way; use Job's body to silence God. God wanted to use Job's body to silence Satan and defeat him and Job was the pawn in the middle.

So I am saying whatever difficult circumstance you find yourself in, try to discern through the Word and through rightly dividing the Word teaching and prayer, reconnecting with God, whether your suffering is from nature like I described, from God for disciplinary reasons, for testing reasons, or from our adversary Satan. Is God perfecting you, or is He disciplining you, or is Satan out to destroy you? You may not control the origin of your suffering, but you can control the outcome with His Word, and how you apply it in your life.

Now, I am not done. How frustrating, but I think I made some key points on the different categories of suffering. We have to discern what type of suffering we are experiencing. God through His Word is going to get you to understand what you are going through and how He can use it for His purposes and for your maturity and growth in the faith. See, I am not a person that is satisfied with "You are just going through trials. Everyone goes through trials." I want to know why! Moreover, if scripture has the answer for everything it should be in here. Tonight I continued my story how I searched to figure out the real purpose of God in my faith journey with Him. However, I am not done. To be continued...

# Why Satan Attacks the Temple of God, Part 3

Open your Bibles to James 5:10. When we get to verse 11, we will see that this is the only place in the New Testament that mentions Job. I have been what some call soul searching the last 25 months because of various medical problems I have been facing, so I decided to share with you my story and how I apply God's Word in facing what I have been through. If it helps you, fine. If you do not need it at this point, store it away in your memory banks. As I said, James is the only place in the New Testament that mentions Job. It begins,

***“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction [or hardship to add the Greek meaning there], and of patience [here endurance could be added because the word means both].***

***Behold, we count them happy [actually blessed or fully satisfied, this word comes from makarios] which endure [a better translation is ‘to be patient under’]. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”***

I have preached before on the word patience. I was taught for years before I started preaching to strike it out of my Bible, but when I find new information that leads me to a different understanding, I am going to share it with you. If something that I have preached needs correction, then I am going to correct what I said in the past so you clearly understand where I am now. Egos are checked at the door. Some preachers will never correct themselves if they come to some new knowledge of the truth that supersedes what they thought was the knowledge of the truth. The truth is important to me, and it needs to be rightly divided.

Returning to the Book of James, in verse 10 and in verse 11 we read the word patience. What do you think of the word patience? What kind of definition do you put to that word? I thought I knew what it meant because of the general assumption of what most people think, but I will tell you what it should mean. Most people think that patience means this definition only: *“refusing to be provoked or angered, as by an insult; forbearing; tolerant; calmly tolerating delay, confusion, inefficiency; able to wait calmly.”* That is what most think, but those are just the secondary meanings to the word patient or patience.

The first definition of patient in a reliable dictionary is: *“bearing or enduring pain, trouble, etc. The state, the quality, the ability, or the fact of being patient; specifically, the will or ability to wait or endure.”*

From this definition, we see “bearing, suffering, or enduring, so endurance is part of patience. I always thought that being patient or patience did not involve endurance, but it does. Usually the word is used with the secondary definition, which I read first. As a result, I did more research, so when I told you to strike out ‘patience’ and put in ‘endurance,’ go back to those places and add instead, *‘patiently enduring’* because that is how it should be defined, just as the Greek defines the word as *‘patiently enduring.’* However, I want to go even further back in the history of this word and share a short reading with you.

***“As to the history of passion, the Late Latin passio contributed the word to us and this traces to the Latin passus from patior, ‘suffer.’ We still speak of the passion or the suffering of Christ. [Many years ago, Mel Gibson made a movie, The Passion of the Christ.] And a patient person is one who ‘suffers’ too, for the word patient is related to passion, which is referring to suffering.”*** What I mean to say, is that here, the King James translators got it right, and knowing that, return to James 5:10.

***“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, [and hardship], and of patience.”*** If you take the word patience all the way back to the Latin definition in the early use of the word, patience always involved suffering and endurance of that suffering. Look at the Greek and you will find the same thing. Verse 11 goes on to say,

***“Behold, we count them happy [blessed] which endure [or, are patient under]. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”***

In these two verses, it is obvious that Satan's purpose was to get Job to be impatient, to give up. We also see in the story of all he went through, that he did become impatient with himself and very impatient with his friends, but he never completely lost his faith, even though he wondered where God was. He did not understand what God was doing. He did not know that Satan presented himself at the throne and got permission from God to go at him. All Job did was continue trusting in God and Job was vindicated by the end of the story.

Now, is patience a Christian virtue? Absolutely, there is no doubt about it, especially when understanding the original definition of patience from the Latin and the Greek, instead of the modern understanding of the word. I am not very good at patience, so do not think I am accusing you, but unless we have patience, we can never really learn many of the truths available in God's Word that lead us to a deeper growth in the faith.

For another example of patience, go to James 1:2:

***“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers [or various] temptations [or trials of life.];***

***Knowing this, that the trying [proving is a better word] of your faith worketh patience.*** [this is *hupomone* in the Greek, patience also involves some kind of hardship, affliction or suffering requiring endurance in faith and trust in God and His Word.]

***But let patience have her perfect [or finished] work [or finished employment of what the Word of God], that ye may be finished and entire, [in all its parts literally] wanting nothing [literally leaving nothing behind].”***

This verse is saying to leave nothing on the table, which requires patience and a patient person, and is a good example of how mature Christians should act. I am guilty of impatience, by the way. It is as if we are children always wondering how long we have to wait, asking a popular question, “Are we there yet?” Impatience in Christians is a mark of immaturity in the faith, but

God's Word is what it is. We should always have room for growth once we hear the truth; the Word does not say you are going to get there overnight. I am still a work in progress and God still has a lot of work to do with me on this subject matter. Not only is impatience a mark of immaturity, it is a mark of unbelief. In Isaiah 28:16, there is a warning to Jerusalem, but we can apply it to ourselves. The end of the verse states, “...**he that believeth shall not make haste.**” Literally, that means in today’s language, *He who believes will not be in a hurry.*

Often we pray to the Lord, then wonder why He has not answered yet, or wonder if He hears our prayers. Then, because we do not get an immediate response, we think the Lord has abandoned us. Let me tell you, speaking from experience, I have found myself in positions where I am anxious, nervous, and restless and I had to come to the point where those things lead in a direction where I eventually stop trusting God. It does not happen all at once, but we slowly slip into that attitude.

Now, faith and patience go together. They are inseparable if you really think about it. If we really trust God and if we really trust His Word, then we will wait on Him for whatever He wants to accomplish involving us and what He has already promised, and there are plenty of promises to pick from. If we find ourselves going down the wrong direction, it is a mark of immaturity in the faith and a mark of unbelief, but it is also a mark of letting our flesh control us instead of the Spirit; that awful flesh is starting to take control instead of the Spirit.

If you recall, in Galatians 5:22-23, patience, or long-suffering or forbearing, is one of the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit. Therefore, this verse should list; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Goodness, instead of being **agathosune** should be ‘*generously, liberally giving,*’ and patience, instead of long-suffering, should be the word there. Sometimes the King James translators tried to get a little poetic when it came to the attributes of the fruit of the Spirit.

The point is, our flesh and our nature are impatient, but the new nature, the Spirit filled nature within will produce patience if we do not slip into that state of unbelief. The Holy Spirit will do its work and bring us to the mature level of patience in its true meaning in our life. It took me decades as a Christian to recognize when I become impatient, not walking in the Spirit, and letting the flesh control the circumstance. It is very tempting to slip back to that frame of mind to start living in the energy of the flesh. Impatience usually leads to costly mistakes.

To find scripture for that, just look in the Old Testament at Abraham's life as an example, just as Hebrews 6 tells us to look at those who, through faith and patience, inherited the promises. It says we are to be imitators of them because of what they went through even if some took years, decades, or a lifetime. What I am preaching is nothing new. It has been around since the beginning. In the scriptures, we see Abraham became impatient with God, so he and his wife came up with a plan to use his wife's handmaid. Now, I do not think Abraham needed much convincing to go into the tent and try to produce a son. Did you ever think about that? What would they have done if Hagar had a daughter? Would Abraham go back in the tent and keep trying until they produced a son? Nevertheless, they did have Ishmael and it has been a thorn in Israel's flesh since that moment. Because of Abraham’s impatient mind and attitude, his costly mistake led to thousands of years of hardship and affliction. Yes, a son was born, but it caused

nothing but trouble and it is still trouble today. Another example in the Old Testament is King Saul. He did not want to wait on Samuel so he decided to present the offering to God himself. And what happened to Saul? It was the beginning of the end of his kingdom and rule; another costly mistake.

There are even examples of impatience in the New Testament. Read about Peter and his impatient attitude in the Garden of Gethsemane. He tried to kill a soldier, but was only able to slice off his ear. It was because of impatience, and Peter probably would have lost his life if Jesus had not healed that man by putting his ear back in working order. There Peter's impatience almost cost him his life. Impatience leads to costly mistakes. I look back at the instruction in Hebrews 6 that tells us to be imitators of the ones who through faith and patience inherited the kingdom after they figured out that it was not according to their will, but to God's will and His plan. Impatience is costly; patiently enduring could be beneficial.

Now, I know that Satan tempts us so that he might bring the worst out of us and God allows it to happen so that the best might come out of us. Job knew that. We see that in Job 23:10, that says,

***“But he knoweth the way that I take: he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”***

Satan was trying to get the worst out of Job, just as God was trying to get the best out of Job. Peter's epistles in the New Testament tell us the fire tries us so we can come out more precious than gold. I do not believe Jesus allows the enemy Satan and his minions to put us through that fire, the tests, and the trials without having a definite purpose in mind, and that is that God wants to make us patient; the original meaning of the word patient. God wants to make us a soldier of His so that no matter what we go through we will have the same attitude; “I will be tested, I will be tried, but I shall come forth as gold, or as in the New Testament, more precious than gold.” God hits Satan and his minions in the face every time we come forth as gold, through whatever we are facing.

Patience cannot be learned by reading a book or even reading the Bible, or by hearing about it. We must go through and endure our trials. We can get instructions and guidance, but we still must go through whatever God assigns to us, the trials, the afflictions, the hardships, the tribulations. They are all tools that God uses to mature us. Satan wants us to fail, but God wants us to go through them and come out more precious than gold. I am convinced our trials are for building our trust and faith in Him and the Spirit instead of the flesh.

I am starting to recognize in my life that the times I find myself impatient Satan is nearby and is ready to pounce and make my flesh come to the forefront. That puts me in a dangerous place of usually making wrong decisions and conclusions. There are many things in our lives that confront us, that are awful and irritating. There is not a day that goes by that something does not irritate me, but put those antennas up and beware, because Satan is looking for those moments to pounce on us. It could be family, employment, friends, or finances, anything that puts us in an uncomfortable position. Satan knows how to use those things, and he just waits for an opportunity to attack, but God has given us a defence, which is in Part 4 of this series.

To be continued.

# Why Satan Attacks the Temple of God, Part 4

Open your Bibles to II Corinthians 12:1, where we will begin looking at scriptures concerning God's grace. In the last several chapters, I have been preaching using Job in the Old Testament as an example and this is the last message in a four-part series about concerning what I have been dealing with medically the last 25 months and how I responded to it. We have been looking at how Satan attacked Job's body after he could not break Job with other tactics. Job is not the only one this has happened to, and in this chapter, we are going to look at Paul in the New Testament. These verses in II Corinthians begin,

***“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord*** [literally, *for I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord*].

***I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago*** [here Paul is speaking in the third person about himself], ***(whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.*** [Whether this happened in the body or out of the body, no one will ever know for sure. All I know and trust in is that this story about Paul's vision is true.]

***And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)*** [Paul repeats himself]

***How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful*** [or *possible*, is a better translation] ***for a man to utter.***

***Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities.*** [Paul has some infirmities.]

***For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me.***

***And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”***

I do not believe Satan or any of his messengers were buffeting Paul by whispering in his ear. It is my opinion, that this messenger of Satan was a thorn in his flesh and was the same kind of situation that we find in the Old Testament in the Book of Job concerning Job's life. Job was buffeted by Satan directly, but first indirectly to try to break him by killing his family, losing his wealth and so forth and when he could not get Job to break, he attacked his body. This is what Paul is saying here, ***“there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”***

Paul goes on in verse 8,

***“For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.”***

Three times Paul sought the Lord and this is a man who went up to the third heaven, and who, on occasion, healed people in the New Testament. Often, we get the idea that every time these



apostles saw someone who was ill, they were automatically healed, but that is not necessarily true. When the power worked through them, the apostles that we see in the New Testament who had that power from the Holy Spirit to heal only healed on occasion when the Holy Spirit decided to move. He used these men to heal whom He wanted to heal because if Paul could turn it on any time he wanted to, why could he not heal himself, or at the very least try to find another apostle to heal him. The key is, when God wanted the healing to take place, it happened; the apostles could not turn the ability on and off when they wanted to. It was Gods doing. I agree with most scholars that Paul had some type of illness that he could not recover from. Paul says three times he sought the Lord that whatever was ailing him would depart from him and Paul tells us in verse 9,

***“And he [the Lord] said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”***

Those of you who have been watching and listening for a while already have me figured out. Often, people use the word grace in a general way when they are stating something concerning grace, but I am not about generalities of anything. When I look at any topic, I try to peel back the layers and get to the specifics. Just the same, people thank God for His grace, most of the time through grace that comes by salvation, but there are a lot of graces God has bestowed on mankind as gifts to whom He wants to give that specific grace for His purposes. Therefore, in verse 9, what ‘grace’ is Paul referring to; the grace that comes with salvation or some other grace? Read verse 9 again,

***“... My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect [a better translation is will accomplish] in [my] weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities....”***

When was the last time you took pleasure in your infirmities? I had to ask myself that many times and it is still hard to accept that Joe Cortes must take pleasure in his infirmities if God decides not to answer my prayers and heal me completely, knowing that the Lord's strength will accomplish what He wants during my weakness. My impatient attitude reflects when I sometimes say, “Why can't you heal me now and get it over with Lord so I can move on at 100%?” Let me tell you right now, the response through His Word is, “You are at 100% because my strength will accomplish what I want you to accomplish during your weakness.” This means that whatever the Lord has for you to accomplish and whatever the Lord has for me to accomplish, He will give us the 100% strength that we need to accomplish it during our weakness. I think I have been a living testimony of that even though there have been times that I do not want to be here because my back is ailing me and I cannot sit here very long, but somehow He gives me the strength to make it through. I have not preached less or worked less. “Thank God that His Word has come alive and it has been a testimony in my life so I can tell others it is true.” It worked for Paul and that means it can work for me.

Learning to take pleasure in our infirmities, reproaches, necessities, persecutions, and distresses for Christ's sake is not easy to accept at first. Who wants to take pleasure in being sick? Who wants to take pleasure in reproaches and persecutions and distresses? Well, for Christ's sake, Paul

came to the realization that when he is weak, or when I am weak, to personalize it, then I am strong. I can look back and say to myself, “You know Joe, you are stupid. The devil wants you to look at it in a different way, but through this crisis with your physical health for the last 25 months, you have never been stronger!” Not only strong in my personal connection with Jesus but stronger, I believe, that for the last 25 months, I have not backed down one inch. I have come here and rightly divided the Word of God to you. I am not boasting about it. I am just saying that I eventually needed that wake-up call to realize that God's grace in this case was sufficient to get me through. Doctors sure have not helped much at all and I have been to plenty of them, some of the best. I am not against medicine. In some circumstances, it is the only option, if we are going to stand against our ailments, but it is not the only option. God is first and not an additional option. Some people think I am against medicine. No, I am not. Do I think medication is often over-prescribed? Sure. I have seen many doctors, and if I listen to most of these doctors, I would be a walking zombie right now due to medication, and I refuse to be a walking zombie.

Like every other subject I have ever studied in my life, I will dig in and use the brain that God has given me to do what I can. Our bodies are His temple because we are bought with a price, and He has given me a brain. Unfortunately, I did not start using my brain on this subject sooner in my life to understand what it takes to keep this temple working the best it can. His temple, this physical form of a body, is here to be His weapon, His tool, and His instrument, as I preached in the previous messages. We must do all we can do to stand knowing and having the confidence that God will accomplish whatever He wants in our weakness, because when I am weak, then I am strong. Although I really do not feel like it right now, deep down inside, I know this is not brainwashing, and I know that I am at my best right now, probably better than I have ever been in my life. I must be doing something right because Satan is buffeting right now and God is allowing it. However, whatever His specific grace is, it will flow through me and it will be sufficient because it is in me. It is accomplishing what God wants out of me and the same is true for you in whatever weakened state you find yourself. Do not beat yourself down or give into the notion that this infirmity is going to have the best of you. Start claiming the promises that the power of Christ may rest upon us to accomplish what He wants accomplished. God's grace, and whatever specific grace you need, is our defence against that buffeter Satan and his minions.

Many debate what the thorn in Paul's flesh was. I believe it was some type of physical ailment, possibly his eyes. Whatever it was it caused him to pray three times for healing, and it reminded me of another event where someone prayed three times in the garden that the cup He was facing might pass from Him. That was Jesus right before He went to the cross, which tells me when difficulties, sickness, or whatever you are facing comes into your life it is not wrong to pray for deliverance. Christ did and here we have Paul doing it also.

In reading these scriptures, we see God did not answer Paul's prayers. Many saints think that God has to answer a prayer exactly as asked; sometimes He will and sometimes He will not. We find case in point here in II Corinthians 12. God did not answer Paul's prayer, but what God did do is meet Paul's need. He said, “***My grace is sufficient for thee:***” In other words, the imparted grace of God, just as with Paul, gives us victory when Satan attacks the body. I absolutely believe that. However, we need to be steadfast in the faith. In I Peter 5:9, we read,

***“Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in***

*your brethren that are in the world.*

*But the God of all grace [our defence], who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered [experienced something painful, in the Greek] a while, make you perfect [or mend that which is broken], stablish [or set fast in a certain direction], strengthen [or firm and capable in the direction God sends you], settle you.”*

Even in verse 8, it says, **“Be sober, be vigilant [or be on alert]; because your adversary [your opponent, Satan and his minions] the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:”**

Just as in the days of Job, God removed that protective shield around Job and Satan went on the attack, and he is on the attack now, especially the disciples of Jesus Christ.

Then, verse 10 continues, **“But the God of all grace [I just love the way that sounds!], who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have experienced something painful a while, mend that which is broken, to set fast in a certain direction, firm and capable, and settled you.**

**To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.”**

Wow! These verses are for you and me! Our God is the God of all grace. We are told in Hebrews 4 that the Holy Spirit dwells in us in the Spirit of grace. He is the God of all grace and His Word is the word for His grace.

Hebrews 4:16 tells us, **“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”**

Just as Acts 20:32 says, **“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”**

The point is it is grace from start to finish no matter what our circumstance, no matter what our need. Wherever we turn in God's Word in the New Testament and the Old Testament, it is grace from start to finish. God's grace is God's provision for whatever our need is; not some mystical substance God somehow pours into us when we have need of it. God's grace is always there. It is forever a bountiful supply whatever our need.

In the Old Testament, the law meant that we must do something for God to receive that grace. It is throughout the Old Testament scriptures, but grace as we find it in the New Testament means God has done something for us. There is a difference. We cannot deserve grace any longer; it is not deserved or earned. The New Testament grace can only be given, and at the very beginning of our journey with God. In Ephesians 2:8, we find that we are saved by grace. It reads,

**“For by grace are ye saved through faith [pistis]; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:**

**Not of works, lest any man should boast.”**

The riches of His grace are available to anyone who seeks Him. That is in verse 7 of the same chapter:

***“That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”***

The riches of His grace are important, because there are plenty of riches available for us to reach out to God and say, “I know what you have promised and this will fulfil my need.” Additionally, God gives us grace for serving. In I Corinthians 15:9 Paul writes,

***“For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”***

In II Corinthians 8, Paul makes it a point to outline all the different graces that we find in the Word of God. In verses 8 and 9 he writes,

***“I speak not by commandment [or of the law], but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love. For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.”***

Paul means rich with the graces of God as we already saw in other scriptures. No matter where you turn in the New Testament, when grace is in a verse, it has, a specific meaning applied to that grace. Here we find the grace for singing in Colossians 3:16,

***“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”***

Colossians 4:6 states ***“Let your speech [before was singing, now here is speech] be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”***

As you can see, there is grace for serving, grace for sacrificing, grace for singing, and grace for speech or speaking, all gifted by God for whatever purpose He wants to accomplish in us. It also means that God can give us grace for suffering as we saw in Job and Paul. So what steps should we take when Satan attacks our body with suffering and tries to make us impatient with God's plan or God's will?

The first thing we need to do is immediately submit ourselves to God. If we do not, we are in rebellion and give Satan another foothold in our life. There is nothing wrong in telling God how we feel, but we must start by telling Him we will continually trust Him and although it may be difficult, begin by thanking God for the trials, tribulations, and sufferings. Ephesians 5:20 says,

***“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;”***

Next, we must thank Him for our suffering, or for whatever the trial. Often we have this habit of only thanking God for the good things that come our way, but He wants thanks for everything because it is acknowledging Him, and even though we may be going through difficult times, suffering, or circumstances, we must tell Him that we still trust Him and are still faithing in Him.

I Thessalonians 5:18 tells us, ***“In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”*** Paul goes on to say in verse 19, ***“Quench not the Spirit.”***

This does not mean we enjoy the suffering or trial, but instead tell God that we will continue to rejoice, trust and faith in Him. Because of our suffering, we are right where He wants us to be, that is, in the will of God and we know He is in control. Satan does not like to hear saints, disciples of Jesus Christ, thanking God in their trials and tribulations. What happened when Paul and Silas sang? That was the last thing Satan wanted to hear when they were thrown in jail. Paul and Silas sang and praised God in that Philippian jail. That is the last thing Satan wanted to hear. I am sure it ruined all of Satan's plans to break them, so we must submit ourselves to God and we must thank Him for our trials.

The third thing we must do is dig in to the Word of God, the word of His grace. Do not run from it. Dive in to all the gracious promises of God. My testimony is that it will strengthen you in even the weakest moments. I am so tired about hearing explanations about my condition, from this doctor or that doctor. I have to remind myself we do not live on explanations. We live on the promises of God. Now, I am not saying all explanations that you get from doctors or other people are bad advice. Some advice is good, but when the explanation is not helpful, what earthly good does it do? It does nothing for us, so that is when we must remind ourselves that we cannot live on explanations. We live on the promises of God no matter what, and I remind myself that God does not always explain to His saints everything that He does. Look at Abraham in the Old Testament. God did not give Abraham all the promises laid out in specific detail, and on occasion, Abraham got impatient. Their lives are in God's Word for our instruction. Abraham got impatient, especially when it came to the promise that he would have a son. He became impatient with God's will and God's plan for his life and took matters into his own hands. Concerning these Old Testament saints, it clearly states that they had to realize that God is in control. Psalms 119:71 states,

***“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.”***

That is when we dig into God's Word to learn what His Word says about our particular circumstances, trials, and tribulations. That is what Paul writes in II Corinthians 12:9 when God told him, ***“My grace is sufficient for thee.”*** I believe that is why Paul's emphasizes grace in his letters. Whatever type of grace he is referring to, it is in the forefront time after time after time. He brings up the graces because through his affliction and his illness, Paul learned that God's grace was sufficient to get him through, to make him strong, and to accomplish what God wanted when he felt weakened.

To review what we should do,

1. We need to submit ourselves to God trusting that He has everything under control just as He wants and just where He wants us to be.
2. Thank Him for your trials and tribulations.
3. Start digging into God's Word and spend as much time as you can in it.

The fourth thing we need to do is look for ways to glorify Christ. Paul was not boasting about himself in the Corinthians letter. He learned that was fruitless, so he boasted about Christ and what Christ was doing through him. God wants to use our body, which is not our own, to glorify Him; we are bought with a price. At the same time, Satan wants to use our body to disgrace God. That is what his final attack on Job was all about, and Satan was hoping that same attack would work on Paul, but he failed both times. Patience and suffering always glorifies Christ. Sometimes people do not understand how Christians can suffer without constantly complaining about the situation or circumstances. Let us look at I Peter, to read about ways to glorify Christ.

I Peter 2:20 states, ***“For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable [or that is well pleasing] with God.”***

I Peter 4:16 tells us, ***“Yet if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”*** The phrase, ***“Yet if any man suffer”*** is in italics and not in the original.

That is why, amidst the shame and suffering in the Philippian jail, Paul and Silas glorified God by singing and praising His name. Look at Stephen's life before he was stoned to death. He glorified God and prayed for his murderers. I do not know how he accomplished that. That would be hard for me to do. Nevertheless, these are examples for our instruction. Even David, as recorded in Psalms, praised God during his trials and afflictions, when he was rejected and Saul sought to murder him, as did his son Absalom later in his life. Paul and Silas sang and praised God for the situation they found themselves in, possibly facing death. Paul wrote the Philippian letter while in prison when his life was in the balance. He did not know what direction his life would turn, nevertheless it was one of the most joyful letters that he wrote while in prison still ill, because we have no record he was ever healed of his physical ailment.

Whatever spirit of grace we need for our circumstance in our life, it will be imparted to us because of God's wonderful grace. When we are well and things are going well in our life, we can overlook God's grace so easily, but when you find yourself in difficulties remember God is fine-tuning you, and one day we will need His grace. By the grace of God, we grow in patient endurance. I am convinced we will experience God's grace and God's love, and the experience that goes with it will be more than enough compensation for whatever inconvenience we go through. Even though we can pray to God, even though we trust in God's plan that He will get us through, there is no guarantee that God will change the circumstance. However, there is the guarantee that He will change us, so then the circumstance we experience will work for us and not against us. We cannot control the origin or the operation of suffering, but with God's help and God's grace, we can control the outcome so we as saints of Jesus Christ can say what Paul said in verse 9, ***“Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ***

*may rest upon me.*” That power of Christ is the key.

If we live to please ourselves, Satan wins, but if we live to bring praise and glory to God, Satan loses. The imparted grace of God in our lives is the only weapon that can defeat him. The other weapons in Ephesians 6 are for our daily activities in the spiritual warfare fight, but the imparted grace of God cannot be left out. It is first and foremost the most important thing that we can understand, realize, and apply in our lives using the scriptures and the grace of God that can defeat Satan and his minions, and that grace can only be found in the God of all grace.

To wrap up these messages about why Satan attacks, I have three other statements about the purpose of suffering, enduring our circumstance, trials, and tribulations.

First, it shapes us. We might not like the form it is shaping us into, we might not like the process, but we are the clay and He is the potter.

Second, it challenges us. Do you realize when Satan attacks us, our opponent, our adversary who is as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, has put out a challenge? It is God's grace and our trust that He is in control of our life, that He will defeat all the challenges in our life that Satan has planned for us.

Last, it draws our hope toward eternity. You must be eternally minded as Paul and others in both the Old and New Testament were, so that the power of Christ may rest upon you.

It is in II Corinthians 12:10 that Paul writes, ***“Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.”***

I may look like a weakened vessel and sometimes it feels like it, but I have never been stronger. The trials, tribulations, and suffering will either distance us from Christ or draw us in where we find ourselves never closer to God in our life. The circumstances will either make you or break you. Satan wants those circumstances to break us; God uses those same circumstances to shape us into something that He molds. No matter what we face, His grace is more than sufficient for thee and more than sufficient for us because whatever strength He gives, He knows what we need to accomplish during our weakness. That is why Paul could glory in his infirmities and why he could say, ***“for when I am weak; then I am strong.”***

I have news for Satan, I might be stretched out on a bed somewhere ill as can be, but I want him to know he is not going to break me – so personalize it for yourself – because His grace is more than sufficient to get us through. To my last breath, I will find myself praising and glorifying Jesus, sounding like a grammar school kid, “Ha ha! You lose. God wins!” I win because His grace and His Holy Spirit flow through me and makes me strong when I am at my weakest. That is my prayer. Just in case I go before Jesus comes, I want to land a blow on Satan on the way out praising and thanking God on the way in, knowing my hope and my life is just beginning on the eternal adventure that Christ has for me.

These last four messages is something that I put myself through and is a summary of what I have

been through and what has got me through, coming to the realization that God's grace is sufficient from start to finish no matter what. It starts with salvation and everything that I covered in just a few verses. To my very last breath, God's grace is sufficient for me, for my strength is accomplished in my weakness. Satan, look out, you lose, God always win!



# Satan Wants Your Mind

In this chapter, I want to look at how Satan wants to control our minds. Once he controls our mind, he then knows he has our worship and we bow down to him though we do not even realize it most of the time, and that is the end goal for him. He has a vast army of demons and fallen angels at his disposal who are constantly trying to find an opening through the shield of faith to get to our mind. He is constantly trying to get through our helmet of salvation to question whether God even exists, and if He does, why does He allow so many circumstances and troubling situations. He wants us to be convinced that if we had not become Christian those things that trouble us would not have happened. Of course, much of the Christian world says you must be doing something wrong when things happen. No, you are not. You are just under attack, and you may not know you are under attack, or how to resist the attack, because you have not been trained or taught in the spiritual warfare lessons that the Bible lays out for us. Churches want to teach all the other necessary things from the moment we first become saved by the blood of Jesus Christ. The result is, they lead Christians down a path of silly traditions of what to do and not do to remain a Christian and it is a shame. After Jesus was tempted in the desert for forty days and nights (spiritual warfare hell) it did not take very long for Jesus to encounter with a demon possessed person in the synagogue. We shouldn't expect any less.

With that, go to Ephesians 6:12. I am still talking about evil spirits, principalities, and powers. I will be focusing on Satan and what his plan is for us. As soon as we become Christian and throughout our walk until the day we go home or are raptured into the heavenlies, he will continually try to sever our relationship with God. He has trained his army and believe me his army is well trained. They are trained on how to attack our mind so we slip into worshipping their master Satan. The launching point is Ephesians 6:12, but this chapter will be going back and forth between the Old Testament to the New Testament. I will start in Matthew in the New Testament and revisit it adding three principles that we need to remember about what Satan is trying to do, how Jesus overcame it, and how He laid it out for us and what we need to remember, understand, and apply every time we come under attack with the same methods used in Matthew 3, Mark 1 and Luke 4.

To begin, go to Matthew 3:13, where Jesus is baptized by John.

***“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.  
But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?  
And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.  
And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:  
And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”***

Here you have the wonderful picture of God the Father speaking, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit descending like a dove. It is a picture of the Trinity in Matthew 3:16 and 17. Verse 16,

states ***“...and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”*** The phrase, ‘*This is my beloved Son*’ will be important in a few moments.

Matthew 4:1 goes on to say, ***“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted [The Greek is clearer than that – to be tried, tested, or proved] of the devil.”***

And this was not the first time the devil tried this. He was successful with Adam and Eve. The first Adam was tested and failed. Like Christ, the first Adam was without sin, but because of his failure, sin came into existence for Adam-like beings and we have been suffering the consequences ever since.

Here in Matthew take note of ***“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit,”*** but Luke 4:1 words this differently. It reads,

***“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”***

This gives the impression that the suggestion was made by the Holy Spirit and, lo and behold, Jesus just went straight to the wilderness. He did not resist the Holy Spirit's nudging here, but do not misunderstand me. The reason we must understand all the Gospels is because each author gives details that are important to grasp the whole picture about what was taking place. Now compare these verses to Mark 1:9.

***“And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.  
And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him:  
And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.  
And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”***

The Greek for 'driveth' is ***ekballo*** telling us that Jesus did not resist, but as soon as He was filled with the Spirit of God, as soon as He began His ministry in those last three-and-a-half years, there was no time to waste. Mark makes that very clear. The word ***ekballo*** has many definitions, such as ‘*to lead one forth or away somewhere with the force which He cannot resist.*’ It is also used in Mark later in the chapter. There was no choice in the matter. Being filled with the Spirit, Jesus was obedient, as if somebody grabbed His hand saying, “Let's go! No time to waste!” Let's go into the wilderness to be tempted, tried, or tested, by the devil. Often Christians look for the easy way of life as soon as they become converted and filled with the Holy Spirit rather than looking to be tried, tested, and proved by Satan and his evil army. As soon as we are saved we are marked.

Now I am sure Jesus had years of preparation for this, but not as intense as the next 40 days and nights. The first thing that happened was Jesus went to the wilderness, desert, or deserted location to get involved in some intense spiritual warfare that no one has ever experienced.

Maybe the only exception would be Adam and Eve. Satan knew the consequences of Jesus being successful in his mission as the only begotten Son of God to rescue mankind. Satan knew he had to get all his evil army involved and take action to make sure Jesus would not be the second Adam who would succeed. Jesus was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tried or tested of the devil. That is not much of a conversion message. However, it is all we need if we truly have been converted and truly understand what Christ did for us and how He saved our miserable souls from eternal death, suffering, and torture. To avoid that all we need to do is keep trusting in Him and His Word. It is all we need to give us the joy we need to go through life's struggles, including the trials and testing points that Satan attacks us with as soon as he realizes we are not one of his any longer.

The message is very clear; when we receive the Spirit of God Satan does not like it. Him and his minions will attack. They will try to break you to the point if you were really saved by Jesus. It is not going to get any easier, but with God's help and the way Jesus laid out for us on how to deal with these situations we can come against our enemy and whatever he throws at us and have victory just as Jesus did. We can be more than conquerors. The devil's goal is to control our mind so then he can have our worship. Some Christians do not even realize that he has their mind and are worshipping him. My goal in this chapter is to make it clear how the devil attacks the mind.

Returning to Matthew 4:1 we read, ***“Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil,”*** and Mark 1:12, reads, ***“And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.”*** Remember, the word driveth, *ekballo* in the Greek, means ‘to lead someone away with the force which he could not resist.’ That same word is also used in Mark 1:34 and 1:39 when He is casting out many devils and demons. Verse 34 states, ***“And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils....”*** In Mark 1:39, we read, ***“And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.”*** Once again, the same word— to lead one forth or away somewhere with the force which He cannot resist is used in these verses.

The demons were not asked nicely or negotiated with to leave the person. They were not asked to grant a favor. That is not how these situations were approached by Jesus, Paul, or Peter. In just about every case, the demons were told, “Shut up and get the hell out!” That is not cussing, that is just fact. This word means that something or someone can be led out forcefully whether it is evil, or driven by the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit was saying, “Come on Jesus, let's go. The time is short and there is a lot to be done.” We need that same attitude daily to remind ourselves that the time is short and there is a lot to be done. We are not here for fun and games. Yes, we can enjoy life and things can bring us joy, but we are here because God has a plan for us and He wants us to be part of this Great Commission in the capacity He has called us. We should wake up every morning realizing we are a foot soldier for Jesus Christ with the attitude with the right spirit saying to our Lord and Master, “What would you have me do today?” It might be praying for someone, praying for this ministry, or employing the Word of God by sending an offering, or studying, or listening to faith messages; faith comes by hearing and hearing the Word of God. Whatever capacity, do not let a day go by without fulfilling what God has planned for you today. Let there be no wasted days or time with God. He has it all under control, even though sometimes we do not want to give Him the control. In these verses, Jesus was led away with force, but not a force He was resisting. He was eagerly led by the Spirit, even

though He knew where He was headed, and that was a desert to be tried and proved by the devil, and his demonic army and fallen angels like no one ever has been in the past.

Now, with that let me read something to give you some understanding on what it must have been like during those 40 days and 40 nights. I have read this before, but it is good to review it to give you an idea of what it must have been like in that desert, that secluded location where Jesus was when He was tried and proved to see if He truly was the Son of God. It was Satan's intention to bring in some doubt.

***“We are face-to-face with spiritual warfare in the most intense magnitude. Jesus, the Son of God, meets the Devil, Satan and the Tempter, face-to-face in true mortal combat. In His private encounter with the Tempter, He reveals that the major focus of His ministry will be against Satan, the ruler of this age. Jesus, though divine as a person, will not function at all on the level of His divinity. He will function only at the level of His humanity.”***

That is how Christ identified with us. He had to go through what we went through; there is no question about it.

***“It was a lonely, dangerous place [this wilderness]. He was alone, without the comfort of the presence of other human beings. ... ‘The region abounded with bears, jackals, wolves, foxes, leopards and hyenas.’”***

These were creatures looking for the opportunity to do Him harm. Now imagine these creatures being possessed or demonized by evil spirits. You may have never even given a thought that these animals were susceptible to possession by a demonic army to do physical harm to Jesus. That is what He was surrounded with. He was surrounded with seen creatures of this world and He was surrounded with unseen creatures even more evil by far. To top it all off, then there was Satan.

***“‘The region abounded with bears, jackals, wolves, foxes, leopards and hyenas. Expositors suggest that this description is “not merely pictorial or intended to hint danger, rather to indicate the uninhabited nature of the place; no supplies obtainable there, hunger therefore a part of the experience.” ... “Perhaps being with the beasts may point to one form of temptation, that of terror, which was practiced on Him.” The first Adam fell into sin in an environment that was perfect and harmonious. The Last Adam maintained His sinlessness in an environment that was hostile.***

***Adam, the representative man, was seduced into disobedience by the Devil. Jesus, as the new representative of man, the Last Adam and the Second Man, is to face the same temptation from the same source. Jesus was to undo the tragedy of Adam's fall, but it was to be more difficult for Him than it was for Adam.***

***Adam was tempted in the garden of God where all his needs were fully met. He had food, shelter, the companionship of his wife, and the presence of God. The animals there were all his friends. Here we see Jesus in a hostile context, however. There He is alone, without food, and probably without adequate shelter. His only companions are wild animals who did not live at peace with humanity. The wilderness in Jesus' day was also considered as the abode of demons. [It still is today.] ‘It was a prevailing Jewish idea that evil spirits especially frequented***

*desert or desolate places.'*

*Since Jesus is to penetrate the very abode of evil supernaturalism, it is fitting that it should be symbolized by the wilderness. There Satan rules. All of the environment is conducive towards fear and danger from the spirit world. Especially is this true when one is without food and shelter for a long period of time. In these circumstances a human being is even more defenseless. He is exhausted. His mind does not function well and his emotions are out of control. His will and resolve are at their lowest. He is most susceptible to any offer of relief. This is the context which Jesus finds Himself in the wilderness as He braces for the Devil's attack."*

Again in Mark 1, he says, *"And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts;"* Then after those forty days, after Satan and his evil army left, the angels came and ministered to Him. Now the language in Mark does not mean that Satan came at the end of the forty days and then started tempting Him. No, he was there the whole time. The language clearly states that it was a continuous presence that Satan had in this desert location, this wilderness. Not only him; in my opinion, the fallen angels under his control and also the demonic world were there also. All hell broke loose in that area with one goal in mind and that was to keep Jesus at this point from going to the cross. With that, go to Matthew 4:2 to see how Jesus was tested and tried. It begins,

*"And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him [Satan came again], he said, If thou be the Son of God..."*

Now this is where many scholars point out three temptations. They are very important ones that take us back to the Garden. These temptations that Jesus experienced are no different than what Adam was presented in the garden. The first Adam failed, the second Adam did not and I will show how. However, back in Matthew 3:17, God's voice from heaven said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* Satan was probably there at that moment listening to what God was saying to Jesus. Then in Matthew 4:3 Satan gives Jesus the first temptation by trying to place doubt in the mind of Jesus.

*"And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."*

It would not be a sin if Jesus had turned the stones into bread by a miracle. After all, Jesus made wine by a miracle and Jesus fed thousands with very little by a miracle. Satan has not changed. For some reason he uses food. You have heard the statement "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach." Food! He knew Jesus was hungry, but he was not interested in whether Jesus was fed or not. He wanted to bring doubt. "Didn't God just tell you Jesus, forty days and forty nights ago, that you are His Beloved Son in whom He is well pleased? Then if thou be the Son of God [verse 3], and He is your Father, He is not doing a very good job. Look, He had the Spirit lead you out here to be tempted by us, to be tried and proved by us. What kind of father is that? I thought you were the Beloved Son of God, and if you are the Son of God, why is He treating you this way? If you are the Beloved Son of God, I would hate to see the Son of God who is not beloved." Just imagine what Satan was trying to do to Jesus' mind. He was trying to place doubt in the mind of Jesus. Satan was telling Jesus, "If you are the Son of God and since God will not

take care of you, why don't you just turn these stones into bread and take care of yourself.” Because God does not answer our prayers or requests in time, too many of Christians have to take matters into our own hands because God is too late. That is what Satan would have you believe. Satan tried to place doubt in the mind of Jesus by reminding him **“If thou be the Son of God.”** What Satan was doing here, and what so many people miss when they preach this kind of message, is Satan was challenging Christ's credentials that He was the Beloved Son of God. Jesus knew better. He knew that his father had everything under control, and He knew what He was asking His Son to do. In addition, His Spirit was there to help Him through it. We have the same promise today. Satan temptations is nothing new. We see him using the same strategy in Genesis 3:1,

***“Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”***

In that verse we see once again the devil is trying to place doubt and challenge God. So, returning to Matthew, Satan tells Jesus, **“If thou be the Son of God...”** It seems that every time Satan tries to bring us under his control, he tries it in the form of creating doubt. He is a master at it. His army is well trained to bring doubts into our life to question God. Satan always challenges our standing with God also. Romans 8:16 tell us the credentials we have with God. It is a beautiful picture,

***“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: [Through the blood of Jesus Christ.]  
And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ....”***

As soon as we become joint-heirs with Christ and an heir of God, reconciled back to Him through the blood of Jesus Christ, understanding where our salvation came from that it is none of our doing, we are joint-heirs with Christ and heirs of God. Satan does not like that so he immediately goes to work to plant doubts. Satan and his evil army do not want us to be a joint-heir through Christ, so he challenges us through doubts, just as he challenged Eve, **“Yea, hath God said, – those four words in the King James are loaded with doubt – *Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*”** Introducing more doubts.

Back to Matthew with Jesus in the wilderness, we know Satan tried to place doubt in the mind of Jesus, but it did not work. In verse 4 Jesus’ response is recorded.

***“But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”***

The Greek for ‘word’ in this verse is ***rhema***. For us, we are loaded with the written Word of God. We have more now in written word than Jesus did when He was confronting Satan. He used what was available at the which was Deuteronomy 8:2, which states, ***“And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove [to try, to test] thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.”***

That is why as soon as we become saved by the blood of Jesus Christ, we are going to be tested, to be tried, to be proved to see if we will live in the blood of Christ and trust in His Word. In verse 3 in Deuteronomy that Jesus quoted to Satan in the Matthew gospel,

***“And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.”***

That includes every word we now have available to us from the Old Testament and New Testament. That is why the sword of the Spirit, one of our offensive weapons in Ephesians 6 is so important. It is the written word. We have more than even Jesus had at the time. Jesus used the Word to confront Satan! He did not try to get into an argument with him. He did not try to get Satan to see his ways, why Satan's way was wrong and Christ's ways are the ways that the Word of God laid out for man to follow. No, He knew Satan had no hope or chance. The only way He could combat against Satan was by using the written word to shut him up. That is why I almost laugh when I read these stories about exorcists wanting to get into a conversation with these demons. No conversation necessary. Just tell them, “Shut up and get the hell out!” But that is a special calling that not anyone can do. There are dangers if anyone thinks they can but are not called to that purpose, so be careful. However, in this verse, Jesus used the Word of God to shut Satan up.

The second test Jesus faced is in verse 5.

***“Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God [here is doubt once again, questioning His credentials with God.], cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”***

Here Satan wants Jesus to challenge God, but Jesus did not. In the first test, he brings in doubt and he challenged Jesus' credentials with the Father. In the second test, he brings in doubt and tries to get Jesus to challenge the Father to see if His Word would be proven true. What Satan was quoting here is Psalms 91:11,

***“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. [The Hebrew is better, to keep you safe and preserved.] They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.”***

Satan was quoting scripture from a Psalm that describes God's care for us. He was trying to get Jesus to challenge scripture, or challenge God and His Word to see if God would live up to it just as and he did in the garden with Eve. Genesis 3:3 tells us, ***“But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent [Satan] said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die....”*** Again, Satan brings in doubt questioning if God really meant what He said, ***“Ye shall not surely die”***. He is trying to get Eve here to challenge whether God's Word was true or not and is placing doubt to

get to the place where Eve would challenge God's Word. The same thing is happening in the Old as in the New Testament.

***“If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, [and Satan knows what is in this Book] He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”***

Now if Jesus relied on the devil's interpretation of God's Word or of scripture, He would have sinned and failed. He did not do that, but Eve did. The devil cast enough doubt where Eve challenged the premise whether she would die or not. You know the story. The challenge was placed and she would carry out that challenge because she believed Satan more than what the Word of the Lord said through Adam. So how did Jesus handle the challenge? In verse 7, we see Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:16.

***“Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt [the Hebrew translation is ‘Ye shall not test, try or prove’] the Lord thy God.”***

We are not the Creator; we are the ones He created. We are a creature of His creation. We have no say or standing that puts Him on trial. He is testing us, He is trying us and He is proving us to see if we too can be a joint-heirs if we trust in His Word. Too many people trust in works and not God. They think because they do good things it will get favor with God. God will say to you, “I never knew you.” He is not interested in our works. He created beings who do better works than we ever could. He is interested in people who will go through the test and the trials, who were proven to be faithful so He too can say, “Well done good and faithful servant.”

When Jesus responded by saying, ***“Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,”*** once again He used the written word! Too many Christians challenge Satan using their opinion instead of the Word of God. Jesus was short and sweet to shut him up. He did not write a doctrinal dissertation to figure out how to shut him up. Some confuse God's Word to show off their spirituality and miss what is given in His Word. Jesus was straightforward about what we are to do when we are put in similar situations. Now we come to the third test or trial in verse 8,

***“Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.”***

If you notice here, Jesus does not question Satan's authority. Jesus knew that Satan had the authority and the power to give Him every thing He was seeing at the time; all the things of the kingdoms that Satan controlled. All the glory and power of this world. Jesus knew Satan could grant control of the world kingdoms of that time because he is the prince of the power of the air. Luke 4:6 also records this event. It says,

***“And the devil said unto him, All this power [in Greek this also means all the power to do anything] will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me [or ‘I have control of this’]; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.”***



However what Satan does here is nothing new. Genesis 3:5 tells us, ***“For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods....”*** Whereas Matthew states, ***“I will give you the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them....”*** In other words, Satan asks Jesus, “Would that not make you like a god to have that kind of power and authority?” And to Eve he says, “God is holding back from you. He knows if you eat of it that ye shall be as gods.” What do gods have? They have power and authority knowing, or as the Hebrew says, ‘*acquiring the knowledge of good and evil.*’ And what kind of ‘good’ is Satan talking about?

In this dictionary, the Hebrew for 'good' means *‘good, pleasant, the beautiful things, the excellent things, the lovely things, the delightful and convenient things [that life can present], the joyful and fruitful things, the things that bring cheer, the things that are kind and correct and righteous.’*

In Genesis, Satan tells Eve that God is holding back. Satan knows as soon as she, or we, question His authority and His Word and doubt enough, then Satan has us and we do not even know it is happening. He convinced Eve, and tries to persuade us, that we can be like him and like a god acquiring the knowledge to be able to enjoy all the benefits that go with the good and to be aware of what the evil is like so we can stay away from it. How cunning, deceptive, and evil. In Matthew the devil was offering nothing different from Eve as he was offering to Jesus, “All these things will I give to you because you will be like a god, if you will just fall down and worship me.” However, Satan could not get Him to doubt God in the first test and he could not get Him to doubt and challenge God in the second test. So now, in this third test, he tells Jesus, “Be like a god without going to the cross and have all power and authority because I can grant you that, [and he can] and all you have to do is fall down and worship me.” Matthew 4:10 records Jesus’ response,

***“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”***

Jesus used Deuteronomy 6:13, ***“Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.”***

No matter what the test, every time Jesus was tested in those horrific times, situations, and circumstances in the desolate desert-like place with nothing but wild probably demon possessed beasts surrounding Him, He came through – the second Adam came through because He stayed focused on God's Word in His responses to Satan to shut him up.

***“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.”***

Shortly after this, the next time Jesus confronts this type of evil it is with a demon in the synagogue. How ironic! Today’s the church does not make Christians aware of the spiritual battle we are facing, instead they want to teach all kinds of other silly nonsense with ten-step programs rather than prepare us for spiritual warfare. It is a shame and an embarrassment to the

church world in my opinion. Training for spiritual warfare is necessary. As soon as Jesus came out of the wilderness, look what He encountered. My commission is to be ready and to make you ready to go to battle to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and to understand these passages about what Satan does. Remember these three important points concerning spiritual warfare:

- 1) Satan will try to place doubt in our minds because he knows if he can control it, he can get our worship whether we realize it or not and we will bow down to him.
- 2) Satan will try to challenge our standing with Christ; to challenge whether we really are joint-heirs with Christ by placing doubt and challenging God.
- 3) Satan will promise us all the power he can grant to do anything that we like if we would just bow down to him and worship him.

As long as I am around and as long as this ministry is broadcasting, we will make Christians who truly want to seek God learn about their enemy and learn about our God who is much more powerful. Because we are joint-heirs through Christ to God our Father, we will be more than conquerors if we will stay trusting in the blood of Christ and living in the written word. Our response to the devil and his demonic army alike is, "You want answers; I have them. I am ready for you." Not through arrogance but through Jesus Christ, His blood, and the written word.

# Angelic Warfare

This chapter's message is about angelic warfare, so we begin in Ephesians 6:12, ***“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,”*** in this case, these are in the sky and air around us, powerful angelic beings, fallen angels, but not demons.

Paul warned against the worship of angels, but in the Middle Ages names for many different types of angels, good and bad, assigned to different things came about, however, in the Old Testament, we are introduced to the only two angels named in the Old Testament, Michael and Gabriel. There are other sources and materials outside the Bible that list different angels and what they were responsible for, but angels are God's messengers. They are there to assist God and also the Lord Jesus Christ. By going back to the Old Testament, I will show how Gabriel assisted the pre-incarnated Christ in the Book of Daniel. Angels also assist us and do His bidding and serve their God the Creator and the Son, Jesus Christ. In addition, both good and bad angels are very powerful beings. In our own strength we are no match for them, but we are more than conquerors because of what Christ did for us.

To read about the principalities and powers, also known as thrones and dominions in the New Testament, go to Colossians 1:16. First, it talks about the pre-eminence of Christ, then verse 16 states,

***“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him....”***

The same Greek words found in Ephesians 6:12 for principalities and powers are also used here in Colossians 1:16. It was never God's intention for Satan to become rebellious, to sin, want to be like God, and turn on his own creator. That was never God's intention, but that is what happened and that is where the fallen angels came from because obviously Satan convinced many others that they too could climb the ladder of authority and become like God. I am sure Satan made it very tempting to these fallen angels and he probably had a very convincing argument that they could be just like God or better. That is what probably happened, but all these beings whether in the heavens or the earth, whether angels or Adam-like beings were created by God for Him and by Him as verse 17 tells us, ***“And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”***

So God created these principalities and powers, both good and bad. In Ephesians 6:12, Paul says, ***“For we wrestle not against blood and flesh, but against principalities...”*** We may think we wrestle against our neighbor, or boss, or whatever circumstance we deal with, but we are wrestling against principalities, powers, and rulers of darkness that control the thoughts and minds of human beings to come against us. Their chief agent in charge of that are the demons assigned to us under control of these principalities and powers sitting on their thrones and dominions. Just the same, angels are assigned to assist us confront these evil forces, not just demons, but other fallen angels as well. To see an example of this, Daniel, throughout the Book

of Daniel is praying, seeing visions, asking for clarification of the visions, prays more, and gets more visions. This happened over several years, then, in chapter 10, Daniel has a terrifying vision. It begins in verse 1.

***“In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel, whose name was called Belteshazzar; and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long: and he understood the thing, and had understanding of the vision.***

***In those days I Daniel was mourning three full weeks.***

***I ate no pleasant bread [or bread of desires], neither came flesh nor wine in my mouth, neither did I anoint myself at all, till three whole weeks were fulfilled.***

***And in the four and twentieth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river...***

***Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain [or one man] man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold...***

***His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.***

***And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.***

***Therefore, I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.”***

Back in verse five, I know some critics say that Daniel was just hallucinating because he did not have any food or drink for three full weeks, 21 days. No, that was not the case. All we have to do is look back in history to what Daniel's vision was all about to understand he was seeing an event that was still yet to come which proves he was not hallucinating because of lack of food or drink. But I want to take a look at who Daniel first saw.

Verse five tells us, ***“Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man [In the Hebrew, one man] clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold...***

***His body also like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.”***

Scholars have argued about this chapter and chapter 8 and who these two particular beings were that Daniel saw. What Daniel described in verse 5 and 6 is nothing more than a vision of the Lord Jesus in a pre-incarnated appearance. Some think it could be a cherubim, a seraphim, another type of angel, or an archangel. It is similar to descriptions of other appearances of angels in the Old Testament, but everything in God's Word must be verifiable to convince me – even faith. We must have faith in God's Word. There is so much evidence of what God and Christ have done in this Book that it developed my faith, or as my mentor would say, *concretized* my faith, bringing me to a point of having no doubt in His Word. He will not lie to us and He always backs up His Word with factual events that declare what was prophesied, in some cases, millenniums ahead of the event. And with that, I know for a fact that this is Christ Jesus because of what it written in Revelation 1:12 where John has seen the Lord Jesus Christ. Here John writes,

***“And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks;  
And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle.”***

Compare that to Daniel 10:5 which reads, ***“Then I lifted up mine eyes, and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen whose loins girded with fine gold....”***

That is very similar, so continue to Revelation 1:14, ***“His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow;”*** comparing that to Daniel 10:6, ***“His body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning....”***

Revelation 1:14 describes His eyes, ***“and his eyes were as a flame of fire;”*** as does Daniel 10:6, ***“and his eyes as lamps of fire...”***

Revelation 1:15 tells us, ***“And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace;”*** and Daniel 10:6 states, ***“and his feet like in colour to polished brass....”***

That is just too many similarities to be coincidence. All the prophecies that have already been fulfilled throughout time were given prior to that fulfilment which is another piece of evidence that God's Word is not a lie and is the truest thing that we will ever come across to reveal things that are still yet to come. All these things that John saw were still things yet to happen. And in verse 12 through verse 15 John gives a description of what he was seeing and how he was perceiving Jesus.

The last feature is described in Revelation 1:15, ***“and his voice as the sound of many waters,”*** and also in Daniel 10:6, ***“and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude.”***

This is none other than Christ that Daniel sees first in this vision, and it is not the first time that Daniel saw the pre-incarnated Christ. He also saw Him, or at least heard Him, in chapter 8. God's Word verifies itself and this is the same person, Jesus Christ, who Daniel describes in chapter 10:5 and 6 and who John describes in the midst of those seven candlesticks. Daniel 10:7 goes on to say,

***“And I Daniel alone saw the vision: for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves.***

***Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.***

***Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.*** [This is where Daniel was touched by none other than Gabriel.]

***And, behold, a hand touched me, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.***

***And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent [by Jesus Christ]. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling.”***

This was not Christ's first appearance to Daniel or his first encounter with Gabriel. In Daniel 8 he receives a vision of the ram and the goat, then in verse 15 we read,

***“And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man. And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai [literally the banks of the mighty leaders], which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. So he came near where I stood: and when he came, I was afraid, and fell upon my face: but he said unto me, Understand, O son of man: for at the time of the end shall be the vision.”***

We have no record that Daniel actually saw Christ here, but he heard the voice which said “give him the understanding of the vision that he just saw”; Gabriel was to make him understand the vision. So here is one encounter prior to chapter 10 and in verses 5 and 6, this is none other than the pre-incarnated Christ and the same description is given of the same Lord Jesus Christ in the Book of Revelation, chapter 1 that John saw in the midst of the candlesticks.

Returning to Daniel 10:11, Gabriel begins speaking. ***“And he said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. And when he had spoken this word unto me, I stood trembling. Then said he unto me, Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. [Daniel's words were heard.] But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.”***

This ‘prince of the kingdom of Persia’ is not some earthly king. No earthly king could keep any angel or fallen angel at bay. They do not have the strength or the power to keep these mighty beings at bay for three weeks, 21 days. And during those three weeks, Daniel was literally fasting and praying as the; things that will happen after we have already been raptured as we read throughout the Book of Revelation, and things after the trials and tribulations and the great wrath of God that will be poured out on this earth when Christ comes back to rule and reign. angel Gabriel was trying to get through with God's message of understanding of the visions for Daniel. But he could not break through because the king of Persia, one of these principalities with a mighty dominion, and probably with a mighty army behind him, was able to keep Gabriel from delivering the message to Daniel.

Let me read something:

***“The words 'I remained' are translated in the margin of the Revised Version 'I was not needed.'”***

So once Michael came, being a more powerful angelic being, he was able to put the prince of Persia in his place allowing Gabriel to then go to Daniel and deliver the understanding of the vision. Michael was powerful enough to hold back this evil prince of Persia, this angelic being not on God's side, but working for Satan himself so Gabriel could penetrate through and deliver

the message to Daniel. Michael is telling Gabriel, “You can go. I have this under control now, but I am going to need you to come back” after he delivered the message to Daniel. This author goes on to say,

***“Later Gabriel said he returned to fight with the ‘Prince of Persia.’***

***The first words that Gabriel spoke to Daniel were an explanation of a delay in answering Daniel's prayer. He said that he had been detained for twenty-one days, the same length of time Daniel had been praying, by the ‘Prince of Persia,’ and if Michael, the Archangel had not come to his rescue he would have been there still. [That is how powerful these beings are.]***

***Here the veil is lifted, and we are shown something of the workings of the ‘UNSEEN WORLD,’ and of the connection between the ‘Spirit World’ and the affairs of men and nations on the earth. This ‘Prince of Persia’ was not Cyrus the King of Persia. No one for a moment would think that a mere human being like Cyrus could withstand a supernatural being like Gabriel, with a message from God, for twenty-one days. The scriptures clearly teach that there is a ‘KINGDOM OF DARKNESS’ over which Satan reigns as KING, and that his Kingdom is composed of ‘PRINCIPALITIES,’ ‘POWERS,’... ‘RULERS OF DARKNESS,’ AND ‘WICKED SPIRITS.’***

***From this we see that Satan has his Kingdom organized in a wonderful manner. It is divided to Kingdoms and Principalities. These divisions correspond to the Kingdom divisions of our earth. If Satan has the ‘Prince of Persia’ and a ‘Prince of Grecia,’ why not a Prince for every nation? Satan has his limitations. He is not omnipresent.... He has to depend upon his agents. And so great and powerful are his ‘Princes’ that it takes a supernatural being, like Michael the Archangel to overcome them.”***

Michael did not necessarily overcome him, but he kept him at bay and occupied so Gabriel could break free and get to Daniel with what God wanted delivered. This story also shows that while these good and bad angels were preoccupied in the unseen warfare, Satan or his fallen angels could also be at the Throne of God. How else would they have known what Gabriel was trying to deliver? Think about it. They knew Gabriel was trying to deliver the exact message that God wanted Daniel to hear, to explain things that were still yet to come. That was not so much for Daniel's benefit, but for our benefit, especially as we live these last days. But as these angelic beings were fighting in the unseen cosmos, nothing could hold back the Lord Jesus. As these angelic beings were fighting, not a single one is a match for the Lord Jesus Christ in this pre-incarnated state. They are no match! So while these angels were being held up, Christ came. He did not have any problem breaking through. He went right through as the source of peace and calmness, and eventually a deep sleep because Daniel was mourning and in agony. Gabriel had his assignment and he was going to fulfil his assignment. He just became delayed because of this prince of Persia, this angelic being who was ruler at the time of the nation that would eventually be destroyed and another nation come up in its place. Daniel saw the appearance of the pre-incarnated Christ, the same appearance that is described in the Book of Revelation chapter 1. Daniel 10:8 tells us what Jesus did for him. Here we read,

***“Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me: for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.***

***Yet heard I the voice of his [Christ's] words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.”***

Jesus came, which shows us that no matter what angels become entangled with, Christ will always be there because we have a comforter and that is the Holy Spirit. It is promised if we keep faithing in Him, He will neither leave us nor forsake us and He is not a man to lie. What Jesus brought Daniel was comfort and He put him in a deep sleep until that angel broke through and was able to now lift him up and say in verse 11,

***“O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright: for unto thee am I now sent. [Daniel then stood trembling and I would too.] Fear not, Daniel: for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand, and to chasten thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained [literally was not needed] there with the kings [more than one] of Persia. Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days: for yet the vision is for many days. And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face toward the ground, and I became dumb. [He could not speak.] And, behold, one like the similitude of the sons of men touched my lips: then I opened my mouth, and spake, and said unto him that stood before me, O my lord [not capitalized there and properly so. He was not speaking to the Lord Jesus Christ here, but speaking to Gabriel], by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my lord talk with my lord? for as for me, straightway there remained no strength in me, neither is there breath left in me. Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me,”***

Looking more closely at the phrase ‘appearance of a man,’ go back to Daniel 8:15. It reads,

***“And it came to pass, when I, even I Daniel, had seen the vision, and sought for the meaning, then, behold, there stood before me as the appearance of a man.” And I heard a man's voice [another voice.] between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel [described as 'the appearance of a man' in this particular chapter] make this man to understand the vision.”***

This is Christ telling Gabriel to bring understanding to Daniel of what he just saw. The 'appearance of a man' is none other than Gabriel in chapter 8 as it is defined, and also here in chapter 10:18,

***“Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man, and he strengthened me, And said, [once again] O man greatly beloved [showing this is Gabriel once again because the same words are used], fear not: peace be unto thee; be strong, yea, be strong [actually have courage]. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened, and said, Let my lord speak; for thou hast strengthened me. [Once again, 'my lord' is not capitalized and properly so.] Then said he, Knowest thou wherefore I come unto thee? and now will I return to fight with***



***the prince of Persia: and when I am gone forth, lo, the prince of Grecia shall come. But I will shew thee that which is noted in the scripture of truth: and there is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael your prince.”***

This is Gabriel who assisted Daniel and the same Gabriel described 'as the appearance of a man' in chapter 8 and in chapter 10:18. Michael and Gabriel are angels fighting with the prince of Persia and others not described or listed here. A heavenly battle is taking place because Satan is to and fro at God's throne. When he is not there, I am sure he has his representatives sitting at God's throne listening in to find out the details and plans that God has for us. In the case of Daniel to understand these visions given to him so Satan could somehow interfere, get in the way and stop the progress of these messengers or angelic beings, in this case Gabriel, to deliver the message and the understanding of these visions to Daniel. A spiritual and physical battle was going on in the heavenlies that goes beyond anything we can probably even imagine. These are the principalities and powers doing battle for the cause of Christ and the cause of God, and also doing battle for our benefit.

In Colossians 2, hundreds of years later, Christ has come and fulfilled everything that God said He would fulfil so we are complete and fully armed and ready for warfare with these angelic beings. About this, verse 8 tells us,

***“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.***

***For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.***

***And ye are complete in him [Christ Jesus], which is the head of all principality and power: ... Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us [that is all our faults, sins, and accusations these principalities, powers, and Satan himself, have against us], which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross [meaning Christ and His blood spilled on that cross blotted out all that was against us];***

***And having spoiled [in the Greek this is *having stripped and disarmed*] principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”***

I like the way the Revised Version translates this verse; it is really close to the Greek, ***“He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.”*** He made a public example of principalities and powers including Satan and his demons. But we are complete in Him if we stay in faith, trust in His Word, and understand what His blood did for us.

Let me read something from one author:

***“One other great picture flashes on the screen of Paul's mind. Jesus has stripped the powers and authorities that made them his captives. As we have seen, the ancient world believed in all kinds of [classes and grades of] angels and all kinds of elemental spirits [and demons]. Many of these [demons and] spirits were out to ruin men. It was they who were responsible for demon-possession and the like. They were hostile [and malicious] to men. Jesus conquered them for ever. He stripped them; the word used is the word for stripping the weapons and the armor from a defeated foe. Once and for all Jesus broke their power. He put them to open shame and***

***led them captive in his triumph train. The picture is that of the triumph of a Roman general. When a Roman general had won a really notable victory, he was allowed to march his victorious armies through the streets of Rome and behind him followed the wretched company [the principalities and powers, these wretched beings following behind us stripped and disarmed] of the kings and the leaders and the people he had vanquished and conquered.”***

Just as Ephesians 6:10 says, we are strengthened, we are empowered, and we are clothed with His might, but He expects us to have faith in His Word and to put on the armor of God described in Ephesians 6. Even though He has won the victorious battle for all of us, He still expects us to fight. He does not want us to become couch soldiers lying around doing nothing and then have the audacity to claim the wonderful promises that are given to us if we just stand up and fight in faith. However, through Christ Jesus we are not the victim, these principalities and powers are; we are victorious.

***“They were openly branded as his victims and spoils. Paul thinks of Jesus as a triumph conqueror enjoying a kind of cosmic triumph, and in his triumphal procession of the powers of evil, beaten for ever, for every one to see. In these vivid pictures Paul sets out the total victory of the work of Christ. Sin is forgiven and evil is conquered; what more is necessary? There is nothing that the Gnostic knowledge and Gnostic intermediaries can do for men- Christ has done it all for everyone already and having spoiled principalities and powers he made a show of them openly.”***

He disgraced and disarmed them triumphing over them just as the Revised Version says, ***“He disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him.”***

And because of that, our sin is pardoned and the law is abolished, so we no longer must live under it. Satan and these principalities and powers, these dominions and evil spirits are conquered because we are complete in Him, as verse 10 in that same chapter says, ***“...which is the head of all principality and power.”*** That is why in Ephesians 6, Paul wants us to become aware that we are not wrestling against human beings. We are wrestling against these evil beings, these strong powerful fallen angels, these evil spirits. Even though as strong and powerful as they are, they are no match for Christ Jesus. And if we are living a life of faith and have God's righteousness and we are a weapon of God's righteousness, or a weapon unto God's righteousness, even they will shake and tremble at our presence, but there is a condition. We must have the attitude that Christ expects us to keep trusting ~ and fighting the good fight of faith. As Paul said, keep being a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Christ has done it all for us and He even gives us weapons to use against the onslaught of unseen enemies that we have. Most of them are defensive weapons, but there are some offensive weapons. Through it all and through the fight, He wants all saints to have open communication with Him.

Christ has completed His role in what God has promised. He has put all these principalities and powers under His feet in triumph. He was the conquering general for our benefit. We no longer must live under sin and condemnation. We are no longer under Satan's control. We are now more than conquerors because of Christ Jesus and we are expected now to take up the good fight of faith for the cause of Christ. When entering a fight, He expects us to wear the armor because the

armor is there and available and it is very, very important to be worn every minute and every day of the year. There is no taking off this kind of armor. This spiritual armor is armor we wear constantly, there are no exceptions. We can choose to take it off, but it was never intended for that purpose. Its purpose is to be worn continuously.

I will abide in Christ Jesus, and it is my hope that you will too. In addition, because of our faith in Him and His conquering blood, we can also be completed in Him if we keep our faith in Him and His Word. Many do not understand what the Bible means when it says we are more than conquerors. We are more than any Roman general ever experienced in the flesh because we are fighting a cosmic battle even though we cannot see it, and it goes beyond any war that any man has ever been able to see with his eyes here on this planet. We must realize what we are involved in. God has put a calling on our life and He has chosen us. With that, hopefully God will let us go further in this chapter and we can start taking a look at the whole armor of God so that we may be able to withstand in the evil day having done all to stand. I am telling you right now, the spiritual weapons are there, Christ has paved the way and we must keep trusting and keep believing that His Word is 100% verifiable, factual, and true. It is worth living our life with the understanding that there is no substitute in life to God's Word. He sees us through our everyday battles, trials, tribulations, and struggles, but the condition is we must keep trusting Him and soldiering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

This battle has been going on for a long, long time. These principalities, these powers and the dominions that they control are powerful beings, but we have something even more powerful. Daniel was touched and comforted by Christ Jesus Himself before Gabriel ever gave him the message of understanding. Well, Christ never leaves us nor forsakes us and we have it all revealed to us here in God's Word, which is something Daniel did not have. How much more lucky and fortunate we are than Daniel. Where much is given, much is required. Some whine too much, including me, because of the everyday spiritual battles that we face. It is time to soldier up so we too can be victorious knowing that Christ has paved the way, and if we keep trusting in His Word and His blood, we know that our enemies, whether seen or unseen, are behind us pouting and mourning in defeat. I will trust God's Word from this moment on; hopefully you will do the same.

I know I have spent a lot of time in Ephesians 6:12. I could probably spend the rest of the year on this verse alone. There are so many different pockets in this particular verse that is really ignored by most of the Christian world, but I think it is time to move on and get to some of the spiritual weapons that God has given us to do battle against the unseen enemy, because all soldiers need weapons and soldiers of Jesus Christ are no exception. Those weapons would not be listed in Ephesians 6 if they were not necessary. I want you to remember that as we face the upcoming battles, circumstances, and struggles. We might not like it at times, but we are called and chosen and it is important to remember II Timothy 2 which begins,

***“Thou therefore, my son, be strong [endunamoo, be strong, be strengthened, be empowered] in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”***

Verse 3 goes on to say, ***“Thou therefore endure hardness [in the Greek this is, kakopattheo, hardships, troubles, afflictions], as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”***

That is why Christ went before us and fought the fight. He won and claimed the keys of death and the grave and He was victorious over Satan and all his accusations against us. Christ fulfilled the law so we no longer must be concerned about the law. Our concern should be whether we are soldiering as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and a good soldier of Jesus Christ keeps trusting in His Word and seeking out God's will daily. God's will is *thelema* in the Greek. It is to deny yourself, and take up your cross – not your personal cross, but the cross for the cause of Christ and follow Jesus. Once a good soldier of Jesus Christ becomes aware that he is a chosen soldier, the two go hand in hand.

Verse 4 in II Timothy says, ***“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.”***

Yes, we will be involved and participate in them, but they do not become our priority. This is putting God second. We are chosen to be a soldier. If you did not know that or if you have never heard it the way I have described it, now the light is turned on. We only have two choices, soldier up or become entangled with the affairs of this life. Most of Christianity has programs and tasting of the flesh, so they may think they are living a Christian life, but it is really putting a sugar coating on what the world has stamped with the name of Christianity.

We are to endure hardness, we are to endure sufferings and hardships, the troubles, and the afflictions for the cause of Christ, but we will be strengthened by Christ Jesus through His grace, thank God, and we are to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ because He has chosen us to be a soldier. Like it or not, you now know we were chose not to fight the things that are seen, but to fight the things that are unseen. There is nothing more powerful that we can do than unleash the Word correctly to others by our participation. Whether you preach it or whether you support someone who preaches, as soon as you do one or the other, you have gotten the attention of the unseen wickedness, evil spirits, and fallen angels and they will come to do battle against you to put a stop to what you are doing and participating in. That is why we need the weapons described in Ephesians 6. So suit up and get in the fight for the cause of Christ.

# Withstand

Go to Ephesians 6:10.

***“Finally, my brethren, be strong [endunamoo, be strengthened, be empowered] in the Lord, and in the power [the kratos, the force] of his might [ischus].”***

The King James reads ***“be strong in the Lord.”*** This type of strength is not from any of our efforts; the strength is from God. ***Endunamoo*** means be strengthened by God and clothe, or envelop, ourselves with His strength. My strength and your strength is not sufficient. We are no match for what is specifically described in verse 12.

So, we are to be strengthened by God, be strengthened by Jesus Christ, and clothe ourselves with Christ's strength. Being strong does not mean using our own strength because we would fail. It means being totally dependent on the Lord's strength. I want you to remember that. If we are not totally dependent upon the Lord's strength, we cannot even wear the armor nor have access to the weapons described. My strength cannot handle the whole armor and your strength could not do it either. Even if we could combine our strength, we would still fall short. 'Be strong' does not mean using our own strength. Remember that. There are many times during the week, sometimes several times during the day that I have to remind myself, 'Joe, it is not your strength. You are fighting against some evil forces, evil spirits, principalities and powers that could wipe you out in the blink of an eye or the snap of a finger. You are no match for them, but through Christ and through His strength I am. And if we are totally dependent upon His strength, we are more than conquerors.' I have to remind myself of that daily, sometimes several times during the day. A better translation of verse 10 would be, ***“Finally, my brethren, be constantly strengthened in the Lord.”*** It is not something we do on occasion or when we recognize we need God's help. We need to be constantly strengthened every minute of every day. There is no taking off the armor.

Verse 11 goes on to say, ***“Put on the whole armour...”*** In the Greek, this includes all the weapons. Not only in this verse but also in verse 13, the whole armor of God is translated as, ‘*the full armor of the heavily armed soldier*’ and in Paul's day he is referring to Roman soldiers who were feared. The Roman army was mighty. No one could stand up against it in those days. Here Paul uses that military language, specifically in the classical Greek, ‘*the full armor of the heavily armed soldier.*’ This is more than just a side arm or handgun. This is a fully packed armor with the most strategic weaponry to do battle with a fierce enemy. And with that little introduction to this chapter, go to verse 13,

***“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”***

***“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God....”*** Paul repeats himself in this verse. He already mentioned the whole armor of God in verse 11. He does this because we are no match for what we fight against in verse 12, and he wants to remind us of that. Paul is telling us this in case we have forgotten what we are facing in verse 12, so we are to ***“take unto you the whole armor of God.”*** Before moving on, I want to read something to you about the armor we use, whether

we like it or not. It begins,

***“‘Take unto you’ is analambano [in the Greek], ‘to take up’ in order to use, ‘to take to one’s self,’ thus, ‘take up’ as one takes up armor to put it on. The verb is an ... imperative, which construction issues a command given with military snap and curtness, a command to be obeyed at once and once for all.”***

It is because of verse 12 that Paul says we need this armor. We are dealing with some very real evil forces controlled by their general Satan. Their whole plan is to destroy us and our faith in God, to put that wedge between us and God.

***“Thus, the Christian is to take up and put on all the armor of God as a once-for-all act and keep that armor on during the entire course of his life...”***

This means the armor does not even come off when we sleep. That is right, there is no let-up in the fight. I received emails one night from someone wishing that there was a vacation in the fight of faith for eternal life. I have asked God many times for just a break! No! The armor is always to be worn ready to do battle with the enemy even when we go to bed at night.

***“...and keep that armor on during the entire course of his life, not relaxing the discipline necessary for the constant use of such protection. The historian, Gibbon, relates how the relaxation of discipline and the disuse of exercise renders soldiers less willing and less able to support the fatigue of the service. They complain of the weight of their armor, and obtained permission to lay aside their [armor].”***

I am not interested in someone starting over in the Word because they should never have left in the first place. I would say the same thing to myself if I did. Wherever they left off means the cross was dropped because they thought it was too much to bear. But we are to wear the armor no matter how heavy it seems at times. You might not think it useful, but as soon as we drop that armor, we drop the cross that was designed for us to carry. There are two crosses; one is how we get involved in the employment of the Word of God which is applied when Jesus said, deny yourself, take up the cross and follow Him. It is not our own personal cross. It is the cross of getting involved in the work of God and employing it in the capacity we were called. The other cross is our personal trials and tribulations.

If we think the cross is too heavy to carry on our own and we drop it, we will not stand a chance. But carrying the load on our own is the problem, instead of being strengthened and clothed – enveloped by God's Spirit – to give us that strength. Dropping this armor is the same as dropping the cross because without it, no matter how much we try to fool ourselves into believing this message is not correct, we are not able to carry our cross without this armor. If carrying both your cross and your armor is too much, then go back to a church that makes you feel good. I was talking to someone not long ago who knew someone from Biola University here in the Southern California area. They made a comment that church services and church gatherings now more than ever are emphasizing worship instead of studying the Word of God because worship makes them feel good. Satan doesn't want anyone learning and trusting on the Word of God, because he knows that faith pleases God. Someone teaching or someone learning and growing in faith will

get Satan's attention. Satan knows that it is faith that pleases God. He knows what pleases God; he knows what gets us closer to our Lord and the understanding of His Word. So reading Ephesians 6:13 again, we see,

**“...take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand...”** In the Greek 'withstand' is *anthistemi*, or the ability to resist what is described in verse 12. Without that armor, we will not be able to set ourselves against what is described in verse 12. Worship will not help you withstand, so do not be fooled with that false doctrine. Do not allow it to happen.

Verse 12 continues, **“... in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”** Here 'stand' is *histemi* – not *anthistemi*, but *histemi*, that is *to stand firmly against the force of evil or the devil and his forces, not leaning or resting on anything besides God*. Lean on the Son, Jesus Christ, and the Father knowing that they have strengthened us and they will provide the strength we need to wear that armor. No matter how heavy we might think it is, we will be able to stand firmly and be able to withstand or resist whatever is facing us. I am also preaching this message to myself as well because there is evil.

The phrase **“in the evil day”** in the Greek is *poneros*. This word describes evil as *sorrow, pain, hardships, toils, peril, troubles*. Evil spirits and principalities will use these weapons against us to destroy our relationship with God. So we to take up this armor so we will be able to *anthistemi* [*resist*] in that evil day.

I just want to read something about the phrase ‘in that evil day.’ What is that evil day to which Paul refers to? I will give you two examples.

**“Bible scholars have given this brief phrase careful consideration. Some take the evil day to encompass the whole life of a Christian on earth. With this interpretation, the exhortation runs something like this: You must cover yourself with the whole armor of God in order to persevere to the end of your life, which is just one day of trouble and trial after another.”**

That makes me laugh because I know it is so true when so much of Christianity wants us to believe something else. Look back at the apostles' lives or the great men of God. They made an impact in reaching people with God's Word taught correctly. Read that statement again,

**“You must cover yourself with the whole armor of God in order to persevere to the end of your life which is just one day of trouble and trial after another. Jacob confessed to this attitude as he looked back over his life; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been (Genesis 47:9).**

**The Scriptures speak of daily bread. They also speak of a daily cross which we are told to take; not make, but to take. The reference here is not to don crosses we fashion for ourselves. God in His providence will always provide a cross of His choosing for us and though He tells us explicitly to take it up, He never tells us to put it down.”**

In the Gospels there are several references of taking up our cross, but He never tells us to put it down. That is why I do not start over in the Word. I know why I fall off the track or get sidetracked. I have come to recognize that I allowed myself to be distracted and sidetracked

because I drifted away from what God's Word says and what others have tried to persuade me to believe. What I have done is drop the cross because another way seemed more appealing. Now I do not do that too often, but put flesh and blood, as my mentor used to say, on myself and yourself as well. Do not become such an arrogant Christian who thinks these things cannot also happen to you. Yes, they can; so do not start over in the Word, recognize when you backslide as a Christian where you dropped the cross because it was too heavy. Then, go back to that place and pick it up and start following Christ once again. Once we understand that He is the forgiver of sins, do not allow yourself to be constantly beaten down with guilt. We are now new in Christ once again. Leave the past in the past and keep marching forward to eternal life. Remember the pit that you were dug from and do not fall for the same trap again. Remember, Christ tells us specifically to take up the cross, He never tells us to put it down. Do not return to the prosperity ministries that do nothing more than make you feel good because it is an easier road to take than picking up our cross and following Christ.

***“The span of our lives and the span of our trials measure the same distance. [Of course, otherwise we would not need armor.] The only consolation, though, is this evil is short. Our life is in fact only an evil day. A few steps and we will be out of the storm. There is an ever widening chasm between the saint and the sinner in this respect. They are like two travellers riding in the same country but in opposite directions, both caught in a rainstorm. The saint however is riding away from the storm and will soon be out of the rain. When death [I like ‘graduation’ better] comes he will have eternal fair weather, but the wicked man rides into the eye of the storm. The farther he goes, the worse it gets.”***

Remember this the next time you are in a storm and you think the waves or the storm is going to overtake you. Remember it; memorize it; apply it to your life. I told myself this just recently that I am riding out the storm into eternal fair weather, unfortunately, those without Christ, are riding into the eye of the storm and it is only going to get worse because they have no hope eternal. This evil day encompasses the whole life of the Christian on earth. The span of our life and trials measures the same distance because of the evilness in the world. However, what follows is another explanation which I do not agree with at all. These two examples are like black and white to me. This states,

***“Another explanation of the term ‘evil day’ is that it does not encompass the whole span of our lives, but rather that time which is particularly and especially fraught with suffering. In other words, it does not encompass the whole span of our lives, but rather it comes and goes when you are faced with battles.”***

That is where most Christianity is stuck today, and if this is true ‘that the evil day does not encompass the whole span of our lives, but rather it comes and goes,’ then ask yourself why we would need the armor that Paul makes very clear is never to be taken off at all. Paul tells us that we are to be constantly ready to do battle with Satan and his forces with that armor on, and all the weapons constantly energized by God's power because we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to energize these weapons. The ‘evil day’ is not just a come and go situation, but it is evident now more than ever this is what Christianity looks like today. Today’s Christianity teaches to put the armor on when you need it. Let me tell you friend, Satan is just sitting there wringing his hands saying “I can't wait,” licking his chops, waiting for the opportunity for you to take the



armor off. In addition, by taking the armor off do you think that your own strength can face such a ferocious enemy? If that is your attitude, then you probably have the opinion that Paul did not mean to wear the armor constantly. Yes, he did! The armor is not to be taken off.

Returning to Ephesians 6:13 we read, ***“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand [or resist] in the evil day, and having done all, to stand [or to resist].”*** In the last word in this verse, *anthistemi* is again used for 'stand.'

Now let me focus on these three words 'having done all.' Another author states,

***“Perseverance is the mark of a true soldier of Jesus Christ. We have not done all until that pitched battle is fought. The word means to finish a business and bring a matter to full issue. Do not be a half-hearted Christian but a thorough one; not he that takes the field, but he that keeps the field; not he that sets out, but he that holds out deserves the name of a saint. There is no such thing as an honorable retreat. No such word of command in all Christ's military discipline as fall back and lay down your arms.”***

You may not like this, but God is not telling us to put this armor on and keep it on if He does not expect us to go to war. There will be skirmishes and there will be real battles, but through Christ, His strength, and His spiritual armor, we will fight the good fight of faith and be more than conquerors. My mentor used to say “If you are going to be a Christian, be one.” Too much of Christianity today is nothing but fake Christians professing this and professing that, claiming to have a word of the Lord from this or that; I have a prophetic message for you; I have a healing for you and the person walks out and two seconds later they are still lame. Christ never said, *'fall back and lay down your arms.'*

***“Your order is ‘forward march’ from the day you take up arms until the day you are called off by death [I prefer, graduation]. Soldiers used to take the military oath not to flinch from their colors but faithfully to follow their leaders. The obligation to take such an oath lies upon every Christian. It is so essential to being a saint that they are identified by it. ‘Gather my saints together, those that have made a covenant with me’ (Psalms 50:5). We are not Christians until we have subscribed to this covenant without reservation. When we profess Christ, we enlist ourselves in his regiment and promise to live and die with him in opposition to all his enemies.”***

Satan and the evil forces under his control are our enemies only because they were His enemies first and because we align ourselves with Christ and are under His command now. When we took up our cross, we became Satan's enemy and all the evil forces controlled by him that we are in opposition to.

***“Christ tells us upon what terms He will enroll us among his disciples. ‘If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.’ He will not accept us until we resign ourselves freely to his disposal [rather than what we want to do or feel like doing, but to His disposal] that there may be no disputing his commands afterwards. The devil never retreats or declares a truce. If an enemy repeatedly assaults a city and those within the city cease to resist, you know who will win.”***

When I began this series I knew the kind of evil I was unleashing on myself and this ministry by exposing who he was and Satan understands that. There are three reasons why Satan comes after us and other ministries that proclaim the Word of God correctly. The three main reasons for the attacks are:

1. Satan does not want spiritual growth because he knows it will lead us to having a mind of Christ, so he will attack us individually to stop that.
2. He knows it invades his territory. He is the prince of the power of the air.
3. This teaching exposes everything that is described in Ephesians 6:12.

It is like a breath of fresh air when somebody even mentions spiritual warfare in the right context. Let me read something else:

***“... Satan attacks directly ... when we’re exposing him for who he really is. I’ve taught these principles several times, and whenever I... have all hell as broken loose. As you discuss these things with other Christians and people begin to get a glimpse of who this enemy really is, he plans retaliation. He wants it to stop. He doesn’t want people to learn how he operates. He’ll intimidate out in the open if he has to, but he’s much more effective in secret. When you disrobe him and expose what demonic spirits are actually doing, you take some heavy-duty shots. To be honest, one of the reasons I was so reluctant to write this book was the opposition and attacks that I knew would come my way and to those close to me.”***

From experience as I look back and these have been the toughest years of my life. This last year has been literally hell from every direction with things attacking this ministry and myself daily. I do not say this to get your sympathy. Anybody who knows me knows that I hate sympathy with a passion. I know hate is a strong word but because of what it does, I use that word. Paul looked at troubles as an opportunity to teach and preach and when I am in my right frame of mind, I view it the same way, learning from Paul. I do not remember in the last few months that a week has not gone by that I have not been sued. Not only me, but people around me have been feeling the heat because of their involvement in exposing the enemy. I cannot even think of one area that Satan has not tried to attack, whether it has been financial, legal, health, other people's health around me, circumstances, business, or ministry related. However, I do not want your sympathy, but I do want your prayers and you supplicating to the Lord for this ministry and the Word. He will see us through and He will make us more than conquerors.

When I look back at the first attempt I made to teach on this in 2005. It was such a weak attempt. It is why the earlier teaching is not available. But, I knew I was half-hearted because I knew the kind of exposure the teaching would bring. The ministry was so young at that point and just starting, and deep down I knew this would bring on too much heat, but it did not take very long for me to realize it is not my way O Lord, but thine. I might not like the trip, but it is necessary for me so I can prepare others for what they will face in these last days. So I went right back to it and I have been faithful ever since.

***“Every time I have taught this material, I have experienced multiple frontal and covert attacks from the enemy on my life... my family, and my co-workers in ministry. In fact, while***

***preparing this text, a co-worker who was helping me with the manuscript rattled off a list of obstacles and difficulties that were so overwhelming and non-coincidental that only our awareness of the source and his tactics could keep him from complete discouragement.”***

I know what that feels like. I can identify with what these authors, God's Word, and Paul are saying. That is why that phrase, 'take unto you' means the armor does not come off. This armor is on every minute of every day of the year so that we can resist and set ourselves against whatever we are facing and whatever evil forces are planning against us so we can resist in the evil day having done all; having persevered through it all to resist, to stand up strong in God's might, not our own. And at those times, something that gives me encouragement is in the Epistle of Paul to the Colossians 1:20. It begins,

***“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross [the only way will get peace], by him to reconcile all things [back to the Father] unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.***

***And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled***

***In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy [or a saint] and unblamable [the Greek is *amomos*, without blemish, faultless and spotless] and unreprouvable in his sight:”***

In the Greek the phrase ‘unreprouvable in his sight’ means we are free from any legal charge that Satan and our enemies have against us. We are free from any legal charge from our enemies described in Ephesians 6:12, and also the Mosaic Law, because Christ paid the price and fulfilled all the law, every jot and tittle. So now we are without blemish, faultless and spotless, free from any legal charge, but here is the key why we must persevere, endure, or *hupomone*. We must endure in our everyday walk of life, a life that is led by the Word of God knowing that because we faith in everything that this Word of God has said for us to faith in, He will see us through. That is what the blood of Jesus Christ did for us. We do not need anything but the blood of Jesus Christ to reconcile us back to the Father and to get this flesh under control to be a saint of God, faultless, without blemish and spotless. It happens through the blood, nothing else.

Verse 23 goes on to say, ***“If ye continue [or persevere, *epimeno* in the Greek meaning *continue*, *abide*, or *persevere*, which I like the best] grounded [or established] and settled, be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard....”***

This verse is instructing us that if we, having done all, wearing the armor, persevering in the faith, ready for battle, grounded, and firmly placed in an unmovable position because of the strength God has given us, and the faith we have in what the armor can provide, we will not be moved away from the hope of the gospel. And I have been preaching that hope to the ones who listen and the ones who will listen, who have the ears to hear and the eyes to see, so remember verse 23. We sit in a place where nothing can be held to our charge, without blemish, faultless and spotless, ready to do battle against God's enemy which is our enemy and that is the devil and all his evil forces. If we persevere in the faith, established, unmovable and firm, and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which ye have heard, we too will be more than conquerors. We will be more than conquerors able to withstand, resist and to stand, and having the perseverance of having done all in that stance against such a horrific enemy like Satan and his

followers, both the seen and the unseen.

That gives me a note of joy knowing that all I must do is keep persevering in the faith, trusting God's Word, keeping the armor on which allows us to carry the cross because God has given us the strength not only to carry the armor, but also to carry the cross as long as we keep Him in focus, not letting any false doctrine distract us, knowing it is not all the sensationalism required. All that is required is a firm established knowledge of what God's Word requires from us and it starts with faith because it pleases Him. If we want to please Him, knowing that faith does please Him, when we are thinking clearly, we will not resist putting that armor on and keeping it on continuously. We also recognize that without the armor we do not stand a chance against our enemy and everything described in Ephesians 6:12.

It is unfortunate that more emphasis has not been put on this chapter in Ephesians. In addition, I know that all hell might break loose on me and those who support this ministry because of it, but greater is He that is in us, than he that is in this world, including the prince of the power of the air which controls this world. With that Satan better watch out. True believers of Jesus Christ, that willingly wear this armor, are strengthened by Jesus Christ's strength, who strengthens us, who clothes us, envelopes us with His strength, and allows us to wear this armor and to wield the weapons. Some of those weapons are offensive in combat against him because the devil knows his days are numbered, but if we stay in faith and in a position where we recognize that we need this armor constantly, his job in driving the wedge between God and us becomes tougher; Satan will be on the losing end. I tell you, and myself, focus on why it is important as we look further at this verse about why perseverance is a key to understanding verse 13. I will give illustrations in the Bible where others start but do not finish, whether the armor got too heavy or the distractions of the world tempted them away from following Christ because it was an easier road. I will give illustrations for both, but the bottom line is keep wearing the whole armor of God. By the way, 'the whole armor of God' is only used twice in the New Testament and in both cases it is strictly important to understand why Paul in scripture twice reminded us within two verses about the armor.

Stay strong in His might; be strengthened by God; let God's strength flow through you so you too can say that you have done all and withstood in that evil day.

# A Good Soldier of Jesus Christ

Open your Bible to II Timothy 2:1. It reads, ***“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.”*** The Greek word used here for *strong* literally means *to be strengthened or empowered*. So we are to be empowered by the grace that is in Christ Jesus. When we look ahead to verse 3 in this chapter we will have a clearer understanding about why Paul’s starting point is with grace that empowers and grace that strengthens.

Verse 3 tells us, ***“Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.”*** In this verse, Paul is instructing us to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ that *endure hardness*. In the Greek this is *kakopatheo*; to suffer hardships, to suffer afflictions, to understand that trouble is coming and we are to endure no matter what comes our way. I will be the first one to confess this is not the kind of program or activity I would be thrilled to sign up for. I am not too sure that I know any honest Christian that would race down to the Soldiers for Jesus recruiting office to sign up for some hardness. If they are anything like me, they would run as fast as they can in the opposite direction. Who in their right mind wakes up every morning seeking out hardness? This is why we are not much of a soldier in Christ’s army without the grace that the Lord provides which strengthens and empowers us to see us through the hardships, afflictions, and troubles throughout our Christian journey.

I thank Him daily for His grace that strengthens me. Not only does He give us strength, but also if you read in Ephesians 6 beginning in verse 10, He gives us a spiritual suit of armor specifically designed for each one of us that we wear when we go into battle day in and day out. In addition to that, the Lord also supplies us with enough grace so that we can make it through each day.

Moving on to verse 4 in II Timothy we read, ***“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.”*** The *‘affairs of this life’* are things that occupy our time, our daily activities, or things that interfere with our calling when we are chosen, as the scripture says, to be a soldier of Jesus Christ. Each and every one of us, no matter in what capacity God has called us, is assigned with a commission, and the Lord expects all of us to carry out what He has assigned us to do. However, Satan will throw everything at us to entangle us in the affairs of this life. Instead, we always need to keep the Lord our first priority and everything else comes after that. It is a must so we ***“may please Him who hath chosen us.”*** We do not elect to become a Soldier of Jesus Christ, He chooses us to be a soldier in His army and not just an average soldier, a soldier that gets by, but to be a good soldier actively involved in what God has called and chosen us to accomplish.

So why did he call us to be soldiers? Look at verse 4 again. It reads, ***“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.”*** The Greek word makes it very clear what type of soldier we are to be. A soldier in the Greek as used in this verse is *one who enlists into active service other soldiers into the same service that you have been called and chosen to participate in*. Satan does not like us invading in his territory. We are fighting against Satan’s soldiers who are trying to keep others from receiving the salvation gifted to us. But we are called to be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and good soldiers are to enlist into active service other soldiers.

Verse 9 of II Timothy chapter 2 begins, ***“Wherein I suffer trouble....”*** The Greek here is ***kakopatheo***, *one who suffers hardships, afflictions, and many troubles* because they are a good soldier of Jesus Christ. Satan does not want us to be part of God’s army and he will do what he can to encourage us to run away from Jesus Christ’s army built to carry out His purposes. But even Paul states, ***“Wherein I suffer trouble,”*** because Paul was not immune to troubles either. Paul once again uses the word ***kakopatheo*** in verse 9 when he writes, ***“Wherein I suffer trouble as an evil doer.”*** Now Paul was not an evil doer and we all know that, but that is how he was perceived because he preached the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ, and for that he was thrown into prison.

Paul goes on to write, ***“... even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.”*** Even though Paul (or anyone else) may be imprisoned, that does not stop what the Lord wants to achieve. The human flesh can be imprisoned, but we cannot imprison the power of God and the desire He has through human instruments to get the Word out to others.

Verse 10 reads, ***“Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation to which is Christ Jesus with eternal glory.”*** The Greek for *endure* in this verse is ***hupomeno***, meaning *to endure bravely and calmly all things* for the elect’s sake. In other words, to suffer all these hardships, all the troubles, and all the afflictions, even in prison, so that the word of God can reach others for the elect’s sake that they may also obtain the wonderful gift of salvation that gives us eternal life which is in Christ Jesus. With eternal glory Paul knew that once he started his commission, Satan would come at him with everything that he could, including prison, hardships, and afflictions. Paul also said, “I endure it bravely and calmly for the elect’s sake” because it was Paul’s passion and it also needs to be all of our passions so that others may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

That is the reason why we must endure and the reason why we go through the ***kakopatheo***, but we do not have to go through it alone. God strengthens us with His grace that is a free gift from God because He knows we will need it; just look at Paul. Once we line up with God’s plan for our life, you will need His grace because we will suffer hardships, troubles, and afflictions as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ; but it is worth it. It is worth it in order to share with others so they can also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

Now that is a plan every Soldier of Jesus Christ should rejoice that they are a part of so others can obtain the salvation, which is in Christ Jesus.

# Angels on Guard

We will continue this chapter in Ephesians 6:10, which begins,

***“Finally, my brethren, be strong [endunamoo in the Greek, be strengthened, be empowered] in the Lord, and in the power [the force] of his might.***

***Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles [or the methods; methodeia in the Greek, the strategies and methods the devil uses to attack us] of the devil.***

***For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against evil wickedness [or evil spirits] in the sky and air around us.”***

I have spent a lot of time on verse 12 explaining what the ‘evil spirits in the sky and air around us’ are by taking us back to Genesis, and looking at the Nephilim, which became demons, disembodied spirits. Then we went to Daniel and Colossians in a spiritual warfare message about Angelic Warfare. I have been spending a lot of time on these evil beings created by God, although He did not create them evil. They turned evil and followed the evillest one of the group, Satan. He was their leader from that point on.

At this point, I do not think God wants me to end in verse 12 simply preaching about these evil spirits and these evil, powerful, angelic created beings that turned against God in rebellion. For lack of better words, I think He wants us to end this verse on a high note. He wanted to remind us that there is something greater and more powerful and that is Jesus Christ and also God Himself, and even though all this wickedness is constantly coming at us, He is in control.

As I preached in the past about the feast of weeks, I took us back to Exodus 23:20, ***“Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.”*** I showed in the Old and New Testament that the angel was none other than pre-incarnated Jesus Christ Himself. Now every spirit being who did not rebel against God is not considered an angel. For instance, cherubim are cherubim, seraphim are seraphim, and angels are angels. There are even different ranks within the angels which I will explain more about in the future. However, in this verse in Exodus, the angel was Jesus Christ who goes before us to keep us in our way and to bring us to a place which He has prepared. He has all the angels who did not rebel at His disposal to do what He wants with them. Part of what Christ wants them to do is watch over us. That is what we are told in Psalms 91 and where this message will end.

I wanted to end this portion of Spiritual Warfare on a high note, so that we know God is with us and He has all His angelic forces and non-angelic forces, like cherubim with us as well. Yes, I will show that even cherubim and seraphim are there to look after us, waiting for Christ's command about what they should do concerning us. So even though all this wickedness, all these evil beings that rebelled against God are constantly after our souls and our beings, trying to drive a wedge between us and Christ, Christ has not forgotten us and there is plenty of hope, if we just keep trusting Him.

With that, I want to turn now to II Kings 6:8 in the Old Testament, which happens right after the verses where Elisha makes an ax head float. In verse 8, Elisha meets with the Syrian troops, and I want to use these verses to remind us that even though the evil forces come against us, they are no match if we cloth our beings with God's armor and after doing everything to stand. God also has all the angelic powers that do His bidding watching over us. The One who is watching over them is watching over us, and that is Jesus Christ. It gets me excited to know there is that much attention focused on us to help in any situation we get into, to help us get through it, and make us more than a conqueror. With that let's go to II Kings 6:8, this is where the king of Syria takes counsel because he wants to war with Israel.

It begins, ***“Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp.***

***And the man of God [Elisha] sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place; for thither the Syrians are come down.*** [Here the Syrians were setting a trap and their intension was to completely destroy Israel and its king.]

***And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice.”***

In other words, no matter what the Syrians were doing, Elisha was getting the message to the king of Israel to not go there, but to go somewhere else or take a different route because Elisha knew exactly what the Syrians and the king of Syria were planning against them. Actually, the Syrian king discerned properly here even though he took the wrong action.

Verse 11 continues, ***“Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?”***

The king was so perplexed, so troubled, so confused, and so aggravated because he could not figure out why every move he planned against Israel they knew about ahead of time, and they were able to move against the Syrians to avoid their traps. The king could not understand this so he thought there was a spy in the camp. That is why he asked, ***“Will ye not show me which of us is for the king of Israel?”*** He was trying to find out who was giving top secret information to the king of Israel so they could avoid the trap that was laid for them several times. The Syrian king knew there must be a spy in the camp! That was the only earthly explanation the king of Syria came up with, but the king's servants and counsel had plenty of discernment that Elisha was behind this.

Verse 12 tells us, ***“And one of his servants said, None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.”***

In reality, Elisha was communicating with God who was warning Elisha about what the Syrians planned against His chosen people, the Israelites. But, the servants said, ***“None, my lord, O king: but Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber.”*** The king had no privacy! For myself, I do not need to know what my enemies are plotting against me because God is there long before I even know any information



about what our enemies are plotting against us. Christ is there. The promise is that He will never leave us nor forsake us. He has a counter punch to all our enemies and what they are plotting against us. I feel sorry for my enemies in that regard. All the top secret information that was only given in this king's bedroom was leaking out somehow. He thought there were spies, but the servants discerned correctly that it was Elisha. It must have been Elisha's reputation, especially in the northern kingdom, and these servants said it was Elisha who was getting the word to the king of Israel about his wicked plans.

Verse 13 continues, ***“And he said, Go and spy where he is, [“Secretly go and find out where Elisha is.”] that I may send and fetch him. And it was told him, saying, Behold, he is in Dothan.”***

By the way, this particular town or city is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament; once here and once in Genesis in the story of Joseph where his brothers plotted to kill him and then eventually sold him into slavery.

In verse 14 we read, ***“Therefore sent he thither horses, and chariots, and a great host: and they came by night, and compassed the city about.”***

In this verse, they found out where Elisha was so they sent a great army, and were taking no chances so they sent the army at night. They thought if they did it by night that God would be asleep, I guess, but God does not sleep. He is watching over us every hour of every day. Then they surrounded the city. Verse 15 tells us what happens next,

***“And when the servant of the man of God [This is Elisha's servant. Some translations say minister; the one who was ministering to Elisha.] was risen early, and gone forth, behold, a host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do?”***

This poor servant was scared out of his mind. He saw the city compassed about with this mighty, great host, the Syrian army that came by night. Lo and behold, when he woke up to take care of the needs of his master, Elisha, he saw the horses and chariots round about the city. This was someone living with Elisha, experiencing the miracles, no doubt hearing the words of faith and the knowledge of God coming from Elisha's own mouth, but his first reaction was, ***“Alas, my master! how shall we do?”*** He does not instead fall on his face and say, “God deliver me.” He was experiencing a moment of fear afraid that he would no doubt lose his life. The first thing he says is, ***“Alas, my master! how shall we do?”*** “Shall we run? Shall we hide?” But what was Elisha's response?

In verse 16, we see, ***“And he answered, Fear not for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.”*** This city did not have a great army. There were not a lot of soldiers for God in this particular city or village, so what was he talking about? It was a truth statement, a testimony of faith, and there was no backing down in Elisha's response. He did not say, “Oh, why did God put us here? Why didn't God give us a warning that they were coming so we would have a chance, and these other village people, citizens of Dothan, given the same chance to escape probably in the middle of the night before these Syrians with their mighty army, their great host

of an army, surrounded the village making it impossible for any escape?" He could have come up with a lot of different reasons, excuses, or complaints, but he did not. Being trained by Elijah, Elisha made an amazing statement of faith here. He answered, "***Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.***"

However, this servant knew that there was no way that their army was a match for this Syrian army surrounding their village, and there is nowhere here in the record that this servant says, "You're right Elisha, what was I thinking! Why didn't I trust in God, knowing that He is there and watching over us. I have seen all the miracles, all the testimonies, and all the knowledge that you have of God. I should not have reacted that way, putting my trust in what I can see and what kind of circumstances we are in seeing how hopeless it was, but instead trusting in God because time after time I saw His miracles and I know what you have taught about His faithfulness." There is no record of that, but Elisha had compassion on this servant because obviously he was full of anxiety and fear.

Verse 17 states, "***And Elisha prayed and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see.***"

Now Elisha did not say, "Open my eyes that he may see." I do not even think Elisha saw what this servant saw. All Elisha had to do was faith that God was in control and he knew that even though you could not see what this servant was about to see, he faithed that they were there because he made the faith statement, "***they that be with us are more than they that be with them.***" Obviously, Elisha was not talking about any army from Dothan because there was not much of an army or soldiers in the Israelite army in this particular township. No, he was talking about the invisible army that the Syrian army was no match for. He declared and he made a statement of faith and he did not need the things that were seen by the servant to make that statement of faith. Instead, he was making the statement of the things unseen.

That is what you and I must do every day. We were not at the resurrection or the ascension, but we faith that the event happened nevertheless, just as we faith that the blood of Jesus Christ reconciled us back to the Father; we faith in the unseen. Now, we have seen the written Word of God, but everything we faith in are events that for the most part have taken place.

As I was reading this, I said to myself, "Bring me to the point where I do not need physical evidence to keep trusting in the Word of God." Yes, it is nice to see, but I have enough of a record in God's Book and in my own experiences in life where I do not have to keep testing God to see if He is going to be there for me. In scripture, God's Word has declared He will never leave us nor forsake us, and there are many other scriptures that say He will be there in all our circumstances. Most of the time when my circumstances take a wrong turn it is because I try to do things in my own strength using my own common sense without taking the problem to the Lord first. I should be saying, "Lord, I don't know how I got here. I don't even know if I did something to get me into these circumstances, but I am here now. You figure a way out for me. I might not like the path you take in handling my circumstances, but I hand it over to you because if I keep it in my own hands I will just create a bigger mess." That is what most of us are guilty of. We like to do things in our own strength with our own power because we think we can perceive what we need better than God. But He knows what is best for us.

In contrast, Elisha had compassion and prayed to the Lord for this servant saying, ***“I pray thee, open his eyes....”*** Elisha did not need to see what God provided, but he knew it was there because the end of verse 17 states, ***“And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”***

They were around the city just waiting for Christ and God's command to eliminate the Syrian army if it was part of God's plan, and the Syrian army did not even know what they were up against.

When you get up every day and as your day toils on and you are surrounded by circumstances and problems, whatever your circumstances are, do you tell yourself, “My enemies do not even know what they are facing or who is on my side”? I know I have to remind myself of that all the time. But to keep Him on our side with His host of angels looking after us, there are five key points in Psalms 91 to keep in mind during our day. Sometimes I have to remind myself “Come on Joe. Come on! Why are you worried about your enemies? Why are you worried about the circumstances? Your enemies do not even know what they are facing or who they are attacking. Because they are attacking me, they are attacking God.” I would not want to be in their shoes.

***“And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”***

These were not just angels, although I know a lot of preachers say God's angels were surrounding the city just waiting for the word to go to battle. No, these were not just angels; they were cherubim. Anywhere in scripture where there are horses and chariots of fire, it is describing cherubim. These God-created spiritual beings were even more powerful than the angelic order God also created that came ready to protect and preserve Elisha until his course was finished. These cherubim are even more powerful than angels described in other areas of God's Word, especially in the Old Testament, who also assist mankind. God sent a host of very powerful beings ready to eliminate Elisha's foes and enemies.

Continuing with verse 18 we read, ***“And when they came down to him, Elisha prayed unto the LORD, and said, Smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.”***

Elisha could have said, “Smite these people and kill them all,” because the Hebrew word for 'smite' can also mean kill; but he did not say that. Of course, a few scholars say it was not really blindness that Elisha was asking for; that he was asking to just confuse them. “Confuse these people so when I go and lead them to a different location, then they will not know who I am.” I do not agree with that one bit. Elisha prayed for blindness, but why? ***“I pray thee, with blindness. And he smote them with blindness according to the word of Elisha.”***

Verse 19 tells us, ***“And Elisha said unto them, This is not the way, neither is this the city: follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek. But he led them to Samaria.”***

Elisha went to the enemy who had been smitten with blindness. Imagine what they were going

through. They were ready to attack the city to capture Elisha to bring him back to the king of Syria where he would more than likely be killed. I am convinced of it. And in a split second, Elisha could have prayed for their death, but he did not; he prayed for their blindness so he could go in the midst of them and lead them somewhere else.

We read in verse 20, ***“And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, LORD, open the eyes of these men, that they may see. And the LORD opened their eyes, and they saw; and, behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.*** [They must have been very fearful surrounded by their enemies the Israelites of Samaria, and Elisha led them there because they were blind.]

***And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them, My father, shall I smite? shall I smite?”***

The king of Israel was so eager that he asked this question twice. He knew what an opportunity he had to eliminate his enemies, this the mighty host sent by the king of Syria to capture Elisha and to eventually kill him. And now Elisha leads them to Samaria in the midst of the Syrian enemies and now they can be eliminated and destroyed. The king of Israel knew it. He acted like a little kid, ***“shall I smite? shall I smite?”*** For those of you who are parents, have you ever had your child ask over and over for something? That is what this king of Israel is acting like. He knew what he had. He knew the opportunity that was there and like a little kid he is asking Elisha over and over, “Shall I smite them, shall I smite them?” We read Elisha’s answer in verse 22,

***“And he answered, Thou shalt not smite them: wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow? [In other words, if you captured them in battle you would not smite them, so do not smite them now. Instead, feed them] set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master.”***

Not only feed them, but then release them.

***“And he prepared great provision for them [They are having a great party, a feast!]: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.”***

Believe me, my flesh wants to plead out to God, “Lord, eliminate my enemies no matter what.” But in the Spirit, remember the Lord's Prayer or the Disciples' Prayer when I taught on it. When asking for forgiveness, make sure you also ask that God will not remember and lay at the enemies charge their actions. Just as Jesus said on the cross, “Forgive them; for they know not what they do,” or as Stephen said while he was dying after being stoned in the streets to forgive them and not hold it to their charge. In the Old Testament, this is what Elisha was doing. He could have asked God to eliminate his enemies and I am thinking that God might have done it. Instead, to make the point to his enemies, he asked God to blind them and he led them into the midst of Israel. They were outnumbered and death was a certainty if Elisha had told the king of Israel, “Yeah, you can go ahead and kill them.” It is not what Elisha did. In fact, he demanded that they be fed, taken care of, and then released.

I do not know if any of these Syrians had their lives changed because of this, but God had

compassion, and God's servant had compassion, and even though Elisha's enemies wanted to kill him, he was using this as an opportunity to send his enemies a message. The message was, "What you felt against me was evil, but my God is a God of forgiveness. He has given you another chance to take a look at what you planned against me. You were controlled by the devil and his forces to eliminate my life. My God delivered you into my hands and now He has given you another chance, an opportunity, to look at your ways and to turn from them. Go back home and come back no more." In other words, Elisha is saying, "Do not hold their sin against them. Forgive them. Do not hold this charge against them forever, but let them have a second chance."

Elisha knew that God would never leave him nor forsake him. Elisha had his trust and faith in God no matter what enemy or circumstances would come against him. He knew God would take care of him. However, in verse 16, it is obvious his servant did not have that much faith because he was full of fear and anxieties. He was having a nervous breakdown, but Elisha, in his compassion for his servant, pleaded with God to open his eyes to see why Elisha had so much trust in Him. I do not believe Elisha saw these cherubim on the mountain, but his servant did, and from that point on you do not see his servant being doubtful any longer. You do not see the enemy, after being blinded, even for one minute having second thoughts of going home, knowing that they were given a second chance to live. They would be destroyed by the king of Israel if Elisha was not there. They were now the ones outnumbered and Elisha would have no part of it. Elisha truly understood that he would use every opportunity, including what opportunity was laying ahead of him to ask, "Lord, put my enemies in the position where they are outnumbered, and show them the compassion that you have if they would just turn from their ways and understand they were controlled by the devil."

Put yourself in any of these situations. This story in II Kings 6 is about Elisha, the Syrian army, and the Syrian king who wanted to destroy Elisha because he thought he was a spy. The king of Syria thought Elisha had connections, whether with God or with people in his camp, with those telling the king of Israel his plans so that the king of Israel was able to avoid all the traps laid for him and his people. The Syrian king wanted to eliminate Elisha. Do I think the king had a change of heart? No, but I almost guarantee there were some in this group given a second chance who had a change of heart or else it would not say at the end of verse 23, "***So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel.***" That does not mean there were no future Syrian armies because the very next verse talks about a future event, but I want to believe that there were some in this group, if not all, who did not want any part in future escapades coming against Israel and definitely against Elisha.

So what does this have to do with Ephesians 6:12? Even though we have an evil, evil army coming against us every day of our lives, an army whose main goal is to drive that wedge between us and Christ and to bring us to the point of faithlessness instead of faithfulness; to bring us to the point where we are, like this servant, full of fear and anxiety taking his eyes off the God of Elisha and putting them on circumstances. Now this servant had a wonderful opportunity, and I am sure you are saying to yourself, "Well, if I saw what he saw, I would believe too and I would not faint."

In contrast, we have so much more than this servant did. We have Jesus Christ. No matter what you say or how you try to disprove it, and a lot of sceptics still try to disprove that Christ even

existed, there is so much evidence that unless you are a total atheist and there is no changing your mind, you cannot deny the existence of Jesus Christ. If you can believe history, why not take a closer look at what history is referring to about this individual called Jesus Christ. I have tried to prove throughout this ministry from Old Testament to New Testament that history proves itself over and over; that this Book is accurate. I took us to Joseph and showed that even though Egyptologists to this day deny the existence of Joseph ever being in Egypt, Imhotep is none other than Joseph. History proves that God's Word is true. In addition, there have been many other subjects that I have taken a second look at in the Bible to prove how history and how God's Word is true and accurate. It does not change. We have only just begun. There are many other subjects that show the accuracy and the history of this Book.

In the past, I have shown in II Kings that we have an angelic force just waiting for Christ's command because He is the angel that goes before us. In that case, we talked about First Fruits and also the Feast of Weeks, the conclusion of the First Fruits, and how God goes before us if we keep Him in our focus 100% of the time not drifting away in what this world offers us, but keeping our minds focused on and honoring Him with our faithfulness. Whether the subject is giving or trusting in His Word, that angel goes before us to prepare the way, and that angel is none other than Jesus Christ with the angelic host at His command to do His bidding concerning us. These verses in II Kings are perfect examples of someone going through much anxiety and fear and had his eyes opened. There are no other statements in the rest of the verses saying he was full of fear again. I bet he was full of faith. Unfortunately, he had to see to believe, but how great of a reward for us as Paul said for not actually seeing Jesus Christ, but nonetheless we faithe in Him and His blood even more. How great of a reward for us.

I know some of you hard heads have to see to believe. Well then, stop being a hard head, stop being stubborn. There is plenty of evidence. Take a look at it. Look into it. I could pick out several different authors, all of them sceptics, trying to disprove the resurrection, who could not do it. A few Easters ago I read from Frank Morrison. He set out to disprove the resurrection, failed in doing so, and came to realize what our Lord and Savior did do and all the evidence given to us in the New Testament to be true and accurate. This is just one example. I could go to several other areas in the Old Testament where God's angelic host is just there waiting for Christ's commands concerning us. That is why I said I feel sorry for my enemies. I feel for my enemies. They do not know what they are coming against. At the same time, may God always remind me to have the compassion that Elisha did for his enemies. Elisha wanted God to give them a second chance. To let them understand how wrong their ways were, and understand how gracious a God we have. He wanted to let them go on being a testimony of God's righteousness instead of those controlled by the devil, as in this case, the king of Syria doing evil on the people of Israel.

This same message still applies today. It is why we have that reminder in the Disciples' Prayer, not only asking for forgiveness, but asking for forgiveness of others. That prayer asks, "Do not hold their sin against them, O Lord; do not hold it against them or charge them with it, but also forgive them." A lot of people like to claim forgiveness that have a forgiving spirit, but go on forever holding grudges, waiting for the opportunity to say, "I knew that God would come against them. I told you so." I pray that God does not come against any of my enemies. As much as it sounds hard in the flesh, there are times in the flesh that I wish God would not forgive my

enemies, but when I get my mind straightened out and I have the mind of Christ, I know He came to forgive all. I also know not all will accept that forgiveness or understand there is forgiveness in the blood of Jesus Christ. They will deny Him and reject Him, but some will understand what that blood and forgiveness is all about, and remember what Christ did is just another example of what was done through Elisha who was a type of Christ in the Old Testament.

There is forgiveness and there is compassion in this story because Elisha had faith in God and God's Word that no matter where he was and what situation he was put in, God was there with him. God had an angelic host ready to go to battle on his behalf and nothing would happen to Elisha. Just the same, nothing will happen to us until God is finished with us.

As an example, I want to read a story about a Danish missionary, Von Asselt, who lived around 1850. He went to Sumatra and this is his testimony, his story. I know some of you will say it is Elisha is Old Testament, God does not do these things today. Well, He did 150 years ago and I will read how He did it.

***“When I first went to Sumatra, in the year 1856, I was the first European missionary to go among the wild Battas, although twenty years prior, two American missionaries had come to them with the gospel; but they had been killed and eaten. Since then no effort has been made to bring the gospel to these people, [Why God allowed that to happen we will never know.] and naturally they had remained the same cruel savages.***

***What it means for one to stand alone among the savage people, unable to make himself understood, not understanding a single sound of their language, but whose suspicious, hostile looks and gestures speak only a too-well-understood language – yes, it is hard for one to comprehend that. The first two years that I spent among the Battas, at first all alone and afterward with my wife, were so hard that it makes me shudder even now when I think of them. Often it seemed as if we were not only encompassed by hostile men, but also by hostile powers of darkness; for often an inexplicable, unutterable fear would come over us, so that we had to get up at night, and go on our knees to pray or read the Word of God, in order to find relief.***

***After we had lived in this place for two years, we moved several hours' journey inland, among a tribe somewhat civilized, who received us more kindly. There we built a small house with three rooms – a living room, a bedroom, and a small reception room....***

***When we had been in this new place for some months, a man came to me from the district where we had been, and whom I had known there. I was sitting on the bench in front of our house, and he sat down beside me, and for a while talked of this, that, and the other, finally he began, ‘Now, tuan [teacher], I have yet one request.’***

***‘And what is that?’***

***‘I should like to have a look at your watchmen close at hand.’***

***‘What watchmen do you mean? I do not have any.’***

***‘I mean the watchmen whom you station around your house at night, to protect you.’***

***‘But I have no watchmen,’ I said again. ‘I have only a little herdsboy and a little cook, and they would make poor watchmen.’***

***Then the man looked at me incredulously, as if he wished to say, ‘Oh, do not try to make me believe otherwise, for I know better!’***

*Then he asked, 'May I look through your house, to see if they are hid there?' 'Yes, certainly,' I said laughing. 'Look it through; you will not find anybody.' So he went in and searched in every corner, even through the beds, but came to me very disappointed. Then I began a little probing myself, and requested him to tell me the circumstances about those watchmen of whom he spoke. And this is what he related to me: 'When you first came to us, tuan, we were very angry at you. We did not want you to live among us. We did not trust you, and believed you had some design against us. Therefore, we came together, and resolved to kill you and your wife. Accordingly, we went to your house night after night. But when we came near, there stood always, close around the house, a double row of watchmen with glittering weapons, and we did not venture to attack them to get into your house. But we were not willing to abandon our plan, so we went to a professional assassin. [There still was among the savage Battas at that time a special guild of assassins, who killed for hire anyone whom it was desired to get out of the way.] And we asked him if he would undertake to kill you and your wife. He laughed at us because of our cowardice, and said: "I fear no god, and no devil. I will get through those watchmen easily." So we came all together in the evening, and the assassin, swinging his weapon about his head, went courageously on before us. As we neared your house, we remained behind, and let him go on alone. But in a short time he came running back hastily, and said, "No, I dare not risk it to go through alone; two rows of big, strong men stand there, very close together, shoulder to shoulder, and their weapons shine like fire."*

*'Then we gave it up to kill you. But now, tell me, tuan, who are those watchmen? Have you never seen them?'*

*'No, I have never seen them.'*

*'And your wife did not see them also?'*

*'No, my wife did not see them.'*

*'But yet we have all seen them; how is that?'*

*Then I went in, and brought a Bible from our house, and holding it open before him, said, 'See here; this book is the Word of our great God, in which He promises to guard and defend us, and we firmly believe that Word. Therefore, we do not need to see the watchmen.'*"

That is exactly what Elisha did. He did not have to see the watchmen, but prayed that his servant's eyes could be opened to see what Elisha already knew was around. In my opinion, a cherubim-force stood around with weapons of fire, ready to do battle against Elisha's enemies and the children of Israel's enemies at the moment God released them to go conquer and destroy. Only because Elisha intervened asking for blindness so he could lead the Syrian army into the midst of the enemies they set out to destroy in the first place, they became vulnerable and outnumbered. Imagine the fear and fright that came into the lives of those individuals in that moment. Elisha could have asked for God to kill them, but he did not. In fact, he fed them, he gave them drink, and he prepared a feast so they could remember what they were delivered from and how a God had compassion through His servant to give them a second chance. As a result, they came no more, all because Elisha knew without seeing what was there, and Elisha's servant got a glimpse of what was there.

In the story I read to you, this Danish missionary and the Battas in Sumatra in the Dutch East Indies also knew what was there protecting them. I do not know why previous missionaries were destroyed. That is for God to know, but the faith of this missionary knowing that God was there



with him putting his trust in His Word when he opened the Bible and said, “This book is the Word of our great God in which He promises to guard and defend us.” I also believe what is described here as ‘strong men shoulder to shoulder with weapons that shone like fire,’ possibly could also have been cherubim, a strong, mighty force like no other in God's creation.

Now go to Psalms 91 and I will conclude there.

Verse 11 tells us, **“For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.** [This is the same as in Exodus 23. We have an angel who is given charge over us who is Jesus Christ and all the host of angels under His command.]

**They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.** [What a promise!]

**Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.** [

**Because he hath set his love upon me....”**

The promise is there. He gives His angels charge over us, and Jesus Christ is overseeing them as they look after our welfare. They shall bear us up so even our feet will not dash against a stone. Even lions, the young lion, and the dragon shall trample under our feet. In other words, no matter what circumstance or what situation we are placed in, we are watched and kept. **“Because he hath set his love** [really *his devotion*] **upon me....”** In other words, He has dedicated His life to me because he has trusted what I said and applied it to his life and his focus is on me and me alone” is what God is saying here.

And the result is, **“... therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name.”**

In the Old Testament there are all kinds of names for God. But there is a name in the New Testament that is above all names, and that is Jesus Christ. That is not Joe Cortes' opinion, it is New Testament. There is a name above all names and that is Jesus Christ the Son of God, who in Exodus 23, watches over us and has charge over us. And if we devote and set our mind and eyes upon Jesus and not drift into the world and become part of the world, He will deliver us and set us up on high because we have known His name. He is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the one who came to give us another chance for eternal life – the life that Adam forfeited. Psalm 91:15 gives us the promise.

**“He shall call upon me, and I will answer him:”**

This is because God is in charge and we know it. We must remember that this is our promise. Through all this, we can see five key points.

**I will answer him.** In other words, we might not like how long God takes in giving the answer, but the promise is there that He will answer us. We also might not like the answer, but He will answer us and He will deliver the right answer every single time.

**I will be with him in trouble.** What are you facing today? What am I facing this week? Christ

will be there right alongside us in those troublesome times. We might not need it right now if we are not in trouble, but I guarantee, sometime in the near future if we are a soldier of Jesus Christ, we will be in trouble, and Christ and the angelic host waiting for His commands concerning us will be there with us.

**I will deliver him and honor him.** He will not only provide the answers and be there in our troubles, He will deliver us from our troubles and place us on high, as scriptures say.

**I satisfy him with long life.** We are promised a long life and throughout that life, He will deliver what is necessary for us to remain in the position and in the place He wants. But we must keep remembering Him by His name and what He has done for us. He will give us long life and He will satisfy us in the place we are at that moment. You might think you need more than you need. You might think you need a better answer than what God has delivered, but the promise is that He will satisfy us with what He thinks we need throughout our long life. Most of the time we want more than we can handle or more than what we need, but the promise has always been there that He will satisfy us in whatever need that we have.

**And show him my salvation.**

1. He will answer us.
2. He will be with us in a time of trouble.
3. He will deliver us, place us on high and honor us. A better translation, He will place us on high.
4. He will give us long life and satisfy our needs what He thinks we need.
5. And show us His salvation through His Son Jesus Christ.

The angels are really the icing on the cake, but God wants something from us, which is for us to trust in Him. He wants us to understand that He knows what we need, He knows how to deliver us from our troubles, and He does not ask us how we got there even though most of the time we get there because of things that we do. He will deliver us, He will set us up on high, He will be there throughout our long life, and He will show us the way to salvation. He has done that in our day and age through His Son Jesus Christ.

So yes, going back to Ephesians 6:12, there are a lot of enemies of God. There are a lot of unseen enemies of God which are also our unseen enemies, but there are a lot more unseen obedient beings of God looking after us, watching our everyday lives, making sure we do not dash a foot against a stone. As Psalms 91 says, they make sure that when we come against the lion or the dragon, we are not the ones trampled on, but that they will be trampled under our feet. And all these angelic forces, cherubim, seraphim, and any other creature that God created that did not rebel against Him, are doing His bidding to make sure that His Word is also fulfilled by looking after us every hour of every day. We have an unseen force that we battle against, but we have a lot of unseen forces that outnumber our enemy just as Samaria outnumbered the Syrian army when Elisha led the Syrian army to them. We have these unseen forces doing God's bidding controlled by our Lord Jesus Christ.

As far as I am concerned, God will use His unseen forces under His command to look after us because He promised that He will never leave us nor forsake us. I will claim all the promises in Psalms 91: He will answer me; He will deliver me from trouble, He will be there with me in trouble and deliver me from it; He will place me on high as I live out my life knowing that He will satisfy all my needs, and He knows which needs to be satisfied; and He will provide me the way of escape to reconcile me back to the Father. Which He did through the blood of Jesus Christ. They are there ready to do battle, ready to come against our foe, ready to come against our enemy. Just as in Elisha's day, it is true today.

Claim the promises in Psalms 91 understanding that as we get ready to put on God's armor, we have so much more than Elisha had. We have so much more than his servant had. We have Jesus Christ. Elisha also had Jesus Christ, but we have Jesus Christ and so much more knowledge of what is available to us than even those Old Testament saints knew.

Paul goes on to describe some of the weapons and the armor we need to come against our foe, and I will go on in these verses in Ephesians pointing out that even though an angelic army is there waiting for God's command to do what is necessary, God is still looking for us to understand what His Word says to bring you to a point that you also understand that with His armor, with His strength, with His force, and with His might, our enemy does not stand a chance either. And it has to be through Him and Him only. When we put this armor on with our own feeble knowledge of what we think this armor is, we will fail and fail most miserably. We will be defeated. That is why before I moved on to the armor, I wanted to point out what also goes before us.

We are a bunch of lucky individuals. We have so much going for us, but yet we still find ways to mistrust God on occasion with our doubts and our questions. I am saying we must have the faith of Elisha and faith that God knows what He is doing, Jesus Christ knows what He is doing and He is also equipping us through the spiritual armor that we will be putting on. We do not go empty handed into the battle. We are going loaded with weapons and our enemy really does not stand a chance, which I do not say that out of arrogance. I know that as soon as we put on the armor, if we slip for just one day, the armor comes off and the opening is there and the devil has his way, so I do not say that out of arrogance, I say it out of confidence that if we keep faithing, we keep trusting God, our enemy does not stand a chance. God will see us through our troubles and He has promised us a long life with salvation to go along with it through His Son Jesus Christ.

I will move on to verse 13, ***“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”***

This is where perseverance is required. So with that remember what we have available to us every hour of every day, not only with God's strength imputed into us, if we are empowered by His strength, but His force, His might, His armor, Jesus Christ, and an angelic host who are waiting for His command to come against our enemy. If you think the army of the United States of America is powerful, you could not even compare it to what we have in the unseen world, if we just keep trusting in Jesus Christ. I plan to do it, and hopefully when I fall off the track, God puts me back on it quickly because I do not want to be caught without the armor facing an enemy

who is so evil, vicious, and wicked. We do not go empty handed into battle if we just stay  
faithing in Him. It is what I plan to do and hopefully you plan to do the same.

# Having Done All, Part 1

Go to Ephesians 6:13, *“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”*

I am not the only one who believes that we are in a spiritual fight. Others have, and I would like to read to you some of their thoughts.

This author writes about the Christian soldier:

*“The Christian must be a soldier by birth....”*

What birth? You hear so much about being born again. People often ask, “Are you born again? Have you had the born again experience?” It was really popular in the 70's to go around saying ‘born again this’ and ‘born again that.’ Some do not even know what I am talking about because you were not even alive then, but take my word for it, that was a common question. When was the last time anyone asked you, “Are you a born again Christian ready to be a soldier by birth?” What birth is this author referring to because he does not go into details? When you went through that born again experience, you might not have thought of yourself as a soldier before, but there is no discrimination because of sex and to a certain point even age.

*“The Christian must be a soldier by birth....”*

As soon as you understood what Christ and His blood did for you on that cross you became a born again soldier of Jesus Christ. So the next time somebody wants to witness to you and give you a bunch of exciting little phrases and statements that they memorized about their born again experience tell them, “Yes, I have been born again. I have been born again to be a soldier by birth for Jesus Christ.” And you have not become just any kind of soldier; not a factitious soldier from some kind of fantasy or imagination that some Christians create in their minds. No, you have become a true soldier of Jesus Christ ready to do battle because your armor is on and you have been strengthened and clothed, or enveloped, with God's strength and His Spirit. You also recognize all the different techniques and tactics the devil might use and understand that you are not really fighting against individuals you cannot see in the flesh, but against unseen forces assigned to bring you down to put that wedge between you and Jesus Christ so the enemy can separate you from Him.

So the next time somebody tells you they are a born again Christian, ask them if they recognize that they are born again by birth, and as soon as that happens they are now a soldier of Jesus Christ. They have become not just any kind of soldier, but as Paul writes, a good soldier of Jesus Christ ready to go through the trials and tribulations, the toils and hardships, understanding that by going through them Christ is molding us from the lump of clay He began with into a beautiful piece. In this case, Paul used language of pottery because He is molding us. God and Jesus Christ do not create Jesus junk. He is creating us to show us off throughout eternity to show what happens when we trust in Him. Returning to this author, we read,

***“The Christian must be a soldier by birth, by fortune, by trade. The most essential quality of a divine soldier is that he is not entangled ‘with the affairs of this life’ (II Timothy 2:4). The elements of self-denial, courage, and endurance are the vital characteristics of this military training.”***

Try to tell that to a newly born again Christian in today's world with a culture out to satisfy themselves making number one the priority.

***“The elements of self-denial [the same message I have been preaching- deny yourself, take up the cross, and follow Jesus], courage and endurance are the vital characteristics of this military training.***

***Strength is the fruit of these high qualities. But it is strength far beyond the Christian soldier's own strength. ‘Strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might (Ephesians 6:1). In preparation for this war, the soldier must look beyond himself. The strength of God, the very strength of God's almightiness, must be his.***

***The ability to stand [and withstand], to fight [the missing element of some Christians today], to conquer [and be more than conquerors through Christ Jesus], and to drive the Foe [Satan and every evil minion under his control from fallen angels to demons to evil spirits] from the field will be found in God's armor. God's strength is imparted through God's armor. No power short of God can enable us to meet the Devil. No partial equipment will suffice.***

***In the passage from Ephesians, we are charged twice to make doubly sure to take the whole armor (Ephesians 6:11, 13).”***

In those verses Paul goes out of his way to remind us twice; once before he tells us about the wiles of the devil and to be aware of them and also right after he describes all the evil in verse 12.

***“We take God by taking His armor. We must make His armor our own. We put on God by putting on His armor- not outside but inside, not objective but subjective, not physical but spiritual. Christ made the armor, and the Holy Spirit puts it on us and makes it ours.”***

We have individualized armor that the Holy Spirit designs specifically for us. It fits us perfectly. Your armor will not fit me; my armor will not fit you. David could not put on Saul's armor and beat Goliath. It just did not fit. God fashions and designs the armor for each who will wear it. Just think about it. We have The Lord our personal designer making us some heavenly clothing. The Lord is so concerned with our welfare that He is specifically designing clothing for our protection. He is our fashion designer and clothes us through the Holy Spirit. He spiritually dresses us with the armor specifically designed for each individual. So remember, we are well-dressed soldiers fit for the fight.

***“We have to fight through to the end, ‘and having done all, to stand.’ We must first withstand and then stand. We gain and hold and then advance. Stand ready for the fight and stand in the fight.”***

***“And having done all, to stand”*** means we must persevere. Some think that the armor is too

uncomfortable. No, it is not! I remind myself constantly that the armor is not uncomfortable. We are the ones who get weary in well-doing and become fatigued in the battle because we stop putting our eyes on Christ and start trying to do things in our own strength which just weakens us over the long haul. We must persevere; **“having done all”** is perseverance. It is *stick-to-it-edness*. We cannot withstand all the evil that will be coming our way and be able to stand against it if we do not have the perseverance to keep marching forward and standing when God tells us to stand. The idea is to be ready every hour of every day to do battle with the vicious foes described in verse 12. The question is what happens when we do not persevere to the end?

I want to take you back to a story in the Old Testament. God put this on my heart and I feel it is a message for me and maybe a message for someone else. What happens when we do not persevere to the end doing it the way God has described for us to apply His Word in our lives so we too can have that *stick-to-it-edness*? Go to 1 Kings. Even though civil war at this point was averted, this is where the ten northern tribes separated from the southern tribes, the two tribes plus the Benjamites, in the Old Testament shortly after Solomon's death.

Upon Solomon's death in 1 Kings 11:41 we read, **“And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did...”** This is when he died and it goes on to say in verse 43, **“And Solomon slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David his father: and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead.”**

I do not know if I am going to anger some of you, but let me tell you something about Solomon. He did not produce as much understanding and wisdom as most people think. Most have been led to believe that Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs, but sometime in the future I will show example after example of who did write that book. So where did Solomon get some of this knowledge? Most of his life was a waste. The only thing he did right was to build a temple and even then his father, David, made sure he had all the supplies and all the necessary things needed to be done to build this temple. Solomon was for most of the time a character not following the path God had laid out for him and most of the time he was in rebellion and not just any kind of rebellion. His rebellion was the kind that God hated the most. For those of you who think that Solomon wrote Proverbs, he may have put some input into it, but I will show example after example of who did write it for the most part and who should get the credit. (To read more about this, go to ‘Was Joseph Imhotep’ in the FCBH archives.)

After Solomon's death, Rehoboam was to take over, but the only problem is Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam in this chapter, but he was unsuccessful, and Jeroboam fled to Egypt. After Solomon died, he came back north and became king. Then in chapter 12:25, we read,

**“Then Jeroboam built Shechem in mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein; and went out from thence, and built Penuel.”** Shechem was about 34 or 35 miles north of Jerusalem. By the way, Jeroboam’s name means *an increase of the people*, although some have defined his name to mean *he who contends*, or *he who contends justice for the people*. Jeroboam was looking after the people and is the kind of king he wanted to be. He had no concern about following God. He had no concern about the Lord of hosts and how the people he was to govern should follow God. He was looking after himself. Verse 26 tells us,

***“And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David:”***

At this point, he was worried that the people were going to be influenced and ruled by the southern kingdom, in this case, the king of Judah which would be Rehoboam. Verse 27 goes on to say,

***“If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord...”***

Jeroboam was worried that the people might turn against him if they realized they were not doing what God wanted. He was also concerned that they might have a change of heart and trek down to Jerusalem to give their first fruits and offerings; Jeroboam was worried the people would turn against him and follow Rehoboam. That is what we read about in verse 27 and 28.

***“If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah.***

***Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.”***

Does that sound familiar? That phrase, ***“behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt,”*** was the very phrase used by Aaron when he made the golden calf near Mount Sinai. What Jeroboam offered the people here was idolatry as an alternative to doing things God's way and worshipping Jehovah the way He laid it out to be done. So what he did is come up with his plan. This was not a new plan, but it worked once to a certain extent when Satan and his demonic forces, evil spirits, and fallen angels used it on Aaron. Now these forces were guiding this individual and just used the same plan once again applying it to this generation of rebellious people.

Jeroboam believed that it was too much for them to go up to Jerusalem. He was looking after their behalf and had sympathy for them. I can hear all the excuses now. He cares about them so much that he is worried about their trip to Jerusalem, their safety, if they are going to become weary.

***“And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.”***

Jeroboam made it very convenient for the people, but Israel was not that big. Shechem was only about 35 miles north of Jerusalem, but he has these two different locations available to make it very convenient for the people.

Continuing in verse 29 we read:

***“And he set the one in Beth-el, and the other put he in Dan.***



***And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi.”***

Only the people who are really close to me really know how much it aggravates me to watch what is being done to Christianity today, not by kings [even though the media does its work in destroying anything that is sincere in the Christian world], but by Christians themselves who are making a mockery out of the calling of the office. I am not talking about the priest in your own church, but the priests, the preacher, the one Romans 10 talks about. Faith comes by hearing and how will you hear unless God sends you a preacher, and like it or not, God will send someone whether you want to hear them or not, He is going to send someone, and if you have ears to hear, you will hear it. But if you do not, you do not. It is a mockery how the priests of our day are being put to shame and dragged through the mud in a country like ours where it does not need to happen, but it is happening. It pains me to see it.

In verse 32 we see Jeroboam is now ordaining feasts that were to be only given by God's instruction. Now this arrogant man has put himself in a position of God – not just king, but God. This verse reads,

***“And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and he offered upon the altar. [He is now offering on the altars. Sounds like Saul all over again.] So did he in Beth-el, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made: and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made.”***

So basically the Baal priests became the high priests and all the others were the lowly priests, and it is happening today, nothing is different. Time, eras, and ages have past, but the same principles, methods, and strategies are being used by Satan. The ones who are preaching the cross; saying, deny yourself and follow Jesus are the lowly. In this case, the ones who worship Baal are the ones who say it is okay to satisfy the flesh and cater to yourselves are the high priests. Nothing has changed. Verse 33 goes on,

***“So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in the month which he had devised of his own heart; and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel: and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense.”***

In chapter 13 another prophet comes along, and it is in this chapter where I will begin referring back to Ephesians 6:13. If you recall, this message began with the verse about the armor and ***‘having done all’*** meaning we have persevered with the armor on, strengthened by God to fight the good fight of faith.

Chapter 12:1 begins, ***“And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Beth-el: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense. And he [this prophet] cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.”***

This prophet is prophesying something to happen almost 300 years later. This prophet is crying out and prophesying the destruction of what is to come. In verse 3 it says:

***“And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This is the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out. And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Beth-el, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him.”***

“***Lay hold on him***” means he wanted to kill him. The King James cleaned it up. Jeroboam wanted the prophet destroyed because of what he was saying and what Jeroboam was hearing so he said, “***Lay Hold on Him.***” In other words, “Seek to destroy him. We don't need a mouthpiece like this who might encourage the people to turn from their evil ways and turn their eyes and focus back on God.”

***“... Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it again to him.”***

He wanted a sign and he got a sign. Bottom line is when the king said “***Lay hold on him,***” immediately his hand started to wither away, dry up, and become immediately useless, not over a period of time, but immediately. We read more in verse 5,

***“The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.”***

You would think an event like this would have changed Jeroboam for life. Unfortunately, it didn't; it hardly made an impact.

***“And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as it was before.”***

There is no true repentance in this verse. It says, “***Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me,***” but Jeroboam did not say with a repenting heart, “Unto you, O Lord, I have sinned,” or plead with God to recognize that he also recognized what he had done was wrong and evil and turned God's people against Him. No, the king wants his hand healed. He recognized the power that this prophet had so he wants this prophet to go to the Lord to restore his hand whole again. And in God's compassion He restores it, but it still did not change Jeroboam's mind.

***“And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.”***

He did not say, “Come home with me and teach me the ways of God so I can become a king to lead His people to Jerusalem at set times of the year.” He was the established king at that point in the northern kingdom. Baal worship and sacrificing to false gods is the thing that God hated the

most. There was no repentance by the king, none whatsoever. In other words he said, “Come here and I will pay you off for what you have done. I will be nice to you now because obviously you have connections. You never know when I might need that connection in the future so, you know, I will entreat you and I might even feed you.” But in answer to that, the prophet says in verse 8,

***“And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place:”***

This prophet at this time – I will save who I think this prophet is for another time – said, “No way! Are you kidding me! I am not going there.”

***“For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.”***

These instructions came from God. So to even plant one foot in the doorway of the entrance of this king's abode would have gone against God. He would not have any part of it, and he did not. The prophet was staying the course. Having done all, he was persevering and doing it God's way at this point. This story continues in verse 10,

***“So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el. [He left.] Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel [a different prophet now, an old prophet.]; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father. And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what way the man of God went, which came from Judah. And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon.***

***And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I am.***

***Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.***

[Up to this point, the first prophet who dealt with Jeroboam was still persevering and doing it the way God laid out for him to do.]

***And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:***

***For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.***

***He said unto him, I a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him.”***

This old prophet was lying to the prophet that prophesied to Jeroboam and told Jeroboam that he would have no part of this eating and drinking and he would not stay in this land. In just about every occasion that I have come across, it takes somebody in the religious establishment to lead us astray or try to convince you of their way by somehow representing God in it. They will even know how to craftily use scripture and twist it to prove their point and never was there 'thus says

the word of the Lord' in one bit of the conversation. It is just how they like to take scripture out of context and apply it to their situation so they get what they want.

***“He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me...”***

For some reason this prophet that was doing things God’s way up to this point was now listening to another supposed prophet – another one from the religious establishment – saying that he got his message from an angel of the Lord. Now we know he was lying because scripture says he was, but this prophet did not know he was lying. The first thing I would have done looking back now was to ask “Who is this angel?” God knows when we take our eyes off Him and drop the armor, then all the methods, the *methodeia* or wiles, of the devil can penetrate our mind and heart and have their way with us. They wreak havoc in our mind to get what the enemy wants instead of staying on the course of what God wants. There was not even a question of “Well, who is this angel?” It says:

***“...and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him. So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.”***

The first prophet should have prayed, “Well God, I don't know what you are doing; first, you say one thing, then you say another that is totally opposite of what you just said for me not to do.” Would that not be a good enough suggestion to stop in your tracks and say, “Well God, if you really want me to do this; if you really want me to stay in your will, you better do some quick talking here because I am totally confused and I am not going to move forward or backward until I have a direct answer. If this is not from you and this is nothing more than the enemy's lies and deceiving ways trying to bring me under his submission instead of yours, then you better get to it God. I need you now.”

A simple direct prayer would have been sufficient at this point in my perspective, but it did not happen. I am sure he was thirsty and hungry by this time, so he succumbed to the things that cater to the flesh. He did not apply the thought that man shall not live by bread alone. Instead he goes to get bread and water and the fellowship of another prophet to go along with it. He was probably thinking, “Thank you Lord. Now you are talking. I delivered your message. I did not succumb to this king's invitation to his abode to feast or to obtain a reward. I stayed true to the course that you had me on. Thank you for rewarding me now, knowing that I am hungry, knowing that I am thirsty, knowing that I am tired, and maybe sending a little compassion you sent a man of God to assist me.”

The angel of light comes in different disguises, but the most dangerous disguise he comes in is through the religious institutions of this world that proclaim thus saith the Word of the Lord when God had nothing to do with it at all. There are also people who babble out scripture and know what is good for you and have never been called by God to sit and be responsible over the lives of people and to rightly divide the Word, but are the self-made experts thinking that they are all called to be preachers. But that is not God's way it can never be proved; it is really twisting scripture. Now for those of you in your own household, there is a priest of your own household, but there is no priest over the things of God and how faith should be portrayed, and

the message in our time especially that increases faith and puts your eyes back on Christ and less of yourself. Verse 19 goes on to show us how God uses the lying religious prophet as a mouthpiece to the prophet who stayed the course, and he revealed a horrible outcome,

***“So he [the first prophet] went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water. And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:***

***And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee,”***

***But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which the LORD did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.”***

Through the prophet the Lord said, “You are going to die!” The penalty in this case for disobedience was immediate death. Some may think time is on your side. We do not know when we will meet our Maker or when the time comes for our last breath. You think you still have time to postpone what is tugging at your heart, so you just keep going day after day becoming more and more disobedient to what God has said, “Come in and feast and partake of what I have laid out for you to enjoy,” and that is everlasting life through the Son Jesus Christ. Some are constantly disobeying and putting it off thinking this does not apply to them.

He was probably saying at this time, “This prophet is crazy. He doesn't know what he is talking about. I don't think God is going to punish me. Why should He punish me?” He probably recognized at this point and probably asked the second prophet, “Where you lying the first time or is God changing His mind again?” There was no repentance whatsoever. Otherwise, even if he did die, he could have died with a repenting heart, but he did not. We read in verse 23 what happened,

***“And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, to wit, for the prophet whom he had brought back.***

***And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcass was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcass.***

***And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass: and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt.”***

This is a sad ending to a story that could have ended with someone being a good soldier of God and fighting the good fight of faith. This prophet should have resisted the temptation to believe that someone in the religious establishment all of a sudden got a different Word of the Lord that he got through an angel. There are not many angels named in the Bible, but it was common practice to call anything supernatural an angel in the Old Testament. But when God wanted to get His Word out, He sent His Son, whether in the Old or New Testament. That is why it is important to understand every name of the Lord, for instance, Jehovah Jireh, the Lord that provideth, is none other than Jesus Christ.

This prophet had a wonderful opportunity to be used of God. At first he obeyed God and resisted temptation. He did not give into hunger or other things of the flesh, but when he got mixed up with someone in the religious environment it brought confusion and misdirection in his life. So he had to pay the price by dying. God was not going to have any part of his disobedience. Just the same we have the opportunity stated in Ephesians 6:13 of **“having done all.”** That prophet had the opportunity to say, “I will persevere and I will keep on persevering having done all that God commanded me.” **Having done all** also means staying the course until the end, but the prophet did not and he paid dearly for it. What a tragedy. The story began so beautiful but turned into such tragedy because he succumbed to the flesh. As I said, I am sure he was hungry, tired, and thirsty. However, what better way to be convinced that you are in the company of friends and people concerned with God? But then they turn out to be liars and traitors, and eventually a mouthpiece for God to prophesy his own destruction in a very short period of time. It did happen. The lion devoured him and tore him apart.

Satan is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. That is the Peter message. But he can only devour us if we succumb to the same things in the flesh. He only can devour us when we let down our armor for whatever reason because letting down our armor is really saying, “I am dropping the cross because I am tired of denying myself and I want to please the flesh.”

To be continued...

## Having Done All, Part 2

Go to Ephesians 6: 10 to 12, where these verses begin,

***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 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.”***

In verse 13 Paul is reminding us again to take on the whole armor of God; not just the pieces that we think we need, but all of it; no exceptions. He writes,

***“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”***

Those underlined words are the focus of these messages, and why we are under attack and face situations in this ministry. I know why the enemy attacks us. We are focusing so much on him to make him recognizable; not only him, but his methods, his schemes, his strategies, his plans to do me in, to do you in, and definitely do this ministry in. He does not like to be exposed. He would rather work behind the scenes secretly and not be in the forefront, and that is what we have done. Christ is in the forefront, but we need to know enemy the and his ways who we are battling. We are not battling against flesh and blood; we are battling against unseen forces that are out to do us in period. Like it or lump it, they are out to do us in. That is why this verse is the focus.

***“Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, [so nothing is left behind] that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.”***

Without that armor and without the strength to wear that armor, we will not be able to stand against the methods of the devil. The armor is important. The whole armor of God and the description of it is in Ephesians 6; the breastplate of righteousness, loins girt about with truth, your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, but the back and rear end are not protected.

Let me just read something I thought was interesting:

***“British Admiral Lord David Beatty commanded a flotilla at the Battle of Jutland during World War I. As the battle began, British and German ships engaged each other in a long-range artillery battle. It quickly became apparent that there was a major flaw in the British ships. First, a heavy cruiser, the Lion, was hit by artillery barrage and quickly sunk. Next, [another vessel] was hit in the powder magazine, and was blown to pieces. Then the Queen Mary was sunk [Not the Queen Mary in Long Beach, California.], taking a crew of 1,200 sailors straight to the bottom. Watching this destruction among the proud ships of his fleet, Admiral Beatty turned to his bridge officer and said with characteristic British restraint,***

*'There seems to be something wrong with our ships today, Chatfield.'* [That was an understatement.]

*Though the British ships eventually turned back the German fleet, it was later discovered that there was a fatal flaw in the design of the British ships. Though they had heavily armored hulls, their wooden decks offered almost no protection against enemy long-range artillery shells that dropped almost straight down out of the sky. Only after the British began to armor their ships on top as well as on the sides did they stop losing ships to German long-range artillery.*

*Effective armor is a crucial element of victory in any war- including spiritual warfare. If you leave anything unprotected, the enemy will find a way to exploit ... your armor- and he will destroy you."*

In some cases, depending on who you study and what military definition you have about what they were wearing in different time periods, the breastplate could cover the back of the torso, but most of the time it protected only the front of the body. There was no protection for people who turned and ran. And in this case, in Ephesians, there is no protection for individuals who decide they do not want to wear the armor any longer or do not want to fight the good fight of faith any longer. Some have decided it is too tough, the road is bumpy, the waves and the storm are too much to handle and decide to turn their back and run. You are then exposed to the unseen evil forces without any barriers to stop their attacks. It is open season on you and there is no protection if you decide to turn and run. However, if you stand and withstand the onslaught of the enemy; if you decide to be strengthened by the Lord, as I have said over and over, you are more than a conqueror. The devil and his agents will not have the last laugh – Christ has already won the victory. The armor is there to protect us in battle when we are face to face with the enemy, not when we turn and run from him.

*"Effective armor is a crucial element of victory in any war- including spiritual warfare. If you leave anything unprotected, the enemy will find a way to exploit ... your armor- and he will destroy you. We cannot merely put on this or that piece of God's armor in some random or incomplete fashion. We cannot leave any part of ourselves uncovered and unprotected. We cannot give our enemy any little opening, or he will exploit the opening to his advantage."*

As I said, when you leave an opening, it is usually when you are turning and running from the enemy in defeat and it is what he will exploit and definitely take advantage of. British ships sank because in the wisdom of whoever built this fleet they never imagined where the missile attack would come from – the flaming arrows as Ephesians 6:16 in the spiritual terms defines. The devil will find a way to try to get through. I cannot say it enough; it is why it is important that we recognize the armor is to be worn and properly used every hour of every day. We do not get to choose what we put on as part of that armor and what you do not. It all must be worn and God will give us the strength to wear it, even though in our own fleshly eyes it seems like it is too heavy to constantly wear, God will give us the strength through His force and by His might.

With that, *"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."*

The armor is important because God intends us to wear it. If you remember Romans 6:13, we are



members or instruments, but in the Greek we are weapons of righteousness unto God. God wants to use us, believe it or not, not just to get the Word out, but He knows the devil will attack us so He wants to give us the tools and the knowledge to come against the enemy. That is why we are weapons of righteousness unto God. Believe it or not, God wants to use us in this battle for eternity. We must keep trusting in God because that gives us the opportunity to be filled by the Spirit. Once filled by the Spirit, the armor envelopes us, and now we are to become a good soldier of Jesus Christ to carry out that commission to spread the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ; not just in the evangelistic way, but in the way the Word should be taught.

With that, go to II Chronicles 14:1 in the Old Testament and I will show you what this has to do with ***'having done all.'*** In these verses I will show you someone who was doing all and doing it the way God laid it out to be done by having faith and putting his trust in Him, but this person literally got weary in well-doing and decided, whether he realized it or not, the armor was not necessary any more. After many years of ***having done all***, it ended miserably and I will lay out the reasons why.

Verse 1 begins, ***“So Abijah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the city of David: and Asa his son reigned in his stead. In his days the land was quiet ten years.”***

Who are these people, Abijah and Asa? They are descendants of David and kings in the southern kingdom of Israel. David was his great-great grandfather. There was David, then came Solomon; from Solomon, Rehoboam; from Rehoboam, Abijah; from Abijah, Asa. David was Asa's great-great grandfather.

Verse 2 continues, ***“And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God:”*** So far so good. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord his God. Up to this point he was doing it God's way.

***“For he took away the altars of the strange gods [in the Hebrew, the gods of the strangers], and the high places [the cultic platforms where altars were placed], and brake down the images [in the Hebrew, he crushed and smashed them], and cut down the groves [the statues of Ashtaroth, the goddess of fortune and happiness. Today we have a lot of those false doctrines preaching the god of fortune and the god of happiness. It can be that, but not the way they lay it out – give to get.]:***

***And commanded Judah [Remember Asa was the king of the southern kingdom.] to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment.***

***Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places [the cultic platforms] and the images [or statues]: and the kingdom was quiet before him.”***

Abijah was an important instrument to get the people back to understanding they had to do it God's way. They allowed these heathen cultic practices that God was against and were warned time after time it would enter their land, and take over their lives and they would forget the true God and start worshipping [whether they realized it or not] the god designed by the devil to take the true God's place.

Verse 6 continues, ***“And he built fenced cities in Judah: for the land had rest, and he had no***

***war in those years; because the LORD had given him rest.”***

God rewarded him. I am sure there were problems running the kingdom, but God gave him rest from wars from outside enemies. The northern kingdom, the ten tribes of the north, and the southern kingdom, the kingdom of Judah, were constantly in civil war with each other in these times; not to mention they had Syrians and other conflicts with the Cushites and so forth. But at this time, God honored his faithfulness and his desire to get the kingdom he was responsible for back to worshipping and the true God and only the true God, and to follow the law and the commandments. And that is what happened.

Verse 7 goes on, ***“Therefore he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls and towers, gates, and bars, while the land is yet before us; because we have sought the LORD our God, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered.”***

I have nothing against prosperity, but do not make it a condition of doing something for God. ‘Give to get’ is what is being taught today around the world. Those who teach that doctrine say, “See, it worked for me. Now you do it too.” It is also called, ‘Name it and claim it’ and it is nonsense. We should please God, and if He decides to give you prosperity, thank Him. But also thank Him if He does not knowing that all good things come from Him.

Verse 8, ***“And Asa had an army of men that bare targets and spears, out of Judah three hundred thousand; and out of Benjamin, that bare shields and drew bows, two hundred and fourscore thousand: [meaning 300,000 and 280,000 = 580,000 soldiers; men of war literally] all these were mighty men of valour.”***

The time of rest was over. Some people think that when you become a Christian, all your problems are solved, all your cares are no longer there, and the pain and hardships are gone. Also, far too many Christians believe that if you are having problems and pain, you must be doing something wrong as a Christian. No, you are not. You are doing something right. A true Christian is doing something right for God and the enemy has taken notice of what you have been doing. As I have said over and over, the devil is out to put a wedge between you and Christ to stop you from doing what you are doing. Denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Jesus is going to bring opposition from evil forces.

Verse 9 tells us, ***“And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with an host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah.”***

I think the numbers here are important because here is someone doing things God's way, trying to follow God and trying to get the nation that he was responsible for to follow God, to put away false idols, cast down the cultic platforms where they worshipped, and try to do the commandments of God. But what did it bring him? It gave him rest to begin with, but eventually the devil regrouped and regrouped in a very, very large way.

***“And there came out against them Zerah the Ethiopian with a host of a thousand thousand, and three hundred chariots; and came unto Mareshah.”*** There had never been a larger army

come against the people of God in the Old Testament. A ‘thousand, thousand’ is a million soldiers of war, and they were outnumbered two to one. The numbers were not put here by accident. This was the largest army ever assembled to come against the people of God. Satan just did not come matching them soldier for soldier. He came like he always does, with overkill, in this case, outnumbering the people of God two to one. Verse 10 tells us what Asa did,

***“Then Asa went out against him, and they set the battle in array in the valley of Zephathah at Mareshah.”*** Asa went out to face his enemy; he did not run. Figuratively, he put on the whole armor of God and he went out to do battle with the enemy, the Ethiopians, who were more than likely the Cushites, which probably came from Egypt. I love this verse that follows, verse 11, because it is a direct prayer.

***“And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.”***

My mentor would make comments about individuals [mostly preachers] as he travelled around. They would get together to pray before a service and lay out everything under the sun that God created and never getting to point, which was to ask God for assistance for that particular evening. It was very common. I remember right before each Festival [it was called Festival of Faith in the late 70’s] when all the crew would gather together and have a prayer meeting. You could tell the ones who just loved to hear themselves pray from the ones who were direct and to the point. At that time, we would pray something similar to, “God help us and give us the ability to be an instrument to get the message out in the capacity that we are called to be in.” Some were technical, some not. Then others would pray for everything under the sun, “Oh God, the creator of everything.” Yes, He is all that, do not misunderstand me, but there is a right place and a right time to acknowledge God and recognize how truly wonderful He really is. There is a right time and a right place for everything.

So look at Asa. He went out to do battle. He went out to face the enemy. He was not going to get into a long prayerful discussion or pray for everything under the sun that God ever created. He was not going to sit there and thank God for everything that he had ever done in his life, or thank God for his responsibility over the kingdom. No, he came and he cried unto God and said, “This is our problem. This problem is nothing for you. We might be outnumbered two to one, but we know that you will not let our enemy prevail against us.” Asa was straight to the point.

Too many Christians try to massage God into answering their prayer request. If you have a stomach ache, pray that God heals your stomach ache; if you have financial problems, pray that God heals your financial problems. He wants you to be direct with Him. He knows you better than you know yourself. He wants you to communicate with Him, but do not try to talk Him into your prayer requests. He knew your need before you even knew what you were facing, so learn a lesson from Asa. It was a fantastic prayer. It was a prayer that got straight to the point. There was no time for anything else because he was facing a fierce foe. I am sure, even though it is not described here in the chapter some of his men were probably even living in fear at that point. Maybe even Asa, but what did God do?

Verse 12, ***“So the LORD smote the Ethiopians before Asa, and before Judah; and the Ethiopians fled.*** [God answered the prayer.]

***And Asa and the people that were with him pursued them unto Gerar: and the Ethiopians were overthrown, that they could not recover themselves; for they were destroyed before the LORD, and before his host; and they carried away very much spoil.”***

God answered their prayer, God honored their faith, and God honored their desire to do things His way under the leadership of Asa. At this time, they did not have much spiritual leadership, so you must admire Asa up to this point. Asa was committed to following God and pleasing Him. The problem was because of the lack of understanding of God's Word and the lack of leadership in the spiritual realm, eventually things broke down. We see that in verse 14,

***“And they smote all the cities round about Gerar; for the fear of the LORD came upon them: and they spoiled all the cities; for there was exceeding much spoil in them.*** [Materially they gained a lot.]

***They smote also the tents of cattle, and carried away sheep and camels in abundance, and returned to Jerusalem.”***

Chapter 15:1 continues, ***“And the Spirit of God came unto Azariah the son of Oded: And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.”***

We have that same promise in the New Testament. He will never leave us nor forsake us if we keep seeking Him. Nothing has changed.

***“Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.”***

Here, God is referring to the Torah and the phrase, ***“Now for a long season”*** is why I said I admire Asa up to this point. They were doing all this out of remembrance of probably what their fathers were taught and what they passed on. ***“Israel hath been without the true God...”*** But Asa made sure that they would go back to worshipping the true God in verse 3 because he no longer would tolerate the worshipping of the gods of strangers or the cultic platforms where they would gather and worship these gods, so he tore and smashed them all down; he crushed them out of existence. They were acting by faith, but it broke down from by what we read in verse 3, ***“Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest,*** [or one that teaches the words of God] ***and without the Torah.”***

And in verse 4 we read, ***“But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.”***

Even though they did not have these teaching priests or the understanding of the knowledge of what the Torah was all about and how they could apply it to their lives, they still remember to put their faith in the true living God and He honored that faith.

Verse 5 continues, ***“And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations [or panic and confusion] were upon all the inhabitants of the countries.”***

Because their wasn't any priest and teachers their faithlessness caught up with them. Because their lack of understanding of what God was expecting from them, everything started to break down. They heard the stories; the battle stories with the Ethiopians, the Cushites. They heard how God delivered them from these Ethiopians because they feared and trusted God. And through a prayer that declared faith in what God can do, God delivered Asa and his soldiers; 580,000 of them, but seeing is believing. However, if all they heard were stories and had not actually experienced it, a lot of people probably doubted, especially people coming to and from the northern and southern kingdoms and other locations from around the area. There was panic and confusion because there were no teaching priests around to declare and put into perspective what happened and why it happened. But Asa was someone who was seeking God, so he could lay down the rules and regulations, but that was not sufficient.

Verse 6, ***“And nation was destroyed of nation, and city of city: for God did vex them with all adversity.***

***Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.”***

In other words, Azariah the son of Oded is telling them what is going to happen and why it is going to happen. They have not been worshipping and trusting in the one true God. They were being guided by the Torah.

We do not live by the Old Testament law.. We must live a life by faith. If we do, we become, as my mentor used to say, *righteousified*, or as Romans puts it 'justified' by faith which allows us to be an instrument or container for the Holy Spirit to dwell in and God now has implanted His righteousness in us. As I have taught before on the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22, He will impute in us the gifts of the Spirit: when we need it, how we need it, and how He wants to use it in us. They did not have all that or even half of what we have in the New Testament. Azariah is telling him this is what is going to happen: nation will destroy nation, and cities against cities, and it definitely happened between the northern and southern kingdoms.

He is telling Asa, ***“Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: [or slack; do not become a slacker] for your work shall be rewarded.”*** Your work shall be rewarded, so do not become discouraged when you see these things come to pass, do not become a slacker because you are on the right path, and do not let panic and confusion come into your life because others cannot understand. Be strong! ***“and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded.***

Reading on to verse 8, ***“And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage, [In the Hebrew, he gained strength] and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim, and renewed the altar of the LORD, that was before the porch of the LORD.***

***And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin [The tribes he was responsible for.], and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh [The northern kingdom or tribes.], and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.*** Write in the margin of your Bible, this was true revival.

You probably hear on television over and over again, “We need revival, we need revival.” They do not want revival; they want camp meetings so they can have expression of emotion that makes you feel good. They just want the feeling of revival, not a true revival.

Read verse 9 again, ***“And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance...”*** They were coming down because they heard what was going on in the southern kingdom, whereas the northern kingdom worshipped false idols and built many altars. Ahab soon would become part of this story and those of you who know your Bible know what was produced when Elisha came on the scene and challenged their gods; fire came down from heaven. But in verse 9 we see, ***“And he gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.”*** He was with him even through the confusion and the panic of what was happening in the southern kingdom. And because of this revival, the southern kingdom returning to the one true God, serving Him and Him only. And because of that, God gave them rest. Even in times of war, He provided deliverance and they prevailed even though they were outnumbered two to one. They came from the north in abundance because they recognized the Lord God was with them.

The story continues in verse 10, ***“So they gathered themselves together at Jerusalem in the third month, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Asa.*** [That time was the Feast of Weeks in the Old Testament and Pentecost in the New Testament.]

***And they offered unto the LORD the same time, of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep.”***

This was a true revival. I could read story after story of true revivals where God's people recognized the true owner of their lives and had an outpouring of giving that went along with it.

***“And they offered unto the LORD the same time [really at that time], of the spoil which they had brought, seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;”***

Just stop a moment and imagine with me what the unseen enemy was thinking at this time. “Wow, I had everybody from the northern and southern kingdoms, all of Israel, worshipping false idols and all these different kinds of gods: gods of fortune, gods of happiness, gods of this and gods of that, all chasing their own way and not concerned for the true God and what pleases Him.” What was going through the devil's mind at this time. I can tell you he was an angry devil because forces were plotting to counter-act what was happening because of people who were led by a king who really did not have any spiritual guidance from someone who knew the Torah and the spiritual guidance to teach them God's ways. Yet they were able to get it together and seek

what God wanted because the desire was there. Unfortunately, as with every great revival, and this is no exception, if we are not grounded or have a foundation in the Word, and if we are not wearing the complete or full armor of God, as Ephesians 6 says, we are no match for the enemy and all his tactics and schemes. Read on to verse 12,

***“And they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD God of their fathers with all their heart and with all their soul;  
That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.”***

That sounds tough to put in place a death penalty if they did not seek the Lord God of Israel! Yes! That was the decree here. That was the covenant they made with themselves to the Lord their God. However, before you think that it was too hard or made up by Asa and the people at this time, go back to Deuteronomy 17:1,

***“Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the LORD thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any evil favouredness: for that is an abomination unto the LORD thy God.  
If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the LORD thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the LORD thy God, in transgressing his covenant,  
[Take note here] And hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded;  
And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel:  
Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.”***

This is the covenant they were renewing here in Deuteronomy, ***“Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman, which have committed that wicked thing, unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and shalt stone them with stones, till they die.”***

And verse 6 tells us that it could not be some random gossip. It had to be confirmed by more than one person:

***“At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death....  
The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.”***

If you lived in Old Testament times, the penalty God commanded was death for worshipping and serving other gods. That is the covenant they were renewing. No more worshipping gods of fertility, gods of fortune, gods of happiness, and gods of health. There were many gods, but God did not want this to happen so He laid down what might seem to us a harsh rule. No matter who the people were in Israel, if they were going to serve other gods and worship them, they were to be put to death. No exceptions. Case closed. That was the covenant they were renewing in II Chronicles 15:13,

***“That whosoever would not seek the LORD God of Israel should be put to death, whether small or great, whether man or woman.*** [Remember the phrase *‘whether small or great.’* Whether you are a nobody in your own eyes or a somebody in people's eyes, whether you are rich or whether you are poor.]

***And they swore unto the LORD with a loud voice, and with shouting, and with trumpets, and with cornets.***

***And all Judah rejoiced at the oath: for they had sworn with all their heart, and sought him with their whole desire; and he was found of them: and the LORD gave them rest round about.”***

The Lord was pleased there is no doubt about it. Finally, they were back at the point where God could enter into a nation – in this case the southern kingdom – and start laying the groundwork for the future again because they were not off in some false religion worshipping some other god. They could be His people again, unfortunately it did not stay that way very long. Remember I said to remember *‘small or great’*? Go to verse 16:

***“And also Maachah [Maacah really] the mother of Asa the king,*** [No, she was not the mother. Absalom was David's son who turned on him and wanted to kill him. Maacah was Absalom's granddaughter as well as King Rehoboam's favorite wife. She was the grandmother of Asa.] ***he removed her from queen,*** [Why?] ***because she had made an idol in a grove: and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron.”***

They just make a covenant with God once again ***“and the LORD gave them rest round about”*** that stated whether *‘small or great, whether man or woman’* that they should not seek other gods, but only seek the Lord God of Israel. How many verses went by before it all changed? Count them. The covenant is in verse 13. They rejoiced in verses 14 and 15, and in verse 16, King Asa's grandmother, Absalom's granddaughter, is found worshipping false gods. Asa did what was right. He cut it down and stomped on it. Here he ***“stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron.”*** How he handle this situation put him in a place where he broke the covenant.

This is where everything gets worse quickly because Asa broke the covenant. His grandmother broke the covenant and he did the right thing by smashing and burning the idols and the groves. However, what was required with *‘whether small or great’*? Go back to verse 13, it says, ***“should be put to death.”*** You may think that is horrible! How could he have his own grandmother killed? I know, I understand. That would be a very tough thing to do. I am sure he stripped her of her title. He got rid of the idols that she was worshipping and he burned the groves to the ground, there is no doubt about that, but he still fell short of the covenant. That is why you should be careful what you promise God. He listens to what we say.

When I was younger I used to hear people pray, “Oh God, if you do this for me, if you do that for me, I will never doubt you again.” Even back then I was saying, “Fools, you just lied unto your Lord.” There is a track record here of people who were full of faith that fell from faith and trusting God's Word. Some of them returned and put their eyes and minds on God and started living a life of faith again, but many of them did not. Do not speak or even make any covenant with God if you are not planning to live up to it is the message here. If you thought Christianity



was easy, it is not. It is tough. It requires commitment in every aspect of the word. Christianity is a serious relationship with Christ and the Father. You cannot say things that you have no intention of living up to. God is listening and He has had many millenniums to listen to cheap words. Stop praying like, “God if you do this, I will do that.” Say, “God, this is my mess. Can you help me?” He will have more respect for that kind of prayer than all the other foolish prayers that He has to listen to on a daily basis because most of the people praying those kind of prayers do not live up to the commitment they just promised.

Returning to verse 16 we read, ***“...and Asa cut down her idol, and stamped it, and burnt it at the brook Kidron.”***

The next thing he should have done is live up to the covenant no matter how hard that was, but because he did not, it was the beginning of the end. I am sure the queen – in this case his grandmother – thought she was the exception to the rule, that he would not kill her. She might get caught worshipping idols, but she would just get slapped on the wrist for it. Furthermore, the devil did not stop trying to bring in these false idols, these false gods. He did not stop trying just because Asa made a covenant. In fact, what the devil probably did was intensify the effort to bring the people back to worshipping these false gods.

Verse 17, ***“But the high places were not taken away out of Israel:”***

Somehow between chapter 14:3, which tells us, ***“For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places”*** and broke them down and chapter 15:7, what Asa accomplished by destroying these idols and cultic platforms where they would worship these idols, was re-established. Why in verse 7 did he not bring down these high places and smash and crush them? Because deep down inside he knew very well that he turned on the covenant that he made with the Lord and the devil took advantage from this point on in King Asa's life. Unfortunately, it also affected the rest of Israel because of his lack of commitment and because he could not live up to the commitment. Things started to go bad very quickly.

***“But the high places were not taken away out of Israel:”***

I can see Asa right now saying, “I cannot live up to this commitment. What is the use! I failed God even though He has brought us this far.” I have always said Satan and the enemy will always find the weak spots in the armor, and usually it is with family and religion or religious denominations. In this case, it was his grandmother who obviously did not respect him as a person because she did not honor his wishes as king. She definitely did not see his point of view about worship and he was quite discouraged, I am sure, to find out what she did. Because he handles the problem the wrong way he lost heart. He probably said, “To heck with it. With everything I have done up to this point, if my own family member cannot understand what is going on here, what is the use of trying to enforce this commitment throughout the rest of the nation.” I am sure this is just one of the discouragements he had, so he gave up. Here you have someone dropping his armor, not willing to wear it any longer because the enemy found a way in. In this case, through probably a beloved family member and because of it he gave up. He decided that even though he might have thought he was wearing the armor of God, if we relax for just one minute the devil will find a kink in the armor and exploit it and that is what

happened.

Verse 17 continues, ***“But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was perfect all his days.”*** That is not what it says in the Hebrew. It should read: ***“nevertheless the heart of Asa was complete some of his days.”*** You get the impression that even though he cut down the grove and burned the idols his grandmother worshipped that was sufficient. No, it was not. ***“But the high places were not taken away out of Israel: nevertheless the heart of Asa was complete some of his days.”*** That verse is telling us that some of the days of Asa's kingship over the southern kingdom of Judah was complete. His whole heart was in it, but now from this point on it was not. Read verse 18:

***“And he brought into the house of God the things that his father had dedicated, and that he himself had dedicated, silver, and gold, and vessels.  
And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.”***

The dating of this can get quite confusing, but the date is better understood as the 35<sup>th</sup> year of the kingdom of Judah. This means that the time of Asa's reign over the southern kingdom was actually Asa's 15<sup>th</sup> year of rule.

Chapter 16:1 goes on to tell us, ***“In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel [the northern kingdom] came up against Judah, and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.”*** Baasha heard about the revival and built fortress cities to stop the flow of people from the northern kingdom to the southern kingdom of Judah to worship God properly. So Baasha, the northern king, built these cities that Asa brought out, and in verse 1, ***“and built Ramah, to the intent that he might let none go out or come in to Asa king of Judah.”***

Verse 2 shows us that Asa begins taking God's money to go against his brother, the northern kingdom. Here we read, ***“Then Asa [the southern king] brought out silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king's house, and sent to Benhadad king of Syria [the true enemy of both the northern and southern kingdoms], that dwelt at Damascus, saying,  
There is a league [or treaty] between me and thee, as there was between my father and thy father: behold, I have sent thee silver and gold; go, break thy league [treaty literally] with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me.”*** Asa told the Syrian king, “Do what you can. Go fight against him and I am going to give you the silver and gold out of the treasures of the house of the Lord.” Asa stole money from the house of the Lord to fight his brethren in the northern kingdom. That is the furthest thing that the money should have been dedicated to do. It was sacrilege. He contacted the king of Syria to go against the brethren, the northern tribe, and go to war with them.

In verse 4 we read, ***“And Benhadad hearkened unto king Asa, and sent the captains of his armies against the cities of Israel; and they smote [it lists all the different cities].  
And it came to pass, when Baasha heard it, that he left off building of Ramah, and let his work cease.”***

In other words, because of the distraction of cities being attacked and destroyed by the army of the king of Syria, they diverted their attention from building the cities which stopped the flow of people coming from the northern kingdom to the southern kingdom to be part of this revival. If you really think about it, this would make one heck of a movie. People wonder why the United States had the Civil War when the north fought the south here in the 1860's. That was brother fighting against brother, and it was no different here in Israel in a much smaller geographic area than what we have here in the United States. These kingdoms were at each other's throats because the king of Syria did the deed that he was paid to do with the money from the house of God, which should never have been spent that way. First of all, if there were true priests and true leadership in the spiritual realm at that time, they probably would have had some influence to convince Asa to remember and to remind him what God did for them with the Ethiopians, but it did not happen that way.

As I said, the beginning of the end started when Asa broke the covenant he made with God. An after that covenant was broken, he did not have the desire like he did in chapter 14: 3 to destroy all these different cultic practices that were taking place. These altars were being built to honor these false idols and gods. From that point on, it is like his mind stopped thinking. There was something else guiding him, penetrating his thoughts to make wrong decision after wrong decision. Looking back, we know now who was penetrating his mind and his thoughts. It was Satan and the evil forces assigned to him because Satan did not like what was going on; the revival that was returning the kingdom back to God, following His ways and trusting in Him.

Reading on in the story, after king Baasha of the north left off building the city of Ramah to go fight the king of Syria and his armies, verse 6 tells us,

***“Then Asa the king took all Judah; and they carried away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha was building; and he built therewith Geba and Mizpah.”***

These were other little fortress towns and cities along the border of the northern and southern tribes to do battle against the northern kingdom in case they came back again to influence what the southern kingdom was doing.

Verse 7, ***“And at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah[There were prophets and seers, but there were no men like Elisha at this time.], and said unto him, Because thou hast relied on the king of Syria, and not relied on the LORD thy God, therefore is the host of the king of Syria escaped out of thine hand.”***

In other words, he told the king, “Hello! You stupid fool, what got into you? What your brethren were doing in the north was nothing compared to what you faced before ; the largest army up to this time, a million-man army. You were outnumbered two to one and God prevailed against them for your benefit and for your nation's benefit. What got into you Asa? What happened?” I told you what got into him. He broke his covenant with God. “What happened and why did you do this? Why did you plan this evil?” He reminds him in verse 8.

***“Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host, with very many chariots and horsemen? yet, because thou didst rely on the LORD, he delivered them into thine hand.***

***[‘Don't you remember what God did for you?']***

***For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is complete [not perfect] toward him. Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars.”***

This seer told the Asa the king, “God is looking after you. He is going from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth. He had everything under control and He would be strong on your behalf if you just stayed focused on Him. You had stay complete and wholehearted. If you would had kept wearing the armor; the armor that is designed for you to come against the enemy.”

What do you think Asa should have done at this point? He should have repented unto God. He should have said, “Unto thee, O God, have I sinned. What have I done! Forgive me, O Lord. I might have gone insane, but now I see the error of my ways and how I let the devil and the unseen forces take advantage of me when I took off the armor of God that gave me for the protection to resist and to stand and to keep withstanding the onslaught of the enemy.” But he did not and it all began because he broke the covenant which he made to the Lord God, the true God that he was serving, not some false idol. The devil found a weakness and took advantage of it, and from that point on Asa gave up. He did not trust his Lord any longer. He put his trust in things of this world to control the situations and circumstances around him. He put his trust in his enemy, the king of Syria, which at that time he had a treaty with. He put his trust on anything but the Lord God. What happened? What was his response? Not one of repentance, but one of anger.

***“Then Asa was wroth [or angry] with the seer, and put him in a prison house [No, he put him in a house of stocks. In those days, a house of stocks included torture chambers where they twist people's feet, putting their body through all kinds of contortions. He put him in a house of stocks to be tortured.]; for he was in a rage with him because of this thing. And Asa oppressed some of the people the same time.”***

What people? It does not describe here who he was oppressing, but I am sure the people who had the same opinion of Hanani the seer. Satan had his way because he waited for Asa to reveal a weakness.

Now, move ahead to the New Testament. When Satan finds that we have relaxed and decided not to wear that armor every hour of every day, he will take advantage of our weakness and will exploit it. He will find it. He is an expert at it. He has been doing it for millenniums. We might think we have everything under control, but we are no match in the flesh against these unseen forces, and they will find our weaknesses. The only protection we have against him finding our weaknesses is to be clothed with the whole armor of God so his evilness, his flaming arrows, his twisting of the truth cannot penetrate. If it does not penetrate, it allows us to keep focus on Christ, His Word, and His commission for us as long as we are His.

Asa lost that because, in this case, family got to him. Think of whatever you are facing, whether it is family, financial, marriages falling apart, job loss, losing a home; whatever the circumstances are, you may be wondering why God is allowing it to happen if you have been trusting in Him and in His Word. But if these trials and tribulations do not come, how can He test us? How will He know if we can be tried in the fire and come out more precious than gold? How can God find out where your heart is? Everybody has good intentions, everybody wants to live

God's way, but when put in a trial or hardship of life, God will find out if we are serious or not. He will find out if we want to keep wearing that armor. However, for some trials and testing periods come and get the best of us, or we decide that the armor is not worth wearing because it is too heavy or does not protect us. This happens because of some false teaching that teaches everything must be happy and prosperous, and everything must go our way. However, when it does not, they may blame God for some reason. God allows these things to happen to us for one purpose; to test us, to try us, to see if our faith is more precious than even gold, but He has not left us stripped when we are going through those trials and tribulations. He has not left us without any protection.

Read Ephesians 6:10 through 18 over and over and over until it sinks in. God has given us plenty- more than enough to be more than conquerors in whatever circumstances we face. This ministry has faced some circumstances where I do not even know in the flesh how we were to get through the next two to four weeks. However, I know if we keep wearing the armor realizing we have been called for such an hour as this to keep this ministry alive, we will be more than a conqueror. This ministry will keep spreading the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and all the knowledge of God's Word in the precise and correct way of preaching and teaching it. That is *epignosis*, the precise and correct way in the Greek; not some false doctrine based upon opinion that sounds good and pleasing to the masses. Hard core Christianity is what it takes to be a true Christian. We need to do a little less complaining about what we are facing and trust God in all our ways.

In verse 10 Asa was angry and turned on the person who pointed out his wrong doing. It was not too late at this point for Asa to turn back to God, but there was no repentance whatsoever. In fact, he turned on this person who was trying to get him to realize that he had turned from God, and how he was really serving the devil. What did he do to this person? He put him through torture in the house of stocks, and, I believe, not only that person but the people who sided with this seer. As a result, verse 11 tells us what happened to Asa.

***“And, behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, lo, they are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel.***

***And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great [Some commentaries say it was gout, but nobody really knows what it was except that he had a disease of the feet and it was exceeding great.]: yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD [Even at this time there was still hope.], but to the physicians.”***

Many use this example to say that is why they do not trust physicians and seek the Lord first. In this case there was nothing wrong with him seeking the physicians, but there is no demonstration of him seeking the Lord at all. If you are diagnosed with an illness, go and get physical help from a physician, but while you are driving there pray to God. Ask Him, “God before I get there you still can heal me and if you elect and decide that you are going to heal me through this physician, glory be to God anyway.” Do not leave God out of the equation.

Verse 13 reads, ***“And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.”***

He died miserably, not with the sword of the Spirit in one hand and the shield of faith in the other. He did not die wearing the breastplate of righteousness or the helmet of salvation. He definitely did not die with his feet shod with the Gospel of the Good News. He did not die with any of the weapons. He did not die with his armor on. In II Chronicles 15:16, because of what Asa was facing, he decided that the armor was not necessary any longer because he could not live up to the covenant he made with God. He changed his attitude and his mind completely. He allowed the devil to take full control so that he even turned against his own brethren. For him it was better solution to fight against his own brethren and to bring in a true enemy of God's people at that time to fight against his brethren. Even when he was given a last chance and given the opportunity to see the error of his ways, he turned on the person who delivered the message. The Hebrew makes no room for doubt. He put the seer in a house of stocks, a torture chamber, and God knows what that seer went through and all the people that more than likely took the side of the seer who asked, "What has happened to you Asa?" And for that, Asa died and he died miserably and he died diseased.

How long did it take for that to happen? Chapter 15, verse 19, after the covenant was broken, states, "***And there was no more war unto the five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.***" And chapter 16, verse 1 tells us, "***In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah....***" This tells us it all happened between the "***five and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa***" to "***the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa.***" After he broke the covenant of God, things went bad quickly, almost overnight.

Therefore, when things begin to go badly in our lives, we might question why God is allowing it to happen. However, the greater concern instead should be not the why, but keep focusing on God's Word knowing He will see us through the ups and the downs, through the peaks and also the valleys, through the hard times and the good times. He will be our God through all seasons no matter what the enemy throws at us. Thank God that in Ephesians 6:13 He has given us the tools necessary to combat an enemy that is just looking for an opening and the opening begins when we decide not to wear the armor that day. If we decide the armor is not necessary, the devil has us just where he wants us. Vulnerable!

***"Having done all"*** means that we are standing, we are recognizing the devil's methods and we are persevering. Even though the armor might seem heavy that day, we still have the promise that He will strengthen us with His force and His might. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit which give us the strength to wear it. He will energize the weapons to go on the offensive. Yes, some of these weapons are described as defensive tools so we can withstand the onslaught from Satan, but some are also offensive. Most of the Christian world wants to focus on just the defensive parts of these weapons, and most of the Christian world will only give credit to one of these weapons described in Ephesians 6 as an offensive weapon, but I will tell you how each one is not just defensive, but offensive.

Most who enjoy sports know you must have a good offence to win the game, but when you want to win the championship games, defence is just as important. The devil is a real opponent that we come against. Demons are real opponents. Fallen angels under the devil's control are real opponents. That is why we must have a good offence and defense against the wiles of these unseen forces.

We have a vicious enemy, so do not be caught off guard. ***“Having done all”*** begins by wearing the armor. Without the armor, we cannot say, “I am here, O God, and having done all I will now wait for you ready for your marching orders.” We will have victory and we will be standing there at the end saying, “Those who put their trust in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, were more than conquerors. He has fashioned our armor for us individually to do battle as individuals which is a weapon unto God to be used as He sees fit in this war and we will be more than victorious.” Someday the devil will be put in his place once and for all and we will rule and reign and live in true eternal joy forevermore with our Savior.

As you go through life do not let what happened to King Asa happen to you. He started off great, he continued in that way and they had revival, but the devil found a way to kill that revival and return them to their old ways of worshipping false gods, false idols, building groves and cultic platforms to worship these evil beings; to the point where they gave up because their mouths were bigger than their commitment.

“Do not be an Asa” is what this message should probably be titled. Apply your own meaning to it. Do not be an Asa, instead be a good soldier of Jesus Christ and keep the armor on because without it we do not stand a chance.

Copyright 2015 TeachingFaith Ministries

Please email us at [email@teachingfaith.com](mailto:email@teachingfaith.com) if this has encouraged and strengthened your faith. You can also find all the written spiritual warfare sermons at <http://www.teachingfaith.com/spiritual-warfare-ebook>

In 2 Corinthians 9:7 it reads, “God loveth a cheerful giver.” The Greek word for cheerful is Hilaros which means when someone is prompt to do something; they are ready in mind, with a joyful heart. In the Septuagint, it also means to cause to shine. Today I am looking for Hilaros Givers who are ready and full of joy for the opportunity to cause others to shine by hearing, learning, and growing in God’s Word. Join with us today and participate as a Hilaros Giver. If you wish to participate, use the following link <http://www.teachingfaith.com/giving>

**[www.TeachingFaith.com](http://www.TeachingFaith.com)**

Write us at

TeachingFaith Ministries

5042 Wilshire Blvd. #21452

Los Angeles, CA 90036

