

The Laws of Spiritual Warfare

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Chapter One:

The Maturing Process

“But speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up into all aspect of Him, who is the Head, even Christ.”

Ephesians 4:15, NASB

Hearing God’s voice produces faith in us (Rom. 10:17). But for what purpose? Is faith an end in itself? When we stand before God, will He use a heavenly faith-ometer to measure our faith and give us rewards based upon how many words we heard from God or how much faith we have accumulated? No, the practical consequence of faith is spiritual authority and with it comes many responsibilities. Hence, men will be judged according to their works (Rev. 20:12), which is their *obedience* to the word that they had heard.

When one receives a word from God, that word carries with it the responsibility to be obedient. If anyone questions whether or not he has the authority to do what God says to do, let it be known that the word itself gives the authority to do it. Whether or not the person is obedient, the person is accountable before God. For this reason, we ought primarily to seek to know for certain whether a word is from God or not. This may involve seeking a double witness, which, according to the divine law (Deut. 19:15), is what establishes all truth and divine revelation. Once we know for sure, we are accountable to Him to be obedient.

Next, we must seek the Father’s heart to know how to fulfill the word in the manner that Jesus would have done. The method of obedience is nearly as important as the obedience itself. For example, one may receive a word to give some criticism or correction to a brother in Christ. An immature Christian might go to that person and beat him with that word. A more mature Christian might correct the brother gently and with meekness, as Paul counsels in Gal. 6:1.

Love: The Measure of Spiritual Maturity

As we learn to utilize the authority by the mind of Christ, we mature spiritually as well. Maturity is measured primarily by our

capacity to love. In the Greek language of the New Testament, there were three or four Greek words that were all translated “love” into the English language. Each word, however, has a distinct application of love that is not set forth in the English word “love.”

The first, *eros*, does not actually appear in the New Testament. It means physical attraction and is the lowest form of love—a selfish kind of love that is more like “I need you” than “I love you.” A baby has no ability to modify his demands according to the situation. A baby does not care if the mother is tired at night—or even if she is dead! The baby only knows its own need and demands that it be met.

The second, *phileo*, means brotherly love. It is a greater form of love that is depicted by brothers and sisters in a family. It is a legal type of love, where people treat each other with equal justice toward all. Yet it is a 50/50 relationship, a conditional love that incorporates the idea of fairness. When children are being raised in a family, everything must be fair. That is the kind of love we find in *phileo*.

The third, *agape*, is the kind of unconditional love that God shows through Jesus Christ. It is most characterized by the statement in Rom. 5:6-10, where the love (*agape*) of God is manifested in that Christ died for the ungodly and reconciled His enemies. He did not do this after they became godly and friends. He did this while they were yet ungodly and enemies. This is what characterizes the mature believer, the overcomer.

A new believer who has experienced Passover by being justified by faith in the blood of the Lamb is called a Christian. But in that stage of his spiritual development, his relationship with God is generally that of a baby to its mother. The baby does not really know how to love its mother. The baby *needs* his mother. The baby is entirely self-referencing, and the mother responds to its needs. When Christians make demands upon God or others, it shows immaturity.

When a Christian begins to mature and to learn obedience, he is like a child who reaches the age when he is capable of learning to be obedient. He begins to learn the meaning of NO. The biblical term is “Thou shalt not.” Like a child who is learning to respect the property of others (particularly siblings), Christians in this stage of spiritual development also must learn the law. The law teaches people to respect the rights of others in a judicial relationship. This is *phileo*

love. This is also the experience of Pentecost, which was the biblical feast celebrating the giving of the law at Mount Sinai.

When a Christian reaches some level of spiritual maturity and has learned to hear and obey the voice of God, he starts to enter the experience of the final feast of Israel, that of the Feast of Tabernacles. This is the realm of *agape* love. Overcomers are forgivers (Matt. 6:12 and 18:21-35.) They do not hold grudges, for the Lev. 19:18 says,

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the Lord.

They have learned from Deut. 32:35 that “*to Me [God] belongeth vengeance and recompense.*” In Rom. 12:19 the apostle Paul quotes this and adds in verses 20 and 21,

²⁰ But if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. ²¹ Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

The average Christian does not truly comprehend this principle. It takes real spiritual maturity to live by it. Any religion can teach men to love a good man. Jews are taught to love Moses and even to die for him. And they would be happy to take some of Moses’ enemies with them. Muslims are taught to love Mohammed, and many would die for him, because they believe he was a good man and a great prophet. And they would be happy to take some of Allah’s enemies with them. Many Christians would die for Jesus, because they believe that He was God in the flesh or at least a good man. And, unfortunately, they would be happy to take as many of Jesus’ enemies and other heretics with them.

In Moses’ day, the magicians of Egypt could match a few of Moses’ miracles (Ex. 7:11, 22; 8:7, 18), but there came a point where they fell short (Ex. 9:11). Even so, all the religions of the world can teach men to love others, but they can go no further than *eros* and *phileo*. None can match the love of Christ, the love called *agape*. Such love is not rational.

How many would die for those that they believe are ungodly? How many would die for those that they believe are “enemies” of

their God or enemies of the founder of their religion? Only those the Bible calls overcomers would dare to do such a thing. To all others, it would be irrational to expect such love. And so, the love of God, as defined by Paul in Romans 5, is not for the average person, nor even for the average Christian. It is reserved for those who can see beyond the rational and into the mind of Christ.

Mathematically, the love of God is manifested in the tabernacle of Moses, where we find the golden lamp stand that represents the light of God and His word. The lamp stand has a center post with six branches on it, for a total of seven. On the lamp stand are 22 almonds, which represent the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet—which in turn represent the word, since letters make up all words.

The seven branches and the 22 words form 22/7, a mathematical fraction that represents pi (3.14). Pi is the main feature of a circle, because the circumference of a circle is the diameter multiplied by pi. A circle represents eternity, because of its never-ending cycle. Pi itself is the sixteenth letter of the Greek alphabet, and sixteen is the biblical number of love. Thus, the “word” portrayed in the lamp stand is summarized by a single word: love. Love is eternal and stands as the light of the world.

Moreover, pi is also never-ending, because the fraction of 22/7 never ends. It is 3.14159... and has no ending or repeat, even to a hundred trillion calculations, as modern computers have shown. Thus, it is called an irrational number, because the love of God itself is irrational to the human mind.

The three types of love also correspond with Israel’s main feast days: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. These festivals represent levels of our relationship with God, and hence, spiritual maturity. Thus, agape love characterizes those who strive to go beyond Pentecost and experience the feast of Tabernacles. It is not surprising, then, that the last great day of that feast, the eighth day of that feast, is always held on the 22nd day of the 7th month. This again manifests the 22/7 relation of pi.

We are all victimized at times by evil men or by evil governments. It is therefore an easy matter to justify hatred. Not many would be kind to their enemies. Our immediate reaction is to attempt to overcome such evil and injustice by the principle of vengeance. Of course, Christians would always do it with “righteous indignation.”

A striking recent example of this is the American reaction to the destruction of the Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001. Many people demanded vengeance, instead of correcting the injustices that provoked such an attack in the first place. It is common for governments—and the Church itself—to suppress revolt and to crush all uprisings under the assumption that no enemy or citizen has the right to revolt or to protest violently. But injustice is the breeding ground for discontent, and to ignore the non-violent protests is to promote a feeling of frustration and anger among non-overcomers.

President Bush accommodated the vengeance-seekers, with much support from the Christian community as well. But he has not even attempted to solve the underlying problem of injustice that the Israelis have perpetrated upon the Palestinians with the support of America. (See our book, [The Struggle for the Birthright](#).) Instead, he chose to overcome evil with more evil.

To put forth the idea of overcoming evil with good would have been laughable, even in the eyes of most Christians. But then, most Christians are not very mature spiritually. They are too rational and practical for that. The irrational overcomers are in the minority. And so this method of overcoming evil is seldom done or even taught with any real understanding in the Church today. The Christianity that the Church practices is hardly different in this area from other religions that teach the virtue of vengeance. This is primarily because too many Christians do not really know or have the mind of Christ, and so they do not know how to practice *agape* love.

Understanding Through Experience

Spiritual maturity is measured also by one’s understanding that comes only through broadened experience in life. As we learn to hear His voice, God often will speak words that we do not understand. Or perhaps we think we understand, but after a time we discover that we did not really understand Him at all. God is always teaching, and we must assume from the beginning that our ways are not His ways, nor are His thoughts our thoughts (Isaiah 55:8). If they were, God would not need to teach us, for we would know everything already.

Hence, our present understanding—as students of Christ—is flawed or immature and in need of alteration. For this reason Prov. 3:5 says,

⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

Understanding is important, but it must be according to the mind of Christ. This is the type of understanding that comes by following the leading of the Spirit and hearing His voice daily. This is what Solomon meant when he wrote in Prov. 4:5-7,

⁵ Acquire wisdom! Acquire understanding! Do not forget, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. ⁶ Do not forget her, and she will guard you; love her, and she will watch over you. ⁷ The beginning of wisdom is: Acquire wisdom; and with all your acquiring, get understanding.

One should not need to understand before one obeys. But once one has obeyed, God always gives understanding at some point, because that is one of the primary purposes of obedience. Each time God speaks, and each time we obey, we gain experience. That experience is designed to give us understanding, or to alter our perception in a way that gives us a better understanding of the ways of God. Therefore, one's understanding of the mind of Christ is one way in which we might measure spiritual maturity.

Heart Idols Overthrown

Thirdly, spiritual maturity is also measured by the number of heart idols that have been overthrown in our minds. For that reason, we recommend reading our other book, Hearing God's Voice, before reading this one. The first book was designed to show first that God does indeed speak to men, and secondly a little about how to begin to hear God's voice. The second chapter is entitled, "Hearing Without Idols." The Bible has much to say about the concept of heart idolatry and how it affects our ability to hear God.

If one has not dealt with heart idolatry and the carnal way of thinking and viewing one's enemies (or God's enemies), such a person will probably end up delivering curses, rather than delivering those who are cursed. Their spiritual condition will therefore become worse, rather than better, and the world will not be improved at all by such efforts.

This book on spiritual warfare is more practical than theoretical. It has to do with applying what one has heard, rather than in

developing the ability to hear. There are people who lack the confidence that they actually hear God—when in fact everyone hears the voice of God on some level, as Psalm 19 illustrates. Some lack the confidence when they do hear. Others have more confidence than they ought to have. Some still have serious idols of understanding in their hearts that are hidden to them. A few have followed the Lord long enough to develop the wisdom and understanding that make them valuable assets to the Kingdom of heaven.

Mature Christians and Christian Zealots

A mature Christian is not the same as a zealous Christian. A zealot is often known as a fanatic. A zealot is one who has a partial understanding of a situation and of the Word of God, but is ready to die and to kill anyone else who gets in his way to accomplish his goal. It is a good thing to believe firmly and strongly in God and the truth, but without spiritual maturity, such zealous Christians end up doing more harm than good. Without having the ability to see people and situations through the eyes of Christ, creeds become more important than people. Zealots sacrifice men on the altar of their creeds. They justify the destruction on the grounds that one must remove the evil before one can build the good. In practice, however, the destruction never ceases, and the good is never built.

Throughout history, men have fought wars of extermination, first with one side killing everyone within reach, and then the other side following their example. Communism under Lenin and Stalin destroyed middle- and upper-class Russia in order to rebuild the nation under its own model of socialism. Millions of Ukrainian farmers were starved to death for a "greater good." The end always justified the means in their eyes. What good did it do? By the end of the twentieth century, communism had been totally exposed as an ideological failure. But meanwhile, the communist experiment had already killed millions of people and caused much suffering and oppression. Even apologies cannot bring their victims back to life.

One would think that Christian people, who could read the words of Jesus in the gospels, might be able to avoid the carnal way of overcoming evil. However, the Church, beginning in the fourth century A.D., began to adopt these same carnal ways in adopting their creeds, or belief systems. The creeds of orthodoxy in "mainstream Christianity," were not determined by prayer or by hearing the voice

of God. From the first church council in 325 A.D. that established the doctrine of the Trinity, through all of the later councils that attempted to determine the precise nature of Jesus Christ, carnal methods reigned supreme. The back-room arm twisting, the threats, and the bribes did far more to establish Church creeds than divine revelation.

The methods by which orthodox “truth” was established in the fourth-century Church Councils and afterward render the creeds entirely polluted, like a fly in the soup. Even if the facts were correct, nothing is truth apart from the Holy Spirit. Truth is a Person—not a set of facts or creeds. Truth is a revelation, not a political statement.

In 382 A.D. Gregory of Nazianzen, one of the most revered bishops in the early Church, wrote shortly after the ecumenical council held a year earlier,

“To tell the truth, I am inclined to shun every collection of bishops, because I have never yet seen that a synod came to a good end, or abated evils instead of increasing them. For in those assemblies (and I do not think I express myself too strongly here) indescribably contentiousness and ambition prevail, and it is easier for one to incur the reproach of wishing to set himself up as judge of the wickedness of others, than to attain any success in putting the wickedness away. Therefore I have withdrawn myself, and have found rest to my soul only in solitude.” [from Philip Schaff’s History of the Christian Church, Vol. 3, page 347.]

Philip Schaff then makes the comment on the same page,

“Yet there remains enough in his many unfavorable pictures of the bishops and synods of his time, to dispel all illusions of their immaculate purity. . . . In the fifth century it was no better, but rather worse. At the third general council, at Ephesus, 431, all accounts agree that shameful intrigue, uncharitable lust of condemnation, and coarse violence of conduct were almost as prevalent as in the notorious robber-council of Ephesus in 449. . . .”

While these Church Councils were not overt declarations of war in the usual sense of the word, they were certainly based upon the same type of carnal politics as one might find among worldly people. It shows clearly that just because a man is well regarded as a great

leader of the Church and full of learning, this does not necessarily mean that he is at all spiritually mature.

Hence, this is not a book of theology to teach men the precise nature of Christ and the relationship between his earthly body and the divinity of His being. If anyone thinks that he, in his carnal mind, has comprehended the precise nature of Jesus Christ, he ought to be mature about his belief and allow others the right to think differently, even if their view may be “wrong.”

How to Handle Differences of Opinion

Peter and Paul had differences of opinion. James differed from Paul as well. Yet all were steadfast believers, and all wrote portions of the New Testament under divine inspiration. Their revelations only appear to be contradictory. It takes spiritual maturity to be able to take two seemingly contradictory ideas and see the truth in both sides.

For example, when one compares Romans 4:1-5 with James 2:21-24, the immature believers might be tempted to choose sides, as if there were a religious war between the apostles. Paul quotes Gen. 15:6 to show that Abraham’s faith was the basis of his justification. James quotes the same verse to show that Abraham was justified not only by faith, but a combination of faith and works. So which apostle was right? BOTH OF THEM.

Paul was showing the root of justification, which is faith. James was showing us that in actual practice it is not enough to espouse faith with one’s mouth. Anyone can do that. True faith is not a dead “confession of faith.” A man must be a doer of the word, and not merely a hearer (James 1:22). The Hebrew word, *shama*, means both “to hear” and “to obey.” If a person says he has heard God, yet does not obey, he has not really heard at all. Obedience is the proof that one has indeed heard.

Some will read Paul and will misunderstand him. Such people will become lawless, thinking Paul put away the law and despised “works” (i.e., obedience). But Paul never said obedience was unimportant. He merely made the distinction between justification and sanctification. Paul made a distinction between Passover and Pentecost. Passover means one is justified by faith in the blood of the Lamb. Pentecost is obedience training, which Israel began to learn at the foot of Mount Sinai, the place where the law was given. But the

way to the Promised Land must always go through Sinai, for that is the biblical pattern. Both feast days are important.

Hence, Paul is correct in saying that one's justification is by faith and distinct from works. But James is also correct in saying that one cannot claim to have faith if he is lawless, attempting to go directly from Egypt to the Promised Land without going through Sinai.

There is no contradiction here. One must read both Paul and James to achieve the balance of truth. Paul and James each portray a portion of the divine revelation. To know the complete truth in this matter, one must understand the reconciliation of Paul and James.

The spiritually mature believer will pray to understand the truth in both writings. He will not love one and despise the other. Some Bible commentators have not been able to reconcile the two views, and so they leave men thinking that God has two irreconcilable means of justification—the doctrine of justification by works (for Jews) and the doctrine of free grace for everyone else. Such a teaching makes it impossible for a Jew to be justified, because no Jew is perfect. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23) including every Jew. If his justification depends upon his works, he is lost forever.

And likewise, such a teaching tends to give lawless Christians a clean conscience. They think that accepting the free gift of grace that came by Jesus' Christ means that they are now free to violate God's law with full immunity. They sin that grace may abound (Rom. 6:1).

This is merely an example of how Christians may differ (or at least seem to differ) in their thinking. But this book is not intended to solve these differences. Until we are fully mature and are in the Image of Christ, we will differ with each other. The apostles themselves differed. This book is intended to promote spiritual maturity, so that Christians can be more charitable toward those who differ with them.

It is not necessary to destroy our opponents in doctrine. The world ought to be an open forum. If any man has a viewpoint, he should be free to express it and to discuss it with others. Ideally, if men disagree, they ought to be able to appeal to the divine court and receive an answer from God Himself. It is largely because we lack the ability to hear God's voice distinctly that our differences remain. And it is the lack of love that keeps us divided.

Chapter Two: The Nature of Spiritual Warfare

*“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood
but against the rulers, against the powers,
against the world forces of this darkness,
against the spiritual forces of wickedness
in heavenly places.”*

Ephesians 6:12, NASB

God often leads spiritually mature people to conduct spiritual warfare. This does not mean that everyone who participates in such warfare must be spiritually mature, but it does mean that whoever leads people into battle must have some level of spiritual maturity. It is indispensable that such a leader have the ability to hear God's voice without the interference of heart idols. Otherwise, there is a casualty rate that is simply unacceptable to God.

The story of the battle of Ai in Joshua 7 shows Israel losing that battle and suffering 38 casualties, on account of sin in the camp (Joshua 7:1). In this case, it was not Joshua's fault, because one of the men of Judah had taken some silver, gold, and a garment in the previous battle of Jericho. Yet the inverse lesson to be learned is this: if a battle is fought by perfect obedience to divine revelation, there ought to be no casualties of war. This is true whether one is fighting a physical battle with armies or a spiritual battle against the spiritual forces of darkness.

For this reason, we ought to study the laws of war in Deut. 20, for this passage also lays down the basic principles of spiritual warfare. Yet before studying that chapter, we must stress up front that warfare is not God's first option, nor is it His perfect will. He is a God of love, and the reasons He led Israel into battle in the Old Testament cannot be used to justify any of our modern wars.

God's command to exterminate the Canaanites in the days of Joshua has been used (misused) to justify countless wars, including the Crusades in the Middle Ages. Likewise, it has been used to justify

the Israeli mistreatment and oppression of the Palestinian people in the past 50 years. The Church has long thought of Christ's first coming as a Prince of Peace and Love, but of His second coming as a Prince of War who will exterminate all of His enemies. In this way, the Church is in agreement with the Jews in regard to the character of the coming Messiah. Both believe that He will come with a different character than in His first appearance. In reality, He will come as a Lion who has the heart of a Lamb. The Lion-Lamb combination is the character of Christ. He is all powerful as a Lion, but He uses that power with the character of a Lamb.

Why Did Judah Reject Jesus as King?

The Jews were looking for a conquering Messiah on the order of Joshua, who had been instructed to conquer the land of Canaan and put its inhabitants to the sword. They wanted a Messiah who would overthrow the Romans by military force, accompanied by miracles. However, Jesus came as the Prince of Peace, rather than as the conquering warrior. Hence, they rejected Him as Messiah. In his History of the Jews, Vol. II, page 162, Prof. H. Graetz writes of this from the Jewish viewpoint,

“From Jesus the zealots could not look for deeds of heroism, for, instead of inspiring his followers with hatred of Rome, he advocated peace, and in his contempt for mammon admonished them to submit willingly to the Roman tax-gatherers. . . . These startling peculiarities, which seemed to contradict the preconceived idea of the Messianic character, caused the higher and the learned classes to be coldly indifferent to him, and it is certain that he met with no friendly reception in Jerusalem.”

The people were looking for another Joshua or David, a great military commander that would overthrow the iron kingdom of Rome. There was one overriding truth that the people did not understand about God. They did not realize that *Joshua himself would NOT have been a military conqueror either*, if the people had been obedient to God under Moses. God was not stern and bloodthirsty. He did not hate the Canaanites any more than Jesus hated Samaritans.

The only reason God gave Israel a physical sword to establish that first “Kingdom of God” was because the people had rejected the Sword of the Spirit at Mount Sinai. They had rejected the voice of

God at Mount Sinai, when God spoke to the people verbally, and all of them heard His voice (Deut. 4:12). But they were afraid and hardened their hearts from hearing the voice of God (Ps. 95:7-11; Heb. 3:7-11). They all ran away and told Moses to go up the mount by himself and then return and tell them what God said (Ex. 20:19).

This great event, where everyone had the opportunity to hear the voice of God, was later celebrated as the “*feast of weeks of the first-fruits of wheat harvest*” (Ex. 34:22). Many years later, this was called in the Greek language, “Pentecost.”

The point is that the Israelites in Joshua's day rejected Pentecost, and therefore, they refused the Sword of the Spirit by which they could have converted Canaan and the rest of the world. And so, that great sword was largely withheld from men until Acts 2, when Pentecost was finally fulfilled and the sword of their mouth was made manifest as all men heard the voice of God in their own language.

At the base of Mount Sinai, the people worshipped the golden calf, and as a result, the Levites used their physical swords to kill 3,000 men (Ex. 32:28). What *would have happened*, if those Levites had had the Sword of the Spirit at their disposal?? Look at Acts 2. The 120 disciples in the upper room were willing to hear the voice of God. God gave them the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word from the mouth that is like a sharp sword (Rev. 19:15). This is the Sword Paul mentioned in Eph. 6:17, saying,

¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God.

The disciples took their spiritual swords down from the upper room and used it on 3,000 men in the streets below them. Acts 2:41 tells us the result:

⁴¹ So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

This is what *would have happened* at the base of Mount Sinai, if the Levites had used better weapons. But their rejection of the voice of Jesus Christ speaking to them from the fire on Sinai deprived them of this better and more effective weapon. This is Jesus' weapon as well, as we read in Rev. 19:15,

¹⁵ And from His mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it He may smite the nations; and He will rule them with a rod of iron; and He treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.

All of this shows us why Jesus did not come as a conquering warrior, but as a Prince of Peace. It explains why Jesus (Yashua, or Joshua) did not seem to fit the pattern of the Old Testament Joshua. The reason Joshua was given a physical sword was NOT because God loves bloodshed. It was NOT because God hated Canaanites. It was NOT even because the Canaanite religion was so wicked. It was Israel's fault for refusing to hear the voice of God. Thus, they were left with a very dull weapon that could never divide soul from spirit or discern the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

The Jews of Jesus' day could not understand this. So they were looking for another Joshua with a bloody sword with which to kill all their "enemies" and oppressors. They had heard it taught that one should love their neighbors and hate their enemies (Matt. 5:43). The gospel of hating Romans and Samaritans was accepted doctrine. Hating one's enemies was a virtue by their standard, because they did not know the mind of God. They perceived God according to their IMAGE of Him, their carnal understanding of His character.

Even Jesus' disciples had been caught up in that kind of thinking. In Luke 9, as they were traveling toward Jerusalem through Samaria, the Samaritans (their "enemies") would not allow them to stay the night in a certain village. Verse 54 says,

⁵⁴ And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?

This seemed like a logical solution to them for the sin of rejecting the Messiah. After all, if Elijah could do it, then it must a moral and righteous solution to satisfy an indignant God whose honor had been insulted. But Jesus' reaction was different. Verses 55 and 56 read,

⁵⁵ But He turned and rebuked them and said, You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; ⁵⁶ for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went on to another village.

In the Old Testament, Elijah had indeed called down fire from heaven, which had consumed three groups of 50 men, along with their captains. This was a total of 153 men. This did not mean it was appropriate to call down fire from heaven in the New Testament. Remember that since Israel had rejected the Sword of the Spirit at Sinai, they were left with only a physical sword to do battle on earth. But we have been given a better sword.

Thus, Jesus did not come to destroy men by fire, but to bring a fiery baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Old Testament fire had a new application in the New Testament. This type of fire destroys "the flesh," but gives men life. What is death in the Old Testament is life in the New. The weapons in the Old Testament were carnal. Ours are spiritual. In 2 Cor. 10:4, 5 we read,

⁴ For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵ We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

The examples of the Old Testament ought to be viewed as biblical types and shadows, rather than as literal models for Christian behavior. The 153 men who died in the fire of Elijah represent the sons of God who were to be baptized by fire later. These are the same as the 153 mature fish that the disciples caught after Jesus' resurrection (John 21:11). After fishing all night from the left side of the boat (that represents judgment), Jesus told them to try fishing from the right side (mercy). When they did so, they became fishers of men.

Hosea 1:10 speaks of the "*sons of God*." The Hebrew term reads, *beni h' elohim*. Since each Hebrew letter is also one of their numbers, one can add up the numbers of each letter in a word or phrase to get its numeric value. The numeric value of *beni ha elohim* is 153. This is what actually sets the spiritual meaning of the number 153. Thus, when Elijah's fire burned up the 153 men, it was an Old Testament type of the baptism of fire coming upon the sons of God. It was not meant to be used literally as a model of Christian behavior. This is why Jesus rebuked His disciples for their carnal thinking.

Those who DID receive Jesus were given the Sword of the Word, and they went forth to conquer the world by the power of the divine fire that was poured out later on the day of Pentecost. Those who refused to accept Jesus Christ and His gift of Pentecost continued to think that the physical sword was an acceptable weapon to use on God's "enemies." They were absolutely wrong.

Those who believed Jesus' words followed a new path. They preached the word. They "killed" people by baptism, and they called down a Pentecostal fire from heaven upon those converts. Unfortunately, over time, Pentecost was lost, and many reverted back to the physical sword in their carnal zeal to convert men by force.

What if Jesus Had Been Accepted as Messiah?

There is historical evidence that if Judah as a nation had accepted Jesus as Messiah, Rome would have given them their independence with no bloodshed at all. About the year 200 A.D. the Roman Christian lawyer, Tertullian, presented Christ to the "rulers of the Roman Empire" in a letter called Apology. (An "Apology," by the way, is not a letter asking forgiveness for some wrong that was done. An "Apology" is a letter advocating a particular position or person. In this case, Tertullian was advocating that the Roman Caesar believe in Jesus Christ.) In chapter 21, he writes,

"All these things Pilate did to Christ; and now in fact a Christian in his own convictions, he sent word of Him to the reigning Caesar, who was at the time Tiberius. Yes, and the Caesars too would have believed on Christ, if either the Caesars had not been necessary for the world, or if Christians could have been Caesars."

In other words, Tertullian tells us that Pontius Pilate was already a Christian by the time he informed Tiberius Caesar of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. In chapter five of his Apology, Tertullian continues,

"Tiberius accordingly, in whose days the Christian name made its entry into the world, having himself received intelligence from Palestine of events which had clearly shown the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the Senate, with his own decision in favor of Christ. The Senate, because it had not given the approval itself, rejected the proposal. Caesar held to

his opinion, threatening wrath against all accusers of the Christians."

We see here that when Tiberius Caesar read Pilate's letter telling him about Jesus, he became convinced that Jesus must be a god. It was common practice in those days for the Roman Empire to recognize various gods and their religious adherents. So Tiberius proposed that the Senate proclaim Jesus to be one of the gods of the Empire. However, Roman law said that only the Senate had the right to present a new god for official consideration. Since Tiberius himself had made this proposal, the Senate rejected it.

We know, of course, that this Roman rejection was part of the plan of God. But if Judah had accepted Jesus as the Messiah and King, it is certain that Pilate would have interviewed Jesus under very different circumstances. Pilate still would have become a Christian. He would have written to Tiberius Caesar, as it was his duty to keep the emperor informed of such events. The emperor no doubt would have wanted to interview Jesus in person, at the recommendation of Pilate. Jesus would have made the trip to Rome, addressed the Senate, and I believe they would have been very impressed with His wisdom, love, humility, and miraculous signs.

They would have realized very quickly that Jesus was not merely "one of the gods" that ought to be recognized officially. I believe that Rome would have been proclaimed as a Christian nation, and that the pagan people would have forsaken their false gods. I believe that Judah would have been set free, along with all other nations. Or rather, all the nations that Rome ruled would have been given to Jesus Christ, the King of Kings.

We know, of course, that none of this was actually in the plan of God. God had fore-ordained a Pentecostal Age that would serve as a transition between the Old Testament kingdom (the type) and the ultimate Kingdom of God (the antitype). Pentecost would fail to manifest the Kingdom in its fullness, because it was fore-ordained that the perfect Kingdom would be manifested by the feast of Tabernacles in the age to come.

It was also necessary that Jesus be betrayed and killed as the Sacrifice for sin. Hence, His first coming was not meant to bring us the full manifestation of the Kingdom, but rather to establish the transitional Age of Pentecost. This Age would serve to train God's

rulers to hear His voice and obey Him as good and faithful servants, so that they would become servant-kings, rather than tyrant-kings. They would also learn the mind of God by observing Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace and come to realize that even though He condoned bloodshed in the old order, this was not really the heart of God at all.

By looking at “what might have been,” both in Joshua’s day and in the days of Christ’s first coming, we can see how Jesus’ peaceful method of conquering the world could have worked very well, if it had been the right time. But it was only the start of a Pentecostal Age in those days. Even so, the principle is applicable today and shows us the manner in which God’s Kingdom will spread to all nations during the Tabernacles Age that lies ahead.

Bloodshed is not the ultimate weapon of the believer—certainly not for the overcomer. This is not how the overcomers will overcome the world in our day under the anointing of the Feast of Tabernacles. The manifested sons of God (Rom. 8:19) will reflect the will and character of Jesus Christ to the world. This will spark a world-wide “revival,” and it will not take long to bring the entire world under the feet of Jesus Christ. But it will be done by love, not by bloodshed, for we have a better sword.

There will be some bloodshed, of course, during this time, but it will be done by those who do not possess such a sword as ours. It is important to understand the mind of God in this matter, lest we engage in spiritual warfare under an Old Testament model and become bloodthirsty in the process.

How to Eat Clean Spiritual Food

To conduct proper spiritual warfare, which has the potential of altering world history as well as the lives of individual people, one must know how to “eat” and process the word that God gives us. In this matter, the food laws of Leviticus 11 are paramount.

1. Animals

There are four basic categories of food laws which teach us how to eat clean spiritual food. First the clean animals in Lev. 11:3,

³ Whatever divides a hoof, thus making split hoofs, and chews the cud, among the animals, that you may eat.

When you receive a word from God, it is not *established* as truth until it has received a double witness. All truth “stands” upon the earth on a double witness, as we read in Deut. 19:15,

¹⁵ A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

Paul refers to this verse in 2 Cor. 13:1, saying,

¹ This is the third time I am coming to you. Every fact is to be confirmed by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

When one receives a word from the Lord, it is to be taken seriously, but it is not to be regarded as “established” until He has seen fit to give it a double witness. This is a divine law. God set it up this way in order that we might know the truth and so that we might know WHEN to act upon it.

In Gen. 41:32 we read the account of how Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dreams regarding the seven years of plenty that would be followed by the seven years of famine:

³² Now as for the repeating of the dream to Pharaoh twice, it means that the matter is determined [Heb. *koon*, “to be erect, set up, to be established”] by God, and God will quickly bring it about.

We see from this that the double witness to Pharaoh not only established the word as truth, but it also indicated timing—that God was now about to bring it to pass. The first witness alerts us to the truth, assuming it is a true word from God. The second witness tells us that the time is now for it to come to pass or to act upon it.

Like the clean animals that have cloven hoofs, the word stands upon a double witness. And those who are given a word from God through one of His servants ought also to act upon it through the mouth of the double witness. Any preacher that insists that their followers accept his word without a second witness (usually in the Bible itself) is dispensing an unclean word. And anyone who hears a word and does not pray to receive his own inner witness by the Spirit has turned that word into an unclean thing.

Secondly, the animal must “chew the cud.” Clean animals graze and then later chew their cud often in the shade of a tree. God created such animals in this way in order to illustrate for us the principle of meditation on the word. This is the meaning of *Selah* in the Psalms. Food and other things used to be weighed by suspending them on a scale (balances). Hence, *Selah* means “suspension, to hang up, to weigh.” It was a word that signaled a pause in the music of the Psalms, giving time for the people to weigh the meaning of the words.

To be a clean word from God, the giver of the word must allow the people time to weigh it and meditate upon it. One may go to a meeting and graze upon many new truths, but then each person ought to go home and “chew the cud.” This is what makes the word clean and lawful by the law of the double witness.

2. Fish

The next category of food in the food laws are the clean fish. We read in Lev. 11:9,

⁹ These you may eat, whatever is in the water: all that have fins and scales, those in the water, in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat.

Clams, oysters, shrimp, crab, and other shellfish are not included in the list of clean foods because they were created to be the water purifiers of the sea. They eat waste material and sewage in order to keep the seas clean. This is their natural, God-given function.

The fins on a clean fish are its guidance system. This teaches us that to eat clean spiritual food, one must have divine guidance. One must be led by the Holy Spirit. Without such guidance, the Bible is just a dead book. Without the Holy Spirit, men are left to their own conscience to determine the right course of action or belief. Yet the heart of man is incapable of coming up with truth, no matter how many facts they learn. Facts are just dead beasts, while Truth is a living Person.

Secondly, fish must have scales to be clean. Scales are the protection, the “armor” of a fish. This teaches us that we must put on the whole armor of God in order to ensure that we eat the clean word. Paul tells us in Eph. 6:10-17,

¹⁰ Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹ Put on the full armor of God, that you may be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹² For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³ Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴ Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Paul relates this armor specifically to spiritual warfare. In regard to this, let me point out that the purpose of this armor and this warfare is not to conduct conventional warfare against flesh and blood. The sword is not designed to kill men’s bodies but to kill “the flesh,” that is, the carnal attitudes and views which are not of God. The shoes are “the preparation of the gospel of PEACE,” not the gospel of war and bloodshed. Without a mature *agape* unconditional love, a person will engage in spiritual warfare for the purpose of destroying one’s perceived enemies, instead of with the attitude of Christ, who was willing to suffer injustice and even to die for those same enemies.

3. Fowl

The third category of clean food is the fowl of the air. We read of these in Lev. 11:13-19. Examples are given, but no particular principle is expressed by which to distinguish clean and unclean birds. Hence, we must understand by the leading of the Spirit. In looking at these birds, we are struck by the fact that all of them are scavengers. They eat dead things on the road or in the woods, along with rodents and other small animals. In this capacity, God created them to prevent disease by keeping the land clean of rotting animals.

They are also meat eaters, and they do not drain the blood from their prey before eating them. In this capacity, the law teaches us not

to be bloodthirsty—that is, to eat that which dies of itself without having the blood drained from it. Lev. 17:10-15 speaks of this, for the life (literally, the SOUL) is in the blood, and for this reason the blood was given for an atonement for our souls. It was to be poured out upon the ground, rather than consumed by man.

Ultimately, the blood of Jesus Christ was to be poured out upon the ground to atone for sin. Isaiah 53:12 says He poured out His soul unto death. The soul is put for His blood that was poured upon the ground, because the soul is in the blood.

In John 6:51-58 Jesus said that in order to have eternal life all men had to eat His flesh and drink His blood. The Jews were scandalized by this, of course, unable to see His meaning. He meant that men had to “eat” the words that He spoke and “drink” of His life—that is, they had believe in Him and follow His model.

In some cultures, men have consumed the blood of their enemies or of wild animals thinking to gain power or consume the souls of their enemies. This is unlawful, even by New Testament standards (Acts 15:29).

In Ezekiel 35:6 the people of Edom, or Idumea, were chastised for being bloodthirsty:

⁶ therefore, as I live, declares the Lord God, I will give you over to bloodshed, and bloodshed will pursue you; since you have not hated bloodshed, therefore bloodshed will pursue you.

Edom means “red,” and was the nickname of Esau (Gen. 36:8). His name is close to Adam, which means “ruddy.” The Hebrew root word is *dam*, which means “blood.” Hence, the “field of blood” where Judas was buried is called Aceldama (Acts 1:19). The mind of the flesh is from the old man, Adam. It is expressed by the actions of Edom. It will always betray you like Judas. Bury it where it belongs.

Spiritual warfare is for those who hate no one. It is for those who, like Jesus, can love even Judas and call him “friend” (Matt. 26:50). It is for the peacemakers (Matt. 5:9), not for those who want to take the kingdom by violence and by force. It is for those who wear the shoes of the preparation of the gospel of peace. Every law shouts this upon the housetops. Let us have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying.

4. Insects

The final category of clean food is found in Lev. 11:20-23, dealing with insects, such as locusts and grasshoppers:

²⁰ All the winged insects that walk on all fours are detestable to you. ²¹ Yet these you may eat among all the winged insects which walk on all fours: those which have above their feet jointed legs with which to jump on the earth.

This speaks of immature believers, those who yet “*walk on all fours*.” Spiritual babies are those who still crawl close to the earth. While this condition is “detestable” in every case, yet they are clean food if they are able to jump, or leap higher.

Many Church organizations are designed to keep people from growing spiritually, because they have found that the more people grow, the more likely they are to begin arguing with their leaders about their creeds and doctrines. It is easier for a denomination to keep them immature and ignorant, and so most preaching is limited to the “milk” of the word—the salvation message. Thus, the choir gets evangelized every week, and people come to Church out of duty, rather than with an expectation of actually learning something. Many come only to partake of sacraments that are designed to maintain their current status as children of God, yet teach them nothing new year after year.

Even a bite-sized morsel that is no bigger than the meat on an insect can be a clean meat, if it actually contains some nourishment. It is clean when designed to cause men to leap higher. However, it can become an unclean food when it is designed to keep the people immature, crawling on all fours. But those who have the desire to leap heavenward are clean through His word (John 15:3).

This final category of clean food specifically relates to the level of spiritual maturity that is necessary in conducting spiritual warfare. Spiritual warfare is not for those who desire to remain immature. If even an immature believer can turn his eyes heavenward and begin to leap off the earth, he is qualified to participate in spiritual warfare, though I would suggest that he follow the lead of another who is more mature and has such a calling.

Military Defense and God's Protection

Let me say at the outset that it is NOT a sin to be a soldier in the military. It is not the ideal occupation, of course, but neither is it a sin. There are certain realities in the world, which make the military a necessity. It is necessary not only because there are evil men in the world, but also because the Christian believers do not have the level of spiritual maturity and faith to believe that God can actually protect their nation from their enemies without help from the military. And so, in a world where men's faith is imperfect, men rely upon the military for their protection.

The fact is, even in the Old Testament times, God played down the importance of military might. God clearly taught the people to rely upon divine protection, rather than their military strategy. In Deut. 17:14-20 we find the divine instructions that the king of Israel was to follow. Few of their kings actually took heed to these things, and so it became more prophetic of how the King of Kings would rule Israel and the world. Jesus, being perfect, always follows His own law, for He was the Lawgiver who spoke to Moses. Deut. 17:16 gives us one of the divine instructions for kings:

¹⁶ Moreover, he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor shall he cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, since the Lord has said to you, You shall never again return that way.

In ancient times, horses were used for the cavalry. Whoever had the most horses had a great advantage in warfare. Nowadays the cavalry rides in armored tanks. But God says that any king relying upon "horses" will inevitably bring the nation back to Egypt—that is, he will put the people back into bondage.

This is what will accompany an "arms race." America has known such an arms race, and its arms buildup has been in direct proportion to our loss of individual freedoms. This condition has now come fully into fruition with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security in the wake of the Sept. 11, 2001 destruction of the Twin Towers in New York City. In re-classifying American citizens who oppose the government as "enemy combatants," instead of as criminals, they are able to justify holding citizens without trial or due

process of law. If left unchecked, this innovation will only expand to include more and more American citizens as time passes.

Isaiah shows us that this same problem existed in his day. The prophet says in Isaiah 30, beginning in verse 1,

¹ Woe to the rebellious children, declares the Lord, who execute a plan, but not Mine, and make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, in order to add sin to sin; ² who proceed down to Egypt, without consulting Me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh, and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt. ³ Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame.

The prophet was speaking of the natural tendency to seek safety in armaments, rather than by turning to God in repentance and in obedience. Isaiah said that reliance upon one's weapons of war for one's protection is to bring the people back into the bondage of "Egypt." The people had rejected the divine law, and as a result, God's judgment was coming upon the nation of Israel. But instead of repenting, they chose to arm themselves against divine judgment "*to add sin to sin.*" Again, in verses 12 and 13 we read,

¹² Therefore thus says the Holy One of Israel, Since you have rejected this word and have put your trust in oppression and guile, and have relied on them, ¹³ Therefore this iniquity will be to you like a breach about to fall, a bulge in a high wall, whose collapse comes suddenly in an instant. . . .

¹⁶ And you said, "No, for we will flee on horses," therefore you shall flee! "And we will ride on swift horses," therefore those who pursue you shall be swift.

Here the prophet makes it clear that he is talking about depending upon horses purchased from Egypt, not Egypt itself. The people were not planning any trips to Egypt. Egypt was merely the symbol of oppression. When Israel depended upon horses for their protection, instead of repenting of their lawlessness, the people were placed into bondage.

It is the same today. America has much need of repentance, and the event of Sept. 11, 2001 was a very important sign that God's hand

of protection has been removed from our nation. Yet instead of repenting, our leaders decided to defend ourselves from the enemies that God raised up to judge us. As Isaiah said, we added sin to sin. We have decided to purchase more arms from the great “industrial-military complex” (as President Eisenhower once called it). God said that such thinking would bring us into bondage to “Egypt.”

And so, American citizens were rounded up and incarcerated without being charged with any crime. The government was given the right to tap the telephones and search houses or businesses without a warrant. The basic freedoms that the American Constitution gave us in the beginning have now been entirely lost.

And this was done by a Christian president, supported by Christian people! That is, he is one who represents the people and the Christians in particular. Christians have been lawless, and Christians have been at the forefront in calling for more bombs and vengeance against the “Arab terrorists.” In a strange twist of fate, the non-Christians seem to have more Christian character than the Christians!

This same passage, beginning with Isaiah 30:18, then prophesies the solution to the problem. It says the day will come when God will send His Holy Spirit as rain upon the earth. (This is the former and latter rain also mentioned in Joel 2:23, which is associated with the outpouring of the Spirit.) Isaiah 30:25 says,

²⁵ And of every lofty mountain [nation] and on every high hill [small nation] there will be streams running with water on the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

I believe this verse spoke of the destruction of the Twin Towers in New York on Sept. 11, 2001, for that event, as time will show, marked a turning point in world history. Though it was a terrible event, Isaiah makes it clear that it is also a sign that God is about to pour out the rain of the Holy Spirit. This is the good news, for God’s judgments are now coming upon America in order to turn the hearts of the people.

But apart from a genuine outpouring of the Spirit, their hearts cannot be turned, for only the Holy Spirit can show people the purpose of divine judgment. Only by seeing this can the people truly repent from their lawlessness and become obedient to God.

In Israel, there are two rainy seasons. The “former rain” comes at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles in October. The “latter rain” comes between Passover and Pentecost in April and May. These rainy seasons are prophetic of two historic times when the Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon the earth. In Acts 2, the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit was the latter rain. But today we look for the former rain of the Feast of Tabernacles.

The destruction of the Twin Towers was, I believe, the primary sign that we are now in the “day” when the Spirit will be poured out in a greater way upon all flesh. That is the good news of Isaiah. But meanwhile, there is also the bad news that the American government is leading us back to the bondage of “Egypt.” Isaiah 31 continues,

¹ Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, and rely on horses, and trust in chariots because they are many, and in horsemen because they are very strong. But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the Lord. . . . ³ Now the Egyptians are men and not God, and their horses are flesh and not spirit.

The Hebrew word for horse is *sus*. It is spelled with two letters in Hebrew. Both are the same letter, *samech*. A *samech* literally means a prop or support. Thus, a horse is a double support in time of battle. The problem is that it is a fleshly support, for “*their horses are flesh and not spirit.*”

Jesus’ Hebrew name was Yah-shua, which means “salvation.” Yet there is also a very interesting origin of the Greek form of his name, which is Iesous, from which we derive the name Jesus. In Hebrew, YAH-SUS would mean Yahweh’s horse. This is the Hebrew name transliterated into Greek as Iesous. We translate this into English as JESUS. The name of Jesus is literally a Hebrew word and means God’s horse, the symbol of salvation (Yahshua). Let us, then, not put our trust in fleshly horses for our salvation, but rather in Jesus.

Chapter Three: The Laws of Spiritual Warfare

We have shown earlier that a nation's military is a necessary evil in an age where men have rejected the better and sharper weapons of the Holy Spirit. Secondly, military preparedness seems to be necessary in the eyes of a disobedient nation that wishes to remain free, yet lawless in the sight of God. While such military strength might succeed for a time in protecting us from our enemies, it cannot for long defend any nation against divine judgment.

The only real defense that can make any nation secure, both internally and externally, is by their trust in God and obedience to His laws. These laws extend far beyond the Mosaic law (properly understood and applied). They must be interpreted by the precedents set by the prophets and by the example of history recorded in the historical books, such as the Kings and Chronicles.

Most importantly, the law must be understood through the eyes of the Lawgiver Himself—Jesus Christ. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus gave us some examples of how the religious leaders of the day had misunderstood the law. Jesus taught it correctly and showed by his life (and in His death) how it was to be understood.

The laws of war are found in Deuteronomy 20. These are the basic rules, not only for military service, but also for spiritual warfare. If a nation should feel the necessity to go to war or to prepare for it, they ought to follow the law in Deuteronomy 20. Likewise, if anyone feels called to engage in spiritual warfare, they should study this same chapter and understand it through the heart of Jesus Christ.

Prior Assumptions

In Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28 God told Israel that if they were to become disobedient and rebellious against Him, God would bring judgment upon them. As a final judgment, God said He would cause foreign nations to conquer and oppress Israel until they repented of their lawlessness. God actually did this six times in the book of Judges alone. Deut. 28:49 says,

49 The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as the eagle swoops down, a nation whose language you shall not understand.

In such cases, the solution to the problem is NOT to go fight the enemy. The solution is to repent. The solution is NOT to pray that God blesses us in our warfare against the enemy, so that we might be victorious. The solution is to repent.

We learn from this that if God brings enemies upon us to judge us for casting aside His law, and if we do not repent, we would have no right to expect God's blessing as we go out to war. Such a war would only be adding sin to sin.

Hence, it is important that we understand the prior assumptions that are inherent in these laws of war in Deuteronomy 20. These instructions assume that the nation is godly. That is, it assumes that the nation has adopted God's law, rather than creating its own laws.

Only if a nation is in obedience to God does it have the right to appeal to God for protection and victory in battle. In the case of America, we long ago forfeited that right. The moment our legislature assumed the right to pass laws that contradicted divine law, we lost the right to enjoy divine protection.

It makes no difference if our president is a Christian or not. As long as our nation sends men to prison instead of making them pay restitution (Ex. 22:1-4), we have no right under God to be free. As long as our nation allows parents to murder their unborn or half-born children, we have no right under God to be free. As long as our nation allows men and women to commit adultery or to engage in homosexual relations with immunity, we have no right under God to be free. As long as we allow men the freedom to distribute pornography, we have no right under God to be free. As long as we give our political leaders the right to bear false witness in the guise of national security, we have no right under God to be free.

These and many other issues are the reasons God removes His hand of protection from us. And when He does so, why do we yet pray that God will be on our side in time of war? Do we expect God to help us remain in our lawless state? Why do we value so highly the freedom to be disobedient and rebellious against God?

These are the prior assumptions of the laws of warfare. The laws found in Deuteronomy 20 presume that the war is righteous. It presumes that God did not bring the enemy against us to judge us for our own sin. Once this has been determined, then and only then do we have the right to ask for God's blessing in warfare.

The same holds true with spiritual warfare.

Let the Fearful Stay Home

The first thing God says in Deuteronomy 20 is that no one ought to be forced to fight any battle. By extension, no one ought to be forced to join the military. A military draft is not biblical.

¹ When you go out to battle against your enemies and see horses and chariots and people more numerous than you, do not be afraid of them; for the Lord your God, who brought you up from the land of Egypt, is with you. ² Now it shall come about that when you are approaching the battle, the priest shall come near and speak to the people. ³ And he shall say to them, Hear, O Israel, you are approaching the battle against your enemies today. Do not be fainthearted. Do not be afraid, or panic, or tremble before them, ⁴ for the Lord your God is the One who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

Even though God condoned carnal warfare in those days (because they had rejected the Sword of the Spirit), God still made it clear that they were not to depend upon their military strength for victory. They were to understand that God was on their side, and He was the deciding factor. It did not depend upon how well trained Israel was, nor did it depend upon how many Israelite warriors they had, nor did it depend upon how many horses they had in their cavalry.

This passage also assumes that God had directed them into battle in the first place, and that their cause was just. If not, these laws of war do not even apply. No nation can assume that God is on their side any time they declare war. They must hear the voice of God and respond only to Him. If He says to do battle, then do so. If not, then any declaration of war would be a lawless act.

If God speaks to a nation and tells them to declare war, then they are to do so. They are not, however, to engage in lying propaganda

about the enemy or about the causes of this war. If one must lie in order to justify the war, then the war is most likely unjust and not according to the command of God.

Take note also that the priests had a role in addressing the troops. They were the ones called to tell them the word of the Lord. Presumably, they had already won the battle in spiritual warfare, so that they could assure the troops that God had already given them the victory in advance.

Deut. 20:8 gives command to the military officers also, saying,

⁸ Then the officers shall speak further to the people, and they shall say, Who is the man that is afraid and fainthearted? Let him depart and return to his house, so that he might not make his brothers' hearts melt like his heart.

Here we find that any soldier that does not have faith and confidence that God had given them the victory could go home and not participate in the battle. No one should be forced to fight under threats of court martial for refusing to do so. This was to be strictly a volunteer army, and every soldier had the right to return home at any time. When was the last time an American soldier had this right?

Dedicating One's Household

Deut. 20:5 says,

⁵ The officers also shall speak to the people, saying, Who is the man that has built a new house and has not dedicated it? Let him depart and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man dedicate it.

Dedicating one's new house was more than a simple matter of saying a prayer over one's newly-built house. A biblical house is really a household—that is, a family—particularly when we deal with the spiritual principle behind this law. It is a law that tells us that those who engage in spiritual warfare ought to have their house in order.

To engage in spiritual warfare is a serious business and a certain amount of spiritual maturity is needed. This is also why the military age was set at twenty years of age, as seen in every census taken of

Israel's men of war (Num. 1:2, 3). Military age in America is just eighteen years of age, but this is unlawful in God's eyes. Military planners want younger men because they are considered to be more impressionable, and they are more easily convinced that their enemies ought to be killed. While this policy is probably more advantageous to the military planners, God wants His spiritual warriors to know the full truth of the situation without such manipulative policies. He demands maturity, whereas America prefers impressionability.

It is for the same reason that Paul tells Timothy that church leaders—who ought to be mature and fit for spiritual warfare—were not be novices (1 Tim. 3:6) and were to “know how to rule his own house” (1 Tim. 3:5). This is connected to the other stipulation in verse 7, which says,

⁷ And who is the man that is engaged to a woman and has not married her? Let him depart and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man marry her.

In other words, as far as God is concerned, establishing a family takes precedence over military service. This does not mean that a man should marry his fiancé, say a prayer over his new house, and then immediately go into battle. In Deut. 24:5 we read,

⁵ When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army, nor be charged with any duty; he shall be free at home one year and shall give happiness to his wife whom he has taken.

We see here that a young man who is engaged to be married is not eligible for military service until at least one year after he has been married. This is really what it means to dedicate one's house. It is not so much the physical house that needs dedication, but rather the household, the family itself.

The manner in which Jesus treated the women of his day shows forth in this law. Jesus' treatment of Mary Magdalene and the woman at the well in Samaria astonished the people—even Jesus' disciples, who were not used to such behavior. But this law in Deut. 24:5 is based explicitly upon giving happiness to one's wife. Was God interested in a woman's happiness? Absolutely so! This law gives us a glimpse into the heart of God that ought to help men know how to treat their wives and women in general.

Planting a New Vineyard

Deut. 20:6 reads,

⁶ And who is the man that has planted a vineyard and has not begun to use its fruit? Let him depart and return to his house, lest he die in the battle and another man begin to use its fruit.

The American military has always made military exemptions for farmers, because they have recognized the importance of agriculture. This is a biblical principle. However, it is also applicable in matters of spiritual warfare. Isaiah 5:1-7 is a song concerning His vineyard.

¹ Let me sing now for my well-beloved a song of my beloved concerning His VINEYARD.

This song goes on to show that God planted a vineyard in the land of Canaan, but that it bore sour grapes. He was speaking of Israel, which was His Kingdom. Verse 7 says,

⁷ For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah His delightful plant. Thus, He looked for justice, behold, bloodshed; for righteousness, but behold, a cry of distress.

When we apply the law to spiritual warfare, the vineyard is the Church—that is, true believers in Christ, not a denomination or an organization. When God plants the word of the Kingdom in the heart of a new believer, that person becomes part of God’s vineyard and becomes a citizen of the Kingdom of God. But new believers are not eligible to engage in spiritual warfare. They must come to some level of maturity before taking such responsibility.

In Lev. 19:23-25 we are told how long it takes for a new believer to come into some level of spiritual maturity so that he is eligible to engage in spiritual warfare.

²³ And when you enter the land and plant all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as forbidden [uncircumcised]. Three years it shall be forbidden to you; it shall not be eaten. ²⁴ But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, an offering of praise to the Lord. ²⁵ And in the fifth

year you are to eat of its fruit, that its yield may increase for you; I am the Lord your God.

As we will see later in our study, Deut. 20:19 and Psalm 1:3 tell us that trees represent men.

New believers should not be called into spiritual warfare for the first four years of their walk with the Lord. In the fifth year, they can do so. This is, of course, a legal minimum. It does not mean that a believer is actually eligible even in the fifth year. It depends upon his spiritual growth. This is one of those cases where one must go beyond the law and not be a legalist.

It is similar to what Jesus said about not murdering others. The law itself cannot prosecute people until they actually commit the murder. But Jesus said that if a man even hates his brother without cause has already committed murder in his heart (Matt. 5:22). In other words, it is not enough to follow the letter of the law that sets forth basic minimums of morality. One’s righteousness must exceed that of the Pharisees (Matt. 5:20).

And so the fifth year is the legal minimum allowed for spiritual growth before one becomes eligible for spiritual warfare. But let us not assume that the day a believer enters his fifth year that he is now spiritually mature enough to engage in spiritual warfare.

Appointing Military Leaders

Deut. 20:9 tells us who is to appoint military leaders, saying,

⁹ And it shall come about that when the officers have finished speaking to the people, they shall appoint commanders of armies at the head of the people.

Here we find the basic principle of leadership. The divine law says that the officers of the people were to appoint their own leaders, the commanders (generals) of the armies. The Hebrew word for “officer” is *shotare*, which literally means “a scribe.” The root word means “to write.” In those days, the magistrates (Levites) were the record-keepers, men who wrote things on tablets to keep official records of all legal transactions, decrees, court decisions, and so on.

These Levites were empowered to appoint commanders of the armies of Israel in the absence of a king. We also see that Moses appointed Joshua to lead Israel into Canaan and to fight the Canaanite

wars. Later, King David appointed Joab as his military commander. No matter who did the appointing, they were expected to pray about it and appoint God's choice, for God was King in Israel.

This is the opposite of what normally has been done throughout history to the present time. We are accustomed to having leadership appointed by a higher rank, not by a lower rank of men.

Under divine law, the primary military power remained with the people themselves, rather than with their leaders. In today's military the leaders are, in effect, dictators who cannot be removed from power by the rank-and-file soldiers. The soldiers must obey their leaders whether the commands are right or wrong, lawful or unlawful. It is easy to abuse such power.

Under God's law, the privates would appoint their corporals; their corporals would appoint their sergeants; their sergeants would appoint their captains, etc. No matter how many ranks are needed to be efficient, the promotions would be done by democratic vote by the lower rank.

One practical result of such a policy would be to ensure that the men would always have confidence in their leaders. Their leaders would be their representatives, empowered by the confidence of those under their command. Of course, it would also be the responsibility of the soldiers to pray about it, to hear God's voice, and to determine whom God has called into leadership position over them.

So it still boils down to hearing God's voice. The only question is who is called to receive the word and to discern leadership callings. The people have this calling, and they will thus be given leaders that they deserve. If they elect bad leaders, they have only themselves to blame, for they were the ones called to hear God's voice.

The same principle holds true in the political realm and in the Church. Those who framed the American Constitution were well aware of this principle. This is why they set up a democratic republic, with a president holding the rank of military commander, much the same as a biblical Judge. God was seen as the King, and the President was merely the earthly leader, elected by the people to represent them.

How to Attack a City

Deut. 20:10-12 reads,

¹⁰ When you approach a city to fight against it, you shall offer it terms of peace. ¹¹ And it shall come about, if it agrees to make peace with you and opens to you, then it shall be that all the people who are found in it shall become your forced labor and shall serve you. ¹² However, if it does not make peace with you, but makes war against you, then you shall besiege it.

The justification for any war is to establish justice and the lawful order internationally. Hence, the divine law assumes that the reason for any attack upon a city would be to rectify a wrong that they have done. Such a war is not for the purpose of gaining more territory or for expanding one's personal wealth.

Applying this passage in physical warfare means that God has outlawed the classic tactic known as an ambush. This is a serious restriction on physical warfare that hardly any worldly generals would advocate. The only ones who would give credence to this divine law would be serious Christians who have faith in God and His ability to protect Christian soldiers.

Declare Peace Before War

The reason for first offering peace terms before attacking is to give the people of the offending city an opportunity to repent of its crime. This also gives them the opportunity to defend themselves in a divine court of law, for it might be that Israel had misunderstood the situation or had somehow falsely accused that city. In any accusation the basic principle is best stated by Nicodemus in John 7:51,

⁵¹ Our law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?"

As a member of the Sanhedrin, he was well aware of this principle. Perhaps for this reason, knowing that many colleagues in the Sanhedrin had already judged Jesus Himself, he came to Jesus by night to speak with Him in person (John 3). He did not want to be guilty of violating the law of Deut. 20:11.

Whether we apply this law to conflicting nations or to disputing individuals, the basic principle is the same. We are not to come with an accusation, but with the word of peace and reconciliation. We are not to confront the one who has offended us, saying, “Why have you done this?” We are to come with a message of peace, saying,

“It appears to me that you may have done this, and it has become a stumbling block to me, a rock of offense. Psalm 119:165 says, ‘*Those who love Thy law have great peace, and nothing causes them to stumble,*’ but I am still somewhat immature spiritually and have stumbled over this. Please forgive me. What can we do to resolve this?”

This kind of approach, I believe, is what Paul meant when he wrote in Gal. 6:1 and 2,

¹ Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another’s burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.

The passage above is also the basis for Jesus’ admonition in Matt. 18:15-17, which reads,

¹⁵ And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. ¹⁷ And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

There are many who read Jesus’ instructions and use His words as a bludgeon against the offending party. They come and “*tell him his fault,*” (KJV) as an accusation, rather than as a message of peace. The NASB translation above is better, “reprove him in private.” However, one must keep in mind that this assumes that the other party proves to be actually guilty. No one ought to assume this from the beginning, however, for one should never assume guilt before the hearing, no matter how guilty the other party may appear to be.

Too often it is done with a wrong spirit, and the result is almost never a peaceful reconciliation. It must be done in love to be lawful. The primary reason for approaching the offending party in private is to protect the one who has offended you, so that it will be easier for him to repent—if he is indeed guilty. And if he is not guilty, it is less embarrassing to you to repent! And so it is also among nations.

Modern nations do have diplomats, whose job is to communicate with foreign governments and to resolve disputes in private. The Kingdom of God also has diplomats, or ambassadors, who are called to bring a word of reconciliation to God’s “enemies.” Paul speaks of this in 2 Cor. 5:18-20,

¹⁸ Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

There are many citizens of the city of Babylon in the world, who have usurped authority over God’s creation. This city has stolen the earth and rejected the rightful King over the earth. Babylon has declared itself to be the enemy of Jesus Christ. But before Jesus Christ declares war on Babylon (Rev. 17-19), He has sent out His ambassadors to declare peace to that city. He has given the citizens of Babylon thousands of years in which to repent and be reconciled to God. You see how God has followed His own law.

This ought to be our example. Evangelists and missionaries ought not to go to these Babylonian citizens and “tell them their faults” in a self-righteous manner. They ought to go to them in humility, love, and gentleness, declaring peace to them.

They ought not to go to them breathing hell-fire and damnation with a message straight from Jonathan Edwards. They ought to go with the message that Jesus has died for them while they were yet His enemies (Rom. 5:10). God has conciliated them and is asking that they, in turn, be conciliated to God.

In 2 Cor. 5:18-20 above, the term translated “reconciled” is from the Greek word *katallasso*. It means “conciliation,” a one-sided declaration of peace. God has taken the first step toward *apokatallasso*, which is “reconciliation” between both parties.

This is one of the most important laws of warfare found in the divine law. The fact that God Himself is following this law gives it great weight of revelation.

The city of Babylon, however, will not make peace with Jesus Christ of its own accord. This is prophesied in Revelation 17-19. Hence, Jesus Christ has declared war on Babylon and is even now undermining its foundations and walls. In one sense this war has been waged from the beginning of time. Yet in the sense of world history, the battle began on Nov. 21-29, 1993 shortly after the end of the 40 Jubilees of the Pentecostal Age (i.e., the 40 years of the reign of Saul as well as the 40 Jubilees of the Church in the wilderness). But let us not get ahead of ourselves.

Enslaving the Conquered Citizens of Babylon

Deut. 20:11, 12 (quoted earlier) says that if the offending city refuses to make peace, then we shall besiege it. But the siege must be done by the divine laws of war. Furthermore, the citizens of that offending city are to be enslaved. Yes, enslaved. But we must stress that biblical slavery is not the same as man’s systems of slavery.

Being a bond slave of Jesus Christ is not a bad thing—it is a good thing. True freedom comes only by becoming a bond slave of Jesus Christ. Conversely, freedom from Jesus Christ is to remain in bondage to sin. Romans 6:17, 18 reads,

¹⁷ But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

The apostle Paul always refers to himself as a bond slave of Jesus Christ (Rom. 1:1). True freedom is only found in being Jesus’ slave. And if men truly understood biblical slavery in past centuries, they could have used the principle to set men free, rather than as a means of oppression.

1. Sin is a Debt

In the Bible all sin is reckoned as a debt. This is made clear in the Lord’s Prayer, where we read in Luke 11:4,

⁴ And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us.

Matthew’s version of the Lord’s Prayer is found in Matt. 6:12,

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew uses the word “sins,” where Luke uses “debts.” These are not contradictory terms. All sin is reckoned as a debt. Even as sins need to be forgiven, so also do debts need to be forgiven.

A sinner is a debtor, because when a man sins against another, he becomes a debtor to the law and to the one he has offended. If he has stolen one hundred thousand dollars, the law declares his debt to be two hundred thousand dollars (Ex. 22:4), for “*he shall pay double*.” But if the debt is too high to pay, then the debtor (sinner) “*shall be sold for his theft*.” This simply means that he is to work as a slave to pay his debt.

2. Sin Brings Slavery

The way this would work is as follows: The judge would put the debtor on the market to the highest bidder in exchange for the bidder paying off the debt to the victim of injustice. The bidder would be bidding for the man’s labor according to his skills. The first bidder might be willing to redeem the debt note in exchange for five years of labor. Another bidder might bid just four years. Another might bid three, believing that the debtor’s skills would be very useful to him.

The judge might then sell the debtor to the highest bidder, who bid the highest premium on the man’s labor. That is, the highest bidder is the one who bid the lowest amount of time. The debtor would thus be sentenced to three years of labor to work for the one who had redeemed his debt note.

This redeemer is actually providing a valuable service to the debtor. Yet in exchange for this service, he must work for the redeemer.

When Adam sinned in the beginning, he incurred a debt that he could not pay. He was like the man in Jesus' parable in Matt. 18, the man who owed a debt of ten thousand talents. A talent of gold was over a hundred pounds of gold. It was a hopelessly unpayable debt. Matt. 18:25 then says,

²⁵ But since he did not have the means to repay, his lord commanded him [Adam] to be sold, along with his wife [Eve] and children [their descendants] and all that he had [all of creation, his estate, or inheritance], and repayment to be made.

This is the basic law of slavery through debt. We and all of creation have been sold into bondage through Adam's sin. It was not only Adam, the original sinner, who was affected by his sin. Nor was it limited to that single generation. Like any debtor, his entire estate was sold in order to cover the payment on his debt. Adam had been given the earth as his inheritance, and this included his own body that was made of the dust of the ground. He had authority over all the animals as well. And so absolutely everything that was his was sold by law, and still it was not enough to cover the debt incurred by his sin. And so his wife and children were also sold into bondage. Hence, all mankind in every generation was sold into bondage by due process of law. All men are thus born "under the law," that is, under the penalty of the law for Adam's sin.

3. The Time of Redemption

In this position of slavery, all are in need of a redeemer. Jesus Christ is that Redeemer. As the last Adam, He came to redeem all that was lost in Adam. Even as Adam's authority over all creation meant that all would be sold into bondage, so also the Last Adam's authority over all creation meant that all would be redeemed into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Under the first Adam, it was not the choice of creation to be sold for his sin. Under the last Adam, though it is their choice whether or not to be redeemed in these years, the great Jubilee will set all men free regardless. This is one of the laws of redemption found in Lev. 25:54,

⁵⁴ Even if he is not redeemed by these means, he shall still go out in the year of Jubilee, he and his sons with him.

In other words, the time of redemption ends with the year of Jubilee. The slave needs a redeemer from the time he is sold into bondage to the year of Jubilee. At the Jubilee, redemption becomes a moot point, for all are set free at that time, regardless of the amount of debt that they may still owe. That is the law, and it is the legal basis of grace in the New Testament as well.

Hence, all flesh and blood now has a Redeemer in Jesus Christ, who paid the full penalty for sin. According to the law of redemption in Lev. 25:48, 49, any man may be a redeemer if he has enough money to redeem another, but only a near relative has *the right of redemption*. That is, the slave owner cannot refuse the redemption price of a near relative, for he has certain lawful rights. That is why Jesus did not come in the form of an angel, but took upon himself flesh and blood (Heb. 2:14, 15). He did this, so that He could call us "brethren," as the Scriptures prophesied. As a brother, He possessed the legal right of redemption and cannot be refused. More than that, He took upon Himself the seed of Abraham, in order that He might also have the specific right to redeem Israel. So there are two levels of redemption laid down in Hebrews 2, Israel and all flesh and blood.

His provision is unlimited, for His life was worth more than all of creation combined. In paying with His life, He left no doubt that He had the means to redeem the debt note of the entire creation. His love and His willingness to redeem are unbounded, and this was His motive for redeeming the entire creation, for God so loved the world (John 3:16).

The only question is whether or not each man will accept His redemptive offer during the time of redemption. The time of redemption for each man is his own life time. Those who refuse to be redeemed in these years will have to await the final Jubilee of creation, when they will be set free by the divine will. This freedom will not be by their own will, but by the will of God alone. That is the law, as we have shown.

For a more complete study of the great Jubilee, see our book, Creation's Jubilee, or the smaller booklet, The Jubilee.

4. Every Man in His Own Order

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul establishes the doctrine of the resurrection. The idea of resurrection was hotly debated between the

Pharisees and Sadducees in Paul's day. The Pharisees (of whom Paul had been a follower in his earlier life) believed in a physical resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees, however, denied this, believing instead that men simply went to heaven when they died and had no further need of a body (Matt. 22:23).

Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 makes it clear that he had not changed his view from what he had learned earlier as a Pharisee. Though he cannot say what type of body the dead will be given at the resurrection, he affirms that they will receive a body (1 Cor. 15:35-38). Paul's proof is the simple fact that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and though His body was different after his resurrection, yet He carefully demonstrated and established that His body was made of flesh and bone (Luke 24:39). Luke, being Paul's companion and the author of the book of Acts, was also a physician and was therefore interested in these anatomical details. No doubt Luke and Paul had thoroughly discussed this conversation that Jesus had had with His disciples in Luke 24 when He first appeared to them in his glorified and resurrected body.

Paul tells us in 1 Cor. 15:22, 23,

²² For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³ But each in his own order. . . .

The word translated "order" is the Greek word, *tagma*, which means a squadron. It is a military term and a collective noun. A *tagma* did not refer to a single individual, but to a group of people. Hence, Paul was speaking of people being raised from the dead in squadrons, or groups. All will be made alive, Paul says, but not all in the same group or at the same time. There is more than one resurrection.

John tells us in Rev. 20:4-6 that the first resurrection will include only righteous people who are called to reign with Christ for a thousand years. It is a limited resurrection, hence, the first squadron of people will not include all mankind, nor even all Christians.

In Rev. 20:11-15 we read of the general resurrection that includes all the rest of mankind. Yet if we compare this with John 5:28, 29, we find that this great resurrection will encompass both Christians and non-Christians. John quotes Jesus as teaching,

²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for the hour is coming in which all that are in the tombs shall hear His voice ²⁹ and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

Jesus obviously was not speaking of the *first* resurrection, for the first one will include no unbelievers at all and is limited to a few. Jesus here was speaking of the second resurrection, which, He says, includes both good and bad, believers and unbelievers. The believers here will receive life (immortality), while the unbelievers will receive judgment.

Hence, in this general resurrection the second squadron of people will be given life—the immortal and incorruptible body. Believers in Christ make up the first two squadrons, or groups, that will come into this glorious life.

The rest are judged, as Jesus says. In Rev. 20 John says that they will be cast into the "lake of fire." However, this is not to be thought of as a torture chamber of literal fire. The divine law never demands such a punishment for any sin. The worst punishment demanded in the divine law was the death penalty, and in some cases their dead body was burned so as not to be honored with a proper burial. This was to serve as an example of shame, not torture.

To understand the nature of the lake of fire, we must compare Rev. 20 with Daniel 7, where the prophet provides us with further details about this Great White Throne Judgment. Daniel shows us that the throne itself is the fire and flame (Dan. 7:9), and that this fire streamed forth from the throne to the people who were rising from the dead. Daniel sees it as a stream, or river of fire. It depicts the judgment of the law coming from the throne.

The throne is a symbol of law, for when a monarch or judge sits upon the throne (or "bench"), he is thereby proclaiming that he judges by the law. God's law is the basis for all His judgments. He will not judge by man's law or by Church traditions. His own law is perfect and sets the standard of all right and wrong.

The overcomers are the meek (obedient) who will inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5). The whole earth will be divided into sections over which the overcomers will have the highest authority (Luke 12:42-

44). The rest of the believers will receive some limited kind of judgment. The parable of Luke 12:45-49 makes it clear that they will be given their inheritance (life) at the same time that the unbelievers receive their reward (judgment). The reward will not be the same, obviously, but the timing will be the same.

The believers (“servants”) are said to receive “few stripes” or “many stripes,” according to the law in Deut. 25:1-3, where the law’s penalty is limited to forty stripes. Whether this will be inflicted in a literal or symbolic sense, we cannot say. We do know, however, that Jesus refers to this judgment as a “fire” in the final verse of the parable (Luke 12:49). The beating is the fire, because it is the penalty of the divine law.

Paul adds his witness in 1 Cor. 3:15, where he says that those believers who built upon the Foundation of Christ using material made of wood, hay, and stubble, will lose their reward when it is tried by the fire. But even so, Paul says, “they will be saved so as by fire.” They will not lose their salvation, but they will lose the rewards of righteousness for their lawlessness and disobedience. Or, as Jesus put it in Luke 12, they will not be given the authority of the faithful servant because they oppressed those who were entrusted to them in this life time. That is, they used their positions of authority to force men (parishioners?) to be their servants, instead of serving others as Jesus taught us to do.

These non-overcoming Christians will be given various positions of administrations under the authority of the overcomers. They will be placed over various “cities” according to their faithfulness shown in their life time (Luke 19:12-26).

As for the judgment of the sinners, the “fiery law” (Deut. 33:2) proclaims all sinners to be debtors, and since these unbelievers will have no means of paying their debt, they must be “sold” to the overcomers, who will (as the Body of Christ) “redeem” them. This simply means that the sinners will be sold as slaves to the overcomers during that final age of judgment.

We are not told how long that age of judgment will last, but in 1 Cor. 15:24-28 Paul makes it clear that Christ must reign on the earth until all enemies are put in subjection to Him. The sinners must be taught obedience by those who are placed in authority over them. The Christian slave owners will not mistreat them, but they will teach

and train the unbelievers by word and by example how to be subject to the divine law. In time they will come into agreement with Christ, seeing that He is not a tyrant or an oppressor, but a loving Master.

As they learn obedience, these slaves will have the law written upon their hearts and not merely imposed upon them by force of an external law. In time, they will not need to be told what to do, for they will automatically do so with joy. The authority of the overcomers and the other believers will therefore become more and more irrelevant, for they will have less and less occasion to force obedience by their authority.

5. The Jubilee

Finally, at the great Creation Jubilee, all these slaves will be set free and given immortal life by grace alone. At present, all creation is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God, the overcomers, who will be the first squadron to receive immortal life. Creation knows that this great event will be the beginning of freedom for itself as well. When the promise is given to the first squadron, creation will view this as proof that the promise will also be given to the second squadron in the general resurrection. This, in turn, will be another proof that the creation itself will be given their Jubilee at the end of time.

Paul says in Rom. 8:19-21,

¹⁹ For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

The slavery of all creation (including man) was not without hope, for its purpose was ultimately to set all of creation free into the glorious liberty of the children of God. That is why all creation awaits this monumental event of history. It is the fulfillment of the Feast of Tabernacles in the first group of people called Overcomers. It is also the time of the first resurrection of that limited number of believers. (See chapter 2 of our book, The Laws of the Second Coming.)

6. The Biblical Purpose of Slavery

Slavery does not mean oppression, although in man's way of doing things, the terms are nearly synonymous. But in God's order, slavery is a way in which men's debts may be paid. It is a way which not only teaches the lawbreaker (sinner) to work, rather than to steal, but also safeguards the victims of injustice. The victim is repaid his losses, and the sinner is taught obedience to the laws of God.

The Bible does not condone slavery except as a means of dealing with debt (sin). If men were to go out and capture slaves for the slave market, this would be classified as kidnapping in the Bible (Ex. 21:16). Such a crime carries the death penalty and is not condoned by God or by His law.

Biblical slavery provides discipline to the sinner, administered by a redeemer who is supposed to treat the sinner with love. A sinner is one who is not yet spiritually mature and must therefore be under some form of discipline (discipleship) to teach him the ways of God. The redeemer has the sacred calling to instill in the sinner the mind of God, even as a parent would teach and discipline his children to bring them into maturity.

A redeemer does not have the right of life and death over the debtor under his authority. In fact, the law says in Ex. 21:26, 27,

²⁶ And if a man strikes the eye of his male or female slave, he shall let him go free on account of his eye. ²⁷ And if he knocks out a tooth of his male or female slave, he shall let him go free on account of his tooth.

The law also gives provision for the slave who comes to love his master and does not want to go free. This law would be astonishing in man's systems of government, but it should be normal in God's Kingdom. The redeemers in God's Kingdom are mature Christians who know how to treat their slaves responsibly even as parents would treat their own children in their various levels of immaturity. In Exodus 21 we read that the slave was to be set free after six years of labor. But in Ex. 21:5 and 6 we read,

⁵ But if the slave plainly says, I love my master, my wife and my children; I will not go out as a free man, ⁶ then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to

the door or to the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

If a man came to love his redeemer, he might not want to leave. It is obvious that the redeemer treated the man as a mature Christian ought to do. Such will be the case in the general resurrection, when God places the sinners under the authority of now-mature Christians who know how to rule with love and perfect justice. Their example will cause their slaves to come to a higher level of understanding. The slaves will not work for their masters because they *have* to do so, but rather because they *want* to do so.

Such slaves no longer desire their own inheritance, but want only to be part of their Master's inheritance. When the law of the Master is written on their hearts, they return to have their ear bored to the door. The meaning of this law is made apparent by Jesus' words in John 10:9, where He said, "*I am the door.*" To be joined to the Door means to be joined to Christ. To have one's ear pierced in this manner signified the opening of the ear, so that the believer could hear His voice. Jesus said, "*My sheep hear My voice*" (John 10:27). When such slaves return to their Master to be joined to the Door, they come saying (Psalm 40:6-8),

⁶ Sacrifice and meal offering Thou hast not desired; my ears Thou hast opened; Burnt offering and sin offering Thou hast not required. ⁷ Then I said, Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me; ⁸ I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy law is within my heart.

Bond servants of Jesus Christ have been joined with Him, and they are the sheep who hear His voice. They understand that God does not really desire burnt offerings or sin offerings, but rather that the sheep hear His voice. They come, not because they are compelled, but because it is their delight to do the will of their Master. They are in agreement with Him, and so the law is within their heart and not merely enforced by an external, or outward, decree.

Those who submit themselves as permanent bond slaves in this manner are those who become the fully mature sons of God. Jesus said in John 8:34-36,

³⁴ . . . Truly, truly I say to you, every one who commits sin is the slave of sin. ³⁵ And the slave does not remain in the

house forever; the son does remain forever. ³⁶ **If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.**

Jesus was referring to the law of the bond slave returning to have his ear nailed to the door. Jesus says that the mere slave does not remain in the house forever, because the law mandates that he be set free at some point. But “the son does remain forever.” And those slaves who return to remain in the Master’s house forever are made sons. This is the path to true freedom, because when the Son makes the bond slave free, he has true freedom in Christ. This signifies the freedom that one has when one is no longer the slave of sin.

7. Obtaining Babylonian Slaves

And so we return to our original premise in Deut. 20:11, which says that if the people of the city you are besieging refuse to repent and submit to the judgment of the divine court, they are all to be enslaved. Carnal men have done this in the past, but their motives have been self-serving. In the Kingdom of God, however, slavery is a good thing, for it teaches the slaves how to love God and obey Him.

In the final overthrow of Babylon, that great “city” that encompasses the whole world in this present age, there are those who decide to repent and submit to the rule of Jesus Christ. All Christian believers are among those people.

The unbelievers, on the other hand, are Babylon’s citizens who refuse to submit to the rule of Jesus Christ, preferring instead to fight against Him. They refuse His offer of redemption, for they mistakenly think that He is a tyrant and do not want Him to reign over them. They do not realize that freedom in Babylon is slavery to sin. They do not realize that slavery to Jesus Christ is the true place of freedom.

Perhaps such Babylonian citizens are afraid of Jesus Christ because they saw too many tyrants who claimed to be Christians and thereby received a distorted view of Jesus Himself. Perhaps they preferred the slavery of sin to the slavery of church leaders who teach that church members exist to serve the pastors and denominations.

Whatever the reason, these citizens of the besieged city represent the unbelievers who must be judged by their works at the Great White Throne. By law the unbelievers will be given to the overcomers and “enslaved” until the great Creation Jubilee sets them free—in order

that they may all return voluntarily, saying, “*Behold, I come; I delight to do Thy will; Thy law is written in my heart.*”

Citizens of Babylon are largely ignorant of biblical law. Hence, like children who begin life ignorant of right and wrong, they must be placed under authority of tutors and governors in order that the mind of Christ might be imparted to them in a loving atmosphere. This is, in fact, the judgment of the “fiery law,” which will be implemented at the Great White Throne judgment. The unbelievers will be placed under the authority of the body of Christ in order that they might learn righteousness. Isaiah 26:9 says,

⁹ . . . For when the earth experiences Thy judgments, the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness.

This is the real meaning of the law in Deut. 20:11. What a glorious and marvelous law He has given! No wonder David wrote in Psalm 19:7, “*the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul.*” In verse 9 he adds, “*the judgments of the Lord are true; they are righteous altogether.*” Understanding this verse is important, for the carnal mind would tend to abhor this law and cast doubt upon the loving character of the Lawgiver—Jesus Christ. And so we have taken the time to explain it as fully as we are able in this short book.

Get the Victory Before Going to War

One of the most revealing laws of war is found in Deut. 20:13,

¹³ When the Lord your God gives it into your hand, you shall strike all the men in it with the edge of the sword.

It is clear from verse 13 that the siege was not to begin until God had given the city into their hands. Men normally think carnally in terms of laying siege, and when the enemy city falls, then they say that God has given it into their hands. But this is a law of the Spirit, where it is assumed that the “priests” of God have finished their spiritual warfare and have won the battle in the heavens. Once the battle has been won in the heavens, and God has given the city into their hands, then and only then is it lawful to lay physical siege to the enemy city.

In other words, God’s people were not to engage in physical warfare until they had completed the spiritual warfare to change the conditions in the heavens. King David is a good example of this. In 2

Samuel 5 we read the story of how the Philistines came against David and how David inquired of the Lord before going into battle.

18 Now the Philistines came and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim. 19 Then David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go up against the Philistines? Wilt Thou give them into my hand? And the Lord said to David, Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.

Take note that King David would not fight the Philistines until God had given them into his hand. This shows David's knowledge of the divine law in Deut. 20:13. We should also point out that David did not merely pray to God for victory. Many pray for victory or for God's blessing and then, having "done their duty," they go out to fight in battle. David waited for God's answer. We are not told how long it took to obtain the answer, nor are we given details beyond what is written, but we know that David did not engage the enemy in physical warfare until he heard from God. Thus, David defeated the Philistines in that first battle.

But the Philistines regrouped and came against David a second time. Once again, David prayed, not presuming to attack without first obtaining the victory from heaven. Verses 22-25 read,

22 Now the Philistines came up once again and spread themselves out in the valley of Rephaim. 23 And when David inquired of the Lord, He said, You shall not go directly up; circle around behind them and come at them in front of the balsam trees. 24 And it shall be, when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall act promptly, for then the Lord will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines. 25 Then David did so, just as the Lord had commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba as far as Gezer.

Timing is important. One should never run ahead of God. Always wait until God has given you the command before doing such things in the world. This is the only path to a victorious life.

Kill the Men; Captivate the Women

In the Old Testament times, those armed only with a physical sword were to fulfill this law quite literally. Yet for those of us who

are armed with the great sword of the Spirit, the law says that once we have obtained the spiritual victory, we are to "kill" all the "men" by the Sword of the Spirit. That is, by the gifts and the fruit of the Spirit we are to systematically destroy every vestige of "the flesh" in the enemies of Christ.

In other words, like in Acts 2, where we have our primary example, we are to use the Sword of our mouth to speak the word of God in order to cause the people to repent. Repentance is a dying process, for it involves the slaying of one's will, one's carnal way of thinking and acting, the "old man" (Rom. 6:6; Eph. 4:22).

The law specifies killing only the males, because they symbolize the spirit of man, even as the female symbolizes the soul. There are many who mistakenly think that they must "kill the soul" in their zeal to become like Christ. But the soul is not to be destroyed. Its purpose is to manifest or reflect the mind of one's regenerated spirit.

Deut. 20:14 says what to do about the women, saying,

14 Only the women and the children and the animals and all that is in the city, all its spoil, you shall take as booty for yourself; and you shall use the spoil of your enemies which the Lord you God has given you.

In Old Testament times the women often were taken as wives and the children adopted or enslaved by Israelite families in order to increase the population of the nation. In the New Testament Kingdom of God, the Sword of the Spirit is used to increase the number of citizens in the Kingdom of God.

First, on one level, the men may represent the leadership of false religions, while the women represent their congregations or members. In this application, spiritual warfare is waged, not against the "women" but against the men. One must destroy the strongholds of ignorance and bondage to sin in order that their congregations might be captivated and incorporated into the Kingdom of God.

This does not mean, of course, that people must renounce one religion and join another. True Christianity is not a religion, but a body of people, the Body of Christ. Hence, the woman is the Bride of Christ and must be joined to Him, not to some denominational leader, which only brings another form of bondage.

Secondly, on the personal level of application, the man represents one's spirit, and the woman represents one's soul. The soul is to be taken captive, because the soul is the realm of the mind.

The man has been killed in this battle, because the spirit of man must die and be entirely replaced by the Holy Spirit.

The female is not killed, but is married to the man, because the soul is the bride of one's spirit. Its calling is not to be killed, but to be loved and to reflect that love in return, even as the moon reflects the light of the sun. Likewise, the children were to be captivated. Paul interprets this for us in 2 Cor. 10:5, saying in the context of spiritual warfare,

⁵ . . . we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

In physical warfare, they were to take the women captive, along with the children. In spiritual warfare, we are to take the soul captive, along with "every thought," which is, as it were, the offspring of the soul, or mind.

The Marriage of Soul and Spirit

Further details of this principle are found in Deut. 21:10-14. Here we read about marrying a captive woman:

¹⁰ When you go out to battle against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands, and you take them away captive, ¹¹ and see among the captives a beautiful woman, and have a desire for her and would take her as a wife for yourself, ¹² then you shall bring her home to your house; and she shall shave her head and trim her nails. ¹³ She shall also remove the clothes of her captivity and shall remain in your house, and mourn her father and mother a full month; and after that you may go in to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife.

In ancient times the Israelite warrior was presumed to be a man who knew God and was obedient to Him. That is, he was presumed to be a member of the body of Christ. The "congregation" of Israel was "the Church" of that day (Acts 7:38). If he were to take a wife from among the war-captives, it signified putting her into a covenant relationship with Jesus Christ.

This principle is applied in two ways when it comes to spiritual warfare. First, on the personal side, your human, rebellious spirit has been "killed" and replaced by the Holy Spirit. Your new spirit now takes the soul captive, along with her children (every thought). At some point, a love relationship grows, as the soul comes to love the ways of the spirit. Hence, the spirit marries the soul in order to bring forth a new type of child—the sons of God.

This "marriage" itself comes in two stages, because the divine law recognizes two types of marriage bond. There is the marriage of a man to a freewoman, and the marriage to a bondwoman. It is apparent that a woman who is a war-captive is a bondwoman.

The primary example of a bondwoman is Hagar. The primary example of a freewoman is Sarah. These are the two wives of Abram (or Abraham). A bondwoman cannot bring forth the promised seed. A freewoman can. Their marriage covenant is based upon different principles, even as the Old and New Covenants are different. The Old Covenant sets up a lawful relationship with God, but the New Covenant establishes a love relationship.

Paul tells us in Gal. 4:22-31 that these two types of marriage covenants are the two covenants: Old and New. In other words, Hagar is the old Jerusalem that remained under the Old Covenant of Moses, while Sarah is the heavenly Jerusalem that came under the New Covenant of Christ.

First, the personal application: When a man takes a soul captive and marries her to his spirit, she is at first a bondwoman. She must learn to be obedient. As a servant, she must do what the spirit tells her out of a certain amount of fear. But in time, as she comes into agreement with the spirit, the relationship changes from Hagar to Sarah. She no longer does things out of fear, but out of love. The husband no longer tells her what to do as a master, for she is now obedient by nature, rather than by compulsion.

When the soul becomes Sarah, she is now a freewoman in a New Covenant relationship with the spirit. As such, she becomes the spirit's double witness to know and implement the will of God. All truth is known by the principle of the double witness, and this is the purpose of a marriage from the beginning. When both spirit and soul hear the voice of God and are in agreement, then the person will always know the will of God.

Likewise, in a marriage between husband and wife, when both hear the voice of God independently and are in agreement, then they know the will of God for the family and cannot make a mistake. This kind of relationship is only possible, however, when the marriage is based upon the New Covenant, rather than the Old.

An Old Covenant relationship makes the wife into the man's servant, and she is not allowed to hear a word from God that might contradict the word that her husband hears. God speaks to the husband only, he tells his bondwoman wife what to do, and she does what she is told like an obedient servant.

In a New Covenant relationship, on the other hand, if the husband hears the voice of God, he consults with his wife and asks her to pray about it. She is given free access to God and is allowed to develop her own independent relationship with God, learning to hear His voice without having to go through her husband. This independent witness is essential if the husband truly wants to know the will of God, for only in this way can he receive a truly independent double witness.

But he must do so without coercion or pressure. His wife must know beyond all doubt that he trusts her to hear the voice of God. His wife must know beyond all doubt that if she hears a word from God that appears to contradict her husband's word, he will not penalize her in any way, nor will he discard her word as being false. If they receive contradictory words, then they must wait on the Lord until they are in agreement. If they do not, and if one simply overrules the other, then they will automatically slip back into the Old Covenant marriage pattern of Abram and Hagar.

The second level of application is the corporate, rather than the personal. In this application, the bride is the Church as a corporate body of people.

The Church under the Old Covenant was a Hagar type, where Christ had married a bondwoman under Moses. Like a captive woman, Israel under Moses was not ready for a New Covenant relationship with Christ. Their hearts were still pining for the things of Egypt, and they were not yet in agreement with Christ and His ways. And so, God married that nation as a bondwoman—Hagar.

Many years later, the Church under the New Covenant was supposed to be a Sarah type, where Christ marries a freewoman. It is

unfortunate, however, that in reality, much of the Church today has reverted to the bondwoman relationship of Hagar. This is most apparent in the Christian's bondage to denominational organizations and leaders, as well as the predominance of the old Jerusalem eschatological teaching.

Even so, when we study the feast of Pentecost and the Church under Pentecost in Bible prophecy, we can understand that Pentecost itself has a strong Hagar mentality in itself. Only by comparing Pentecost with the feast of Tabernacles can we understand that Pentecost is Hagar, while the feast of Tabernacles is Sarah. Hence, the feast of Pentecost is designed to teach us obedience by the leading of the Spirit. This prepares us for the feast of Tabernacles, where we rule with Christ as His double witness in the earth.

For further study on these problems, see [The Wheat and Asses of Pentecost](#) and [The Struggle for the Birthright](#).

Shaving the Captive Woman's Head

Deut. 21:12, quoted earlier, says that if a man wishes to marry one of the captivated women,

¹² then you shall bring her home to your house; and she shall shave her head and trim her nails.

She was to shave her head, because her hair was her "glory" and her "covering." 1 Cor. 11:15,

¹⁵ but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her, for her hair is given to her for a covering.

Her hair symbolically represented her covering. Some people misinterpret this verse and conclude that women should cover their hair with hats or veils. They base this upon the first part of Paul's statement that her hair is "a glory to her." They say that the glory of God was to be veiled.

But Paul says that a woman's hair itself is both her glory and her covering. It is illustrated in the fact that when the glory of God came down upon Mount Sinai, a cloud covered the mount. The cloud itself represented both the glory of God and the covering. Even as the glory of God was the covering, so also is a woman's hair. It is both her glory and her covering and needs no further veil. When a woman

wears another veil, it is a SECOND veil. It depicts an Old Covenant relationship with God, which is an indirect relationship with God. In such a relationship, the woman is not allowed to have a direct relationship with God and hear His voice for herself. She has TWO coverings—Christ and her husband.

In the Church denominations, particularly in the Roman Catholic Church, it is depicted in the fact that the people (the bride of Christ) must have a second covering in the form of the priest. The people are not allowed to have a personal relationship with God and hear His voice for themselves. If they want to hear from God, they must go to the priest, who (presumably) tells them what God says. This is precisely what the people demanded in Exodus 20:18-21.

Hence, those women who are required to wear veils are living in a Hagar-Abram relationship with God. They know God through the eyes of the Old Covenant only. Their ideal in marriage is to be the best bondwoman possible, but they must leave to their husbands the right to hear God and know His will for the family.

So what does it mean in Deut. 21:12 for the bondwoman to shave her head? It symbolically removed the covering of her inglorious past and allowed her to grow a new covering of glory under Christ. When she was in idolatry or under the bondage of false religions and their leaders, her “glory” was her shame. Paul says of this in Phil. 3:18-20,

¹⁸ . . . they are the enemies of Christ, ¹⁹ whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. ²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven. . . .

In other words, this captive woman has been taken from her former life outside of Christ, where she was part of the “enemies of Christ” in the world. The carnal mind (soul) is the enemy of Christ. It must be taken captive and then married—first as a Hagar, and then later as a Sarah—in order to bring forth the promise. This holy seed brought forth by a New Covenant relationship is “*Christ in you, the hope of glory*” (Col. 1:27).

In essence, Jesus Christ came as a conquering King by means of spiritual warfare, and found a beautiful woman among His captives (Israel). He took her as His wife, after she has first shaved her head to be removed from the authority of Egypt and her former husband.

With the coming of Christ as the Mediator of the New Covenant, He made provision for the Hagar bride to experience a new type of relationship that is based upon the relationship of Abraham to Sarah, that is, the relationship of a freewoman. Relatively few from the land of Judea were ready to move to that higher level. But those who did became the foundation of the New Testament Church.

New converts, however, were unable to move directly into a New Covenant relationship with Christ. They were like the war-captive woman who had to learn obedience and to hear the voice of God before being given the responsibility and authority of a freewoman. After the first century, much of the Church leadership failed to teach the people how to hear the voice of God, lest they hear something that contradicted the established creeds of the Church. Hence, it became easier to remove from them the right to hear God for themselves.

In this way, the Church in the Pentecostal Age reverted to an indirect relationship with God and became a bondwoman once more. They were taught to be obedient to the leadership, the priests, who alone had the right to hear God. And so, Pentecost was characterized by Hagar, rather than by Sarah. Nonetheless, there have always been a few who hungered for God and pressed on into the New Covenant. Most found themselves in a collision course with the established Church system, and many were persecuted and some even killed.

Paring Her Nails

Deut. 21:12 also says that the war-captive wife was to trim her nails as well as to shave her head.

Her fingernails were cut, because they represent to the hands what the hair represents to the head. Hair is the glory of the head, and the fingernails are the glory of the hands. Even as shaving the head signifies the change from the carnal mind to the spiritual mind, so also cutting the fingernails represents the change from the old works of the flesh to the new works of the Spirit.

War Against Cities Near and Far

The laws of war in Deut. 20 make a distinction between cities that are outside the borders of the Kingdom of God and those that are within those borders. Treatment of these cities and their citizens are quite different in order to establish some very important principles in the Kingdom of God. We continue our study in Deut. 20:15-18,

¹⁵ Thus you shall do to all the cities that are very far from you, which are not of the cities of these nations nearby. ¹⁶ Only in the cities of these peoples that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, you shall not leave alive anything that breathes. ¹⁷ But you shall utterly destroy them, the Hittite and the Amorite, the Canaanite and the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, as the Lord your God has commanded you.

So we see from this that up to this point the law was speaking about far-away cities and nations—not about the nations of Canaan. The treatment of the Canaanite nations is different. Israel was not to take any captives or leave anything alive. In other words, it was an absolute policy of extermination that included men, women, children, and even animals.

The primary question is this: Did God really hate Canaanites so intensely? Was this policy a moral mandate that literally reflected the mind of Christ? Not at all. This entire policy could have been avoided, if the Israelites had been willing to hear the voice of God at Sinai. If they had not run away from God's voice (Ex. 20:18-21), and if they had been ready to move to the next step (Pentecost) in their relationship with God, they would have received the Sword of the Spirit. With this powerful weapon, they would not have had the need to destroy all living creatures in Canaan.

Instead of the command being to destroy all life, they would have been given the Pentecostal command that Jesus gave His disciples in Mark 16:15, "*Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.*" In Matt. 28:19, 20 we read:

¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Death by baptism is a much better way to die! The Old Covenant Joshua and his followers were empowered by a physical sword. The New Covenant Joshua (Yahshua) and His disciples were empowered by the Sword of the Spirit. The literal extermination of the Canaanites is NOT a suitable example for us to follow today, for it does not

accurately reflect the mind of God or His perfect will. Instead, the example of Israel under Joshua shows us the woefully inadequate method of establishing the Kingdom of God apart from the authority of Pentecost that became available to us with the event in Acts 2.

In the New Covenant application, this law teaches us that we are not to incorporate the religious practices of pagan (false) religions in the Kingdom of God. The reason and purpose for the law is very clearly stated in verse 13:

¹³ in order that they may not teach you to do according to all their detestable things which they have done for their gods, so that you would sin against the Lord your God.

This is a lesson that the fourth-century Church forgot in their zeal to convert pagans by coercion. It was not long before the pagan temples became Christian churches, the statues of their gods received new Christian names, pagan festivals were Christianized, and even pagan doctrines were adopted with a new biblical flavor.

If they had read the law and understood it, these same Christian leaders would have known that one cannot incorporate paganism into the Kingdom of God or re-interpret the Scriptures to make it more palatable to pagans. Such a practice is the moral equivalent of leaving the Canaanites to coexist with the Israelites in the Promised Land.

Yet in applying this law, let us not interpret it in such a way that we justify religious intolerance toward others. Let us not fulfill this law in the same manner as they were required to do at a time when they lacked the Sword of the Spirit. The Church in the fourth century and beyond—to the degree that they lost the spiritual sword—began to use the physical sword against anyone who did not believe as they did. They drew upon the example of Joshua's treatment of the Canaanites to justify their religious intolerance.

Their carnality, combined with zeal, often made a deadly combination that brought bloodshed. Yet the attempted extermination of heretics only resulted in the rise of more heretics. This shows how ineffective was their physical sword.

In fact, when Israel conquered Canaan, they did NOT destroy all the Canaanites. We read this in the first chapter of Judges. Because of this, God told them in Judges 2:3,

³ Therefore I also said, I will not drive them out before you; but they shall become as thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you.

In the New Testament, this principle also became applicable. The Church came to be defined as a religious system, rather than a body of people. As such, a Christian was thought to be a baptized member of the religious system, one who conformed to a set of creeds, regardless of his character or personal relationship with God. And so it came to pass that the Church system had pagans in its membership who were in full communion with the true believers.

Because they were incapable of keeping pagans out of the religious system, God judged them by leaving the pagans in their midst. These became a thorn in the side of the Church system, and the pagan gods soon became a snare to the Church. Eventually, the believers were taught to venerate images and idols under the fiction that they were merely honoring them, not worshipping them. They were taught to keep Easter (Astarte, the pagan goddess) instead of Passover and the wave-sheaf offering. They were taught to keep Christmas instead of Tabernacles. They were taught that it was more important to believe an established creed than to have a personal relationship with Christ. The divine law was set aside, and Church law (tradition) put in its place.

Thus, Pentecost reverted to a Hagar relationship with Christ and disqualified itself to bring forth the promise of the Kingdom. Even so, this was all according to the divine plan, for Pentecost was never intended to perfect anyone. It was a leavened feast (Lev. 23:17) and as such prophesied failure in the Pentecostal Age. Though it was certainly the WILL of God (Greek: *thelema*) to be perfect under Pentecost, it was not the PLAN of God (Greek: *boulema*) that they do so. (These terms are more fully discussed in Creation's Jubilee, pages 109-110.)

Another way of looking at this failure in Israel to destroy the Canaanites is that their method—though commanded by God—was not really the mind of God at all. It was merely a divine accommodation for Israel's refusal to take the Sword of the Spirit. And so we read in Judges 3:1-7,

¹ Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to test Israel by them (that is, all who had not experienced any of the wars of Canaan). . . . ⁴ and they were for testing Israel, to find out if they would obey the commandments of the Lord, which He had commanded their fathers through Moses. ⁵ And the sons of Israel lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; ⁶ and they took their daughters for themselves as wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods. ⁷ And the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgot the Lord their God, and served the Baals and the Asheroth.

God Himself left many of the pagans among Israel in order to test the hearts of the Israelites, to see if they would continue to follow Him or if they would adopt the religious practices of the Canaanites. In the same manner, in the New Testament God spoke truth through Jesus and His disciples, but He tested the Church by putting them side by side with the pagans and other unbelievers.

At first God tested them by using the Jews who had rejected Jesus. The Church was persecuted to test their love. The Jews argued against their new doctrines to test their beliefs. In other words, did they really believe in their heart what they said they believed, or did they merely believe in ignorance what someone else had told them?

Later, the Roman government tested them to see if their relationship with Jesus Christ was really the highest priority in life, or if life and property was more important.

Finally, after Rome fell, the Church was tested by so-called heretics. God did this first to test the Christians and see if they really operated by the power of the Holy Spirit or not. Did they manifest the gifts of the Spirit? Did their lives portray the fruit of the Spirit toward others? Did they have the gift of discernment to know truth when they heard it? Would they study to show themselves approved unto God? Would they search the Scriptures to see if the things they were being taught were indeed true? Did they manifest the same character that Jesus demonstrated in His earthly ministry?

As time passed, fewer and fewer received a passing grade on God's test. The presence of heretics became a religious opportunity to

hate and kill, using the Old Testament model, rather than to love and discuss the Word under the model of Pentecostal power.

God is more interested in our character than He is with our doctrinal purity. He is more concerned with our being changed into His image (2 Cor. 3:18) than He is with our knowledge of biblical facts. In fact, without a change of character, without a change of the heart, without manifesting Christ to the world, all of our biblical knowledge is mere FACT at best. It is not truth. Truth is a Person, for Jesus is the Truth (John 14:6). Facts are dead and embalmed, so that they continue to look almost alive, and yet have no life in them.

Cutting Down Trees in the Siege

Deut. 20:19, 20 provides us with a final law of spiritual warfare:

¹⁹ When you besiege a city a long time, to make war against it in order to capture it, you shall not destroy its trees by swinging an axe against them; and you shall not cut them down. For is the tree of the field a man, that it should be besieged by you? ²⁰ Only the trees which you know are not fruit trees you shall destroy and cut down, that you may construct siege works against the city that is making war with you until it falls.

It was unlawful to cut down olive trees, fig trees, or palm trees in war. However, it was lawful to cut down oak trees in time of war. This law was quite practical for obvious reasons. However, not all men followed this basic law of warfare.

The only reason stated in the law for this prohibition is at the end of verse 19, which the NASB translates, "*For is the tree of the field a man, that it should be besieged by you?*"

The King James Version does not render this as a question, but as statement of fact: "*for the tree of the field is man's life.*" Yet the word "life" is not in the original, and is therefore italicized in the KJV. It literally reads, "*the tree of the field is MAN.*" And since there were no question marks in the original Hebrew, to pose this statement as a question is merely the opinion of the translator and is of no particular importance to us.

Psalms 1 speaks of the blessed man, whose delight is in the law of the Lord, saying in verse 3,

³ And he will be like a TREE firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers.

Both the law and the psalms, therefore, establish the trees as representing men. When we apply this law to spiritual warfare, the trees are indeed men. There are some "trees" that are fruit-bearing by nature, while others are not. Some men bear the fruit of the Spirit in the sight of God, while others do not. The law forbids us to engage in spiritual warfare against men who are fruit-bearing "trees."

1. Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

In Matt. 21:18-22 we see a very important example of spiritual warfare manifested when Jesus cursed the fig tree.

¹⁸ Now in the morning, when He returned to the city, He became hungry. ¹⁹ And seeing a lone fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it except leaves only; and He said to it, No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you. And at once the fig tree withered.

Some may think this curse was somewhat immature on Jesus' part. Why would anyone curse a fig tree just because there was no fruit on it? The lack of fruit could have been for any number of normal reasons. Perhaps earlier travelers had already stripped the tree of its fruit earlier that morning. In fact, in Mark 11:13 we read of the natural reason for this lack of fruit:

¹³ . . . and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves, for it was not the season for figs.

And so, Jesus' behavior is odd, unless we understand that Jesus discerned that this was the word of the Father, telling Him to engage in spiritual warfare against the nation of Judah for its lack of fruit.

The fig tree represented the Judean nation, as Jeremiah 24 shows. The prophet went to the temple and found there two baskets of figs, one with very good figs and one with very bad figs. Two different people each had brought the first fruits of their figs to God, as the law had commanded in Deut. 26. When such people brought their baskets of fruit to God, they were to pray for God's blessing upon them.

These first fruits represented the hearts of the people. Some were good, and some were bad. It is difficult to understand how any man could bring a basket of rotten fruit to God and still expect God to bless them. But this is what happened. And so God revealed to Jeremiah that there were two types of Judahites (Jews). He told the prophet that those who refused to submit to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, according to the judgment of the law, were bad figs. On the other hand, those who submitted to Babylon (like Daniel) and submitted to the captivity, were good figs.

In Jesus' day the same problem had emerged. There were good figs and bad once again. The bad figs refused to submit to Rome and hated them. The Zealots among them actually took up arms against Rome, believing that it was their right under God to be free. They did not understand the judgment of God upon their nation, nor did they understand that their rebellion against Rome was a revolt against God Himself.

The good figs found common cause with Jesus, the Messiah who came to set men free in a peaceful manner. The bad figs were looking for a military Messiah, one who could militarily throw off the Roman yoke. The majority of Judah was of that bad-fig mindset, and so when Jesus came to His own nation, His own did not receive Him (John 1:11). But the good figs who DID receive Him were given the power to become the sons of God (John 1:12).

This was the background behind Jesus' curse. While the tree itself withered immediately, the curse was not merely directed against a lone tree on the road to Jerusalem. It was an act of spiritual warfare against the nation of Judah itself, which had not borne fruit unto God. It was an act of spiritual warfare against the people who prayed for God's blessing, while bringing rotten fruit to the throne of God.

Hence, we see in history that the curse was fulfilled when Rome came and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D. to put down their rebellion.

With this in mind, let us say that Jesus did not violate the laws of war when he cursed the fig tree. If the fig tree had been capable of bringing forth fruit, then it would have been a violation of the law. If the nation of Judah had been capable of bringing forth the fruit of the Spirit, then again Jesus would have been in violation of the law.

Jesus said that this nation-tree would never again bring forth fruit. Jesus explained later in Matt. 24:32-34 that this fig tree would indeed come back to life at a future date—which prophecy was fulfilled in 1948 when the Jewish nation was again established. However, Jesus did NOT say that it would bring forth fruit. He said only that it would bring forth MORE LEAVES.

There was never any question about the tree's capability of bringing forth leaves. The problem was its lack of fruit. And Jesus' curse said, "*No longer shall there ever be any fruit from you.*" This says clearly that the Israeli state will not repent and bring forth the type of fruit that God desires. In fact, as we show in our book, The Struggle for the Birthright, the Israeli state was founded by the same types of rebels and terrorists that brought about their ruin in Jeremiah's day and again in the first century A.D.

So the prophecy is fulfilled that the tree has come back to life and has brought forth more leaves. The people were given one more chance to bring forth fruit, after a lengthy time of dunging (Luke 13:6-9). John the Baptist gives us the bottom line in Luke 3:9,

⁹ And also the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Hence, we should expect to see the Israeli state destroyed in the same manner as Jesus' disciples expected to see Jerusalem destroyed in the first century. The reason for the destruction has not changed. Any Israeli who wants to be spared from this disaster must cut himself loose from that doomed nation. As the apostle Paul put it, he must be grafted back into the true Kingdom tree. Rom. 11:23 says,

²³ And they also, if they do not continue in their unbelief, will be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again.

In other words, the Israeli state itself is the cursed fig tree that has now returned to life (for a time). The individual branches on that tree are the individual people themselves, who, as followers of Judaism or as secular Jews, do not have faith in Jesus as the Passover Lamb. Hence, they are not attached to the trunk of the tree, which is Christ. The only way for these dead branches to receive true life is to be removed from the dead tree and be grafted into the tree of Christ. Yet let them not think that they can remain in both the cursed tree and the

blessed tree at the same time. Nor let Christians think that they must be grafted into the cursed tree while being also in the blessed tree. This is not the way to bring forth fruit unto God.

Getting back to Jesus' act of spiritual warfare, if the Judah fig tree were EVER to bring forth fruit, it would destroy Jesus' credibility, for He prophesied that it would never do so again.

Secondly, if that Judah fig tree were EVER to bring forth fruit, then Jesus would have violated the law of Deut. 20:20, which forbids destroying fruit-bearing trees. Since the New Testament testifies that Jesus was without sin, being the unblemished Passover Lamb, we believe that Jesus did not sin by his curse of the unfruitful fig tree.

2. Stephen's Example

In Acts 7 we read of Stephen's testimony just before he was stoned to death. We also read in Acts 8:1 that Saul was present and in full agreement with those who stoned Stephen—if not an actual participant in the stoning. As Stephen was being stoned, he said in Acts 7:60, "*Lord, do not hold this sin against them.*"

From the Jewish viewpoint, Stephen was a blasphemer and worthy of stoning according to the law. From the Christian viewpoint, however, he was merely speaking the truth and was stoned for no just cause. Hence, it was murder. Nonetheless, as he was being murdered, Stephen went before the divine court and petitioned that they not be held liable for their sin.

There is no doubt that Stephen was led by the Spirit in making this petition before the divine court. Though he had the legal right to hold it against them, he did not exercise his rights. In doing so, he spared them of God's judgment. Only time would prove just how significant this act of forgiveness would be for the Church.

Saul was among those that Stephen forgave (Acts 8;1). Those stoning Stephen may have been unfruitful trees, but Saul was a FUTURE fruit-bearing tree. This became evident soon afterward at his conversion on the Damascus road (Acts 9).

Stephen gives us an example of NOT engaging in spiritual warfare when such warfare might endanger a fruit-bearing tree. He shows us how it is better to give one's life and suffer the wrong than to destroy a fruit-bearing tree—even if that tree is not yet bearing

fruit. Stephen therefore sets the standard of spiritual warfare so high as to require us to go beyond the visible evidence by which we may normally act in this matter. It shows us that if we do not act always out of *agape* love, we may inadvertently destroy a future fruit-bearing tree who might change the world for Christ.

Conclusion

It is a serious matter to engage in spiritual warfare. We must remember that we are not fighting flesh and blood. We are not fighting people but the spirits that motivate evil people and keep them in bondage. We engage in spiritual warfare for the purpose of changing men's hearts. We engage in spiritual warfare for their benefit, not for their hurt. We engage in spiritual warfare, not to call down fire from heaven upon the heads of God's "enemies," but to bring them to repentance through the love of God.

This is why it is so important that spiritual warriors have some spiritual maturity before they engage in such warfare. This is why it is so important that spiritual warriors prepare their hearts for battle by developing Christian character. Without such preparation, they may do more harm than good.