

GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical For spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement.



ARMOUR OF GOD

Spiritual Warfare

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PERSPECTIVE:-

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

 **By Nelson Thomas**

Most people in Ukraine and even around the globe never imagined that Russia would attack another sovereign country so brutally in this modern time. This shows, education as well as development does not change the mind-set of people, and it's risky to take the opponents for granted.

This is a lesson for God's people too.

Irrespective of our understanding and response, the fact remains that God's people are in a battlefield, and spiritual warfare is a reality.

From the moment of our conversion, evil spiritual forces in the heavenly places make every effort to disturb and discredit us (Eph. 6: 10 – 20).

FOUR THINGS PROVE THE REALITY OF SPIRITUAL WARFARE

1 REPEATED EXHORTATIONS IN THE EPISTLES.

Most of the authors in the New Testament refer to spiritual warfare and encourage believers to be on their guard to fight a good warfare (cf. Rom. 13:12; 2Cor. 2:11; 1The. 5:8; 1Tim. 1:18; 6:12; 2Tim. 2: 3, 4; James 4:7; 1Pet. 2:11, etc.). While referring to his ministry, Paul mentions it as warfare and declares at the end that he has fought it well (2Cor. 6:7; 10:4; Phi. 1:30; Colo. 1:29; 1Thess. 2:18; 2Tim. 4:7).

2 EVEN ANGELS FACED IT. DANIEL 10:13

The angel's revelation to Daniel is startling. From the first day of Daniel's special prayer (cf. Dan 9:3ff), God began to work; He sent His holy angel to communicate with Daniel, but on the way evil forces hindered him for 21 days. Finally, Michael the Archangel had to intervene.

3

ABOVE ALL, OUR LORD HIMSELF FACED IT VICTORIOUSLY.

A careful study of the entire scripture reveals how these evil forces tried to hinder the work of God’s redemptive programme through the ages. We see the efforts of the enemy before the incarnation of Christ and even after that (Matt. 2:16; Luke 4: 1, 13; John 14:30). However, the Lord Jesus disarmed the enemy and triumphed over him on the cross (Colo. 2:15; Heb. 2:14).

4

FINALLY, OUR LORD NOT ONLY EXHORTS US TO OVERCOME, HE PROMISES FINAL VICTORY TOO. REVE. 2, 3

Christ’s repeated calls in His messages to local assemblies to overcome, refer to the reality of a continuous warfare (cf. Reve. 2:7, 11, 26 etc.). He has already spoken of the triumphant march of His church (Matt. 16:18).

All these facts point out the reality of spiritual warfare that God’s people will have to face during their earthly sojourn. Then, why do we neglect it or do not feel the fight?

FOUR REASONS FOR NEGLIGENCE

1

The easy-going, ignorant new generation. (Judges 2: 10 – 15; 3:1)

After the time of Joshua and his contemporaries, the new generation preferred an easy life and compromise more than warfare. The writer specifically mentions that they did not know the Lord, His ways and the warfare. They were only enjoying the benefits of the efforts of the forefathers.

Don’t we see the same situation even today? The first generation stood for the Lord and His word. They triumphantly fought against the evil forces of every kind. But the present generation without having any conviction or commitment of the first generation, prefers to be neutral and non-combatant. Thus, we see spiritual activities becoming entertainment programs and ministry becoming performance.

2

Misunderstanding grace.

The security of salvation is a New Testament teaching; we ought to rejoice in that. Salvation is of God and it is He alone who sustains us. But this does not mean we have no role at all. Paul pens it beautifully in Philippians, “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” (2: 12, 13).

To enjoy the blessings of salvation and to lead a fruitful Christian life, one needs to fight a good spiritual warfare.

“A good conscience is important to a good warfare and a good ministry.”

-Warren W. Wiersbee

3

An unproductive and worldly life. (John 15:19)

In any fight, the target of the enemy is always the key people and strategic locations. They don't waste their ammunition on useless structures. So, our enemy too attacks those who are fruitful and stand in the frontline, serving the Lord.

Thus the casual, indifferent Christians even though bear the name of Christ do not face the fury of the enemy, for they are not a threat. In fact, unknowingly such believers are working for the enemy!

Remember, in Egypt Israelites had no fight, but only as they moved towards Canaan they faced opposition. Once in Canaan, they faced severe battle. Their possession and enjoyment of the Promised Land depended upon their successful fight.

In Christian life too, as we move forward, spiritual warfare only becomes intensified, not decreased. Consequently, the increasing attack of the evil forces only proves our growth, not the decline (Cf. 1Cor 16:8, 9). John MacArthur's comment is significant in this aspect, "A Christian who no longer has to struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil is a Christian who has fallen either into sin or into complacency."

4

Satanic Deception

Our enemy himself prefers a low profile. He makes no introduction nor does he seek any credit. He loves to work from behind the scene and keeps people in the dark even about himself.

That's why Paul admonished the Corinthians, "we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs." (2Cor. 2:11 (ESV)). Peter warns, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1Peter 5:8).

We should never be unaware of this warfare, our enemy or his tactics. We are not only the children of God but His soldiers too. Christian life is never easy; we have a fight to be fought. And we are never alone either; everyone is facing the same struggle.

“

“Every true child of God soon learns that the Christian life is a warfare.”

-William MacDonald”

WARFARE - IMPORTANT AS WEALTH AND WALK.

In the book of Ephesians, in chapters 1 – 3 Paul deals with the believer's spiritual riches in Christ. And in chapters 4 and 5 he explains our walk in God's will, and finally, in chapter 6 he concludes with our warfare with the evil forces.

We definitely rejoice over our position in the Lord and are careful about our daily walk too, but how serious are we in connection with the warfare? In fact, all the three major topics of the book are connected to each other and vital for successful Christian living. When we truly appropriate the wealth in Christ and walk pleasing to the Lord, it is then the warfare is felt in its full force. Finally, we are not helpless in this fight. Our Lord has already defeated the enemy. In Him, we are victors too. Apart from that, we have the resources too (Eph. 6: 10 – 20). That's why, we need to continue to trust in the Lord, resisting the evil forces and fight a good warfare.

STUDY :



NOTES ON TABERNACLE – 14

THE BRAZEN ALTAR : PART - 5

 By Charles E. Wigg, Australia

The Height

The height of the altar was 3 cubits, or about 5 feet, (1 1/2 metres) high. This meant that if one was to see what was happening inside the depths of the altar, one had to draw near. While everyone remained at a distance, they would see the fire and the smoke as it ascended to God, but would never see the sacrifice consumed by the fire.

The altar was hollow. The acacia wood boards covered with thick bronze, formed an outer wall, and fixed to the internal corners of those bronze walls were hooks, from which a grating, (network,) of bronze, was hung, by bronze rings on the corners of the grating. This grating hung down inside the altar, and because of this, the fury of the fire that consumed the sacrifice would only be seen by those who cared enough to come near.

In our days, there are so many who have truly trusted Christ as their Saviour, but who have a very shallow and superficial appreciation, and understanding of all that He passed through for them, when He hung on the cross. How often we talk of Christ dying on the cross, but rarely do we come (in our minds), to that place of the skull. So few have heard that cry of agony, “My God, My God, why hast thou

forsaken Me?” Has your heart ever been torn by the agony of that cry?

The Unseen Agony

Have you ever wept as you have thought of what He passed through for you? Have you ever seen, with the eyes of your heart, His lovely bruised and blood stained body, hanging limp and lifeless on that tree, and said to yourself, He did it all for me?

There is a solemn depth about the agony and sufferings of Christ the most of us never realize. The Psalmist says, “Thy judgments are a great deep”, Psalm 36:6. “Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me.” (Psalm 42:7)

My dear brother and sister let us “draw near, and see the Saviour die, on the cross, on the cross”, as the hymn says. To see the fire consume the sacrifice was an awesome sight for the offerer to behold. It leaves upon our souls a deep sense of the hatefulness of sin, and of the terrible cost to our blessed Lord, that we might be His.

PRACTICAL :

THE WHOLE ARMOUR OF GOD

(Ephesians 6: 14-18)

 By Paulson Joshua, Kochi

Just as the word of God reveals the reality of believers' spiritual warfare, scripture also tells us of the resources provided to fight well. Apostle Paul while in prison might have closely watched the weapons of a Roman soldier. In Ephesians 6: 14 – 18, he compares each of the pieces of armour to the divinely given spiritual resources and calls it as the 'whole Armour of God' (cf. Eph. 6:11; Rom. 13:12; 2Cori. 6:7). Let us consider each of those pieces and their practical application briefly.



THE HELMET OF SALVATION

1

First, admit to God that you are a sinner, receive Jesus Christ into your heart by faith, and confess Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. You will be saved. This salvation will protect you from all evil.



**THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT,
WHICH IS THE WORD OF GOD.**

2

Read and meditate on God's Word daily to fight the devil's temptations. This will give you the strength to live and keep you in peace with God.



THE BELT OF TRUTH.

3

Gird your loins with the truth to run without any hindrance or distraction, and be ready to stand in front of others to tell the truth.



**THE BREASTPLATE OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

4

In order to protect our heart and be bold at satanic accusations, we need to be covered with the righteousness of God in Christ. It also implies to our righteous actions.



**THE SHOES -
THE GOSPEL OF PEACE.**

5

A clear understanding of the gospel and our readiness to preach gives us stability and peace of mind.



THE SHIELD - FAITH.

6

Our unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus will quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. Rely and have faith in Jesus Christ alone. He is the author of faith, who defeated Satan on the cross.

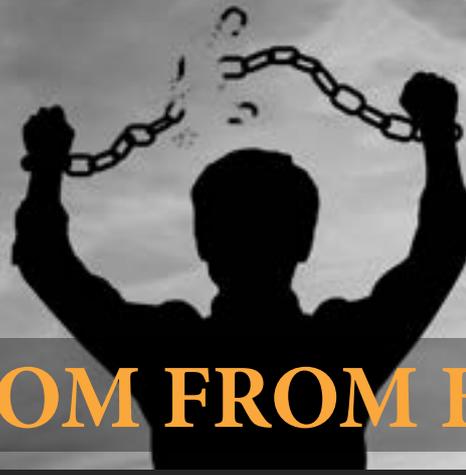
The whole Armour of God has been given to His children to wear at all times for protection, to fight against the wiles of the devil, and to stand in the evil days. This will help us to overcome all the negative situations we face in this world.



ARMOUR OF GOD

(Ephesians 6: 14-18)

As we live in the last days of the age of the church, the promise of Jesus Christ is “to him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne” (Revelation 3:21).



FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE

 By Tony Evans

On January 1st 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which was as a presidential declaration and an executive order. In a single stroke the law was changed and the legal status of over 3 million American slaves was immediately changed from “slave” to “free”. But history records that being legally free can be an entirely different thing from being functionally free.

News didn’t reach Texas until Union soldiers marched into the city of Galveston a full two years after the document proclaimed their freedom. Slaves in Florida too got the news many months later.

For years, legally freed slaves remained in bondage simply because of what they thought was true. Even though they were technically free, they had remained virtual slaves; trapped in a false reality because they did not possess knowledge of the truth by which they could escape their bondage.

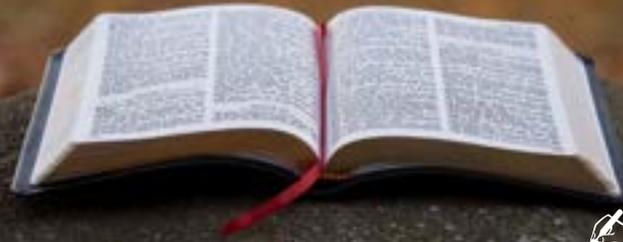
OUTLINE

BELIEVER’S POSITION

 By R.L.

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------|
| 1. | <i>A pupil sitting at the feet of Jesus.</i> | <i>John 11: 32</i> |
| 2. | <i>A soldier putting on his spiritual armour,</i> | <i>Eph 6:14</i> |
| 3. | <i>A runner laying aside every weight,</i> | <i>Heb 12:1</i> |
| 4. | <i>A sower sowing beside all waters,</i> | <i>Isa 32: 20</i> |
| 5. | <i>An ambassador beseeching men to be reconciled,</i> | <i>2 Cor 5:20</i> |
| 6. | <i>A priest offering spiritual sacrifice,</i> | <i>Rom 12:1</i> |
| 7. | <i>A fisher casting the net on the right side,</i> | <i>John 21:6</i> |

THE APOSTLES' DOCTRINE!



✍️ By Sam Shinde, Chiplun

In Acts 2:42, we notice that the first century disciples practiced four activities on a regular basis, and it's mentioned about them that they continued in those 'steadfastly', meaning resolutely or in an unwavering manner. In layman's terms, they followed these practices without fail. And they set an example for next generation believers to build the local assemblies on these four pillars, viz. apostles' doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.

The 'apostles' doctrine' is mentioned as the first activity, which indicates that it holds priority over the other three. Not that the other activities are less important in comparison, but, 'apostles' doctrine' is essential to be at the first place so that we can follow the other activities in an appropriate way. Doctrinal errors could create problems in following the other activities the way they should be followed.

Talking about the 'apostles' doctrine', it was not anything new that the apostles came up with, which is to say, that the apostles were not the source of the doctrine, rather they just taught us what they received from God. In 1 Corinthians 15:3, Paul states that he delivered (to others) whatever he received, and in one of the earlier chapters of the same epistle, i.e., chapter 11

and verse 23, he clearly states that whatever he received from the Lord he delivered to others, which later came to us in the form of The Scriptures. The Lord Himself confirms about such revelation in Matthew 16:17, "... for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven." So, we can safely conclude that the apostles' doctrine is evidently 'God's word'.

In Luke 10:42, we read how the Lord appreciates Martha's sister, stating, "... Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." Here the good part that the Lord is talking is about sitting at the Lord's feet and listening to His word, i.e., studying God's word. Also, we notice here that this isn't just restricted to brothers, but the Lord encourages sisters as well to study, for His glory.

Learning God's word is never in vain, and God can use sisters for His glory too! We know that Priscilla equally contributed along with Aquila in explaining to Apollos the way of God, more accurately (Acts 18:26). We also have examples of Lois and Eunice through whom the faith trickled down to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:5).

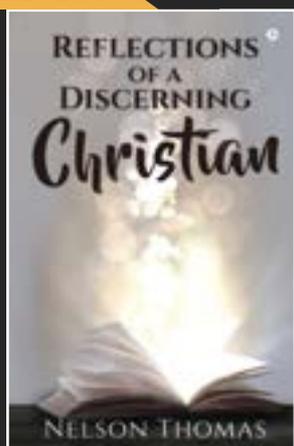
The Lord has made the apostles' doctrine available for us; however, are we interested in studying God's word? The sad part of believers' lives in many assemblies today is that the believers are so dependent on other Bible teachers for learning that they have given up on learning on their own.

While it's true that only some are mentioned to have been given to be pastors and teachers (Eph. 4:11), all are called to study His word and learn. It is okay to listen to others' messages or to read articles or books written by some good authors, however, the Lord expects us to be like the believers at Berea, who received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things (whatever Paul taught) were so (Acts 17:11). And in the same verse we read that

they were mentioned to be fair-minded, compared to others.

Thus, studying God's word will also help us to discern the spirits as instructed in 1 John 4:1. We can access the apostles' doctrine through His Word, and God encourages us to learn, as in the case of Mary in Luke chapter 10. He also promised to give wisdom to all liberally and without reproach (James 1:5). Also, in 1 John 2:27, we read that the Holy Spirit is the best teacher and that we do not need anyone else over Him. So let's not shrug off our responsibility of personally studying the Word, rather let's give up depending on others to learn from the Word. Readily receive the word from others, yet search the Scriptures for yourself.

MRP 270 /-



REFLECTIONS OF A DISCERNING *Christian*
NELSON THOMAS

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Book From Grace & Peace

ONLY BELIEVE


 By AbeyKuruville, Mumbai

It is written concerning the response of the people during the times of Lord Jesus that “...though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him” (John 12:37). But that the Lord Jesus was no ordinary man was affirmed even by those who found it hard to grasp the person of the Lord – “Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?” (Matt. 13:54).

Yet we may wonder why there was a response of unbelief. The scriptures foresaw this in Isa. 53:1 – “Who hath believed our report?” (see John 12:38). So, what would transpire during the times of the Lord was not just an affirmation of the accuracy of the scriptures, but also the exposing of the heart of man. The evidence required for faith was set forth manifestly. But the heart refused to accept them as true. If they couldn’t believe in Him for the works that He did, how would they then believe in Him for the greater purpose for which He came into this world?

The holy standard of God declares “...all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23), and also pronounces that “...the wages of sin is death...” (Rom. 6:23). This death is an eternal separation from God. Lord Jesus’ coming into this world was to save man from this judgment. For this He became a

Substitute for us by dying in our stead. His death paid the price for our sins, and His resurrection secures the salvation eternally for all who believe in Him.

A Jew could not accept a dying Messiah. They were expecting a mighty ruler to save them from the Romans. But everything about the Lord Jesus was to them a stumbling block. He was born in a manger, instead of a palace. He was simple and not like the royals. He was meek, and His companions were fishermen and tax collectors. Finally, He would suffer and die. This was unlike the Messiah they were waiting for!

Today, are you also stumbling at who the Lord Jesus is? Do you see Him as just one among other gods of this world, or just another good man, or prophet? Are you stumbled or offended at the fact that He is the only true God and that without Him you cannot be saved? We have sufficient evidence given to us in the scriptures concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. This is not a myth, nor a tradition. The mind may not be able to comprehend all facets of the truth. But it is the heart that must be exercised. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). Will you believe?



READER'S RESPONSE:

Reader Response



Articles are quite valuable especially the editorial. Cover page scenery is beautiful. Keep it up. Thanks for forwarding.

K. M. P, MH

Reader Response



While I praise God for this ministry I do pray for its blessings to many souls including me.

J. S, TN

Reader Response



Examine Yourself is the need of many believers today....doctrine put in simple words...

P. P, MH

Reader Response



If suicide 'is a sin which can be forgiven', how is it forgiven after death? In that case will apostasy also be forgiven after death? All the examples in the Bible, which ironically he quotes, are against it. The writer's intention is right, but the Bible doesn't say suicide is a sin which a Christian can commit.

B.V.B, UP

Editor Reply



*Thanks brother BVB, for your response. The author's detailed answer is available at our website, <http://gracepeace.net/life/sinofmurder.htm>
The article is entitled, 'The sin of murder – Is suicide 'the unforgivable sin?''*

NTK

“Believers are not instructed in the New Testament to assault demons or Satan, but to assault error with the truth.”

- John MacArthur

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