

Psm. 11:3

Baptists For Liberty

Prov. 29:2

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Galatians 5:1

NEWS LETTER

Issue #22

July 2014

Monthly Verse: *"The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident."*

~Psalm 27:1-3

Devotional: Psalm 34:14

by Bro. Jeff Short

"Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it."

~ [Psalms 34:14](#)

Throughout the whole of the 34th Psalm are set out numerous reasons to heed the words of verse 14. Perhaps, in summation we could look to verses 15 and 16. Benefits are reaped by the doers of good: **"The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry."** Similarly, **"The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."** Let us now briefly consider the four simple statements of our text.

First, we are instructed to **"Depart from evil."** We are not to do evil; rather we must depart from it. We must flee from its presence and appearance. We must have nothing to do with it. Solomon warned his son to depart from sinners, **"My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path: For their feet run to evil, and make haste to shed blood"** ([Proverbs 1:15-16](#)). It was not only that he was not to take part in their evil deeds, but also that he was to refrain from going in the path with them, for to evil was where their path was leading. He likewise instructed him to avoid the strange woman. **"Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house"** ([Proverbs 5:8](#)).

Secondly, we must **"do good."** Lot, living in the city of Sodom, had an arduous task just to **"depart from evil."** If he were successful in that much, he must have felt accomplished. Likewise, much energy is consumed today by the righteous to avoid evil. However, departing from evil is only one-fourth of our duty in this passage. We must also **"do good."** We must be proactive in the doing of good. We must study the good, seek it out, and do it. We must set ourselves in the very way of good and continue to walk therein. **"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls"** ([Jeremiah 6:16](#)).

Thirdly, our responsibility is to **"seek peace."** We rejoice when we are at peace. We rest when we are at peace and are refreshed. Although, we are not merely to enjoy peace when it comes, but we are to **"seek"** it out. Precious few today expend their energies

in seeking peace. Jesus taught, **"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God"** ([Matthew 5:9](#)). We are happy to have peace when it comes by the concessions of others, but we do not want to give an inch for the same. This attitude denies both the spirit and the letter of our text and ignores our plain responsibility, **"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men"** ([Romans 12:18](#)). How many have truly gone to that extremity before conceding it is not possible? (Continued on page 3)

In this Month's issue:

Sermon: "Loved and Hated"

by Bro. Cecil A. Fayard, page 2

News Reports, page 3

"Devotional Genesis 13:7"

by Bro. Jeff Short, page 6

The Forum: "War Fare" page 8

"The Faith of Abram Demonstrated in Genesis 14"

by Bro. David Green, page 9

"We Are Well Able To Overcome"

by Bro. Dr. M. J. Seymour, Sr. page 9

Historical Marker: "The God Of Peace"

by Bro. Charles H. Spurgeon, page 10

Labor In Love, page 16

"Weapons in Church?"

by Bro. David Green, page 16

"The Armor of God"

by Bro. Todd Bryant, page 17

The 68th Psalm, page 18

"Bring It On!"

by Bro. Dr. M. J. Seymour, Sr. page 19

"We Love Him Because He First Loved Us"

by Bro. Curtis A. Pugh, page 19

Morning Devotion: "We Are The Children Of God"

by Bro. Stephen McCool Sr. page 20

Sermon:
"Loved and Hated"
by Bro. Cecil A. Fayard



John 15:17-27

INTRO: The children of God are loved by the Savior and hated by the world. John's Gospel is filled with contrasts: belief and unbelief; light and darkness; life and death; love and hatred.

1) Vs 17, THE NEED TO LOVE AND BE LOVED

- a) Christians need to love one another because the world certainly is not going to love believers.
- b) In John 15:12-17, the emphasis is on love, the Lord's love for us and our love for Him and for one another (vss 12, 17).
 - i) The Lord knows that we need to love Him and love one another because of the hatred of the world for the Lord and His own.
 - ii) Children of God, we need the Lord, but we also need one another. We cannot go it alone and be healthy Christians.

2) VSS 18-22, THE HATRED OF THE WORLD FOR CHRISTIANS

- a) Vs 18, The world is controlled by Satan, opposed to God, to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to the children of God. This wicked world could not tolerate Jesus, and it cannot tolerate His followers.
 - i) The world hated Jesus because He was different from other men. Jesus was different:
 - (1) He was sinless; He made no mistakes; He never, ever failed.
 - (2) He spoke the truth in love without fear or favor.
 - (3) He refused to compromise on moral issues.
 - (4) He would not tolerate doctrinal error. Most people today have no idea what real doctrine is.
 - (5) He exposed corruption and decay within the establishment.
 - (6) He cleaned house when it was needed. (Example: the cleansing of the temple).
 - ii) The world hated Jesus, and it is going to hate true believers. The word for hate used here is the Greek word *miseo* meaning, "to hate, be hateful, detest, pursue with hatred." The world is after those who stand up for God. The world will hate you if:
 - (1) You live for God: "Be ye holy...."
 - (2) You tell the truth as stated in the Bible.
 - (3) You refuse to compromise on moral issues, adultery, fornication, abortion, sodomy, etc.
 - (4) You will not compromise doctrinally: baptism, the Lord's Supper, church truth, the blood, the book, and the blessed hope.
 - iii) If you are hated for your righteous stand, you are in good company. They hated Jesus long before they hated you.
- b) Vs 19, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own...." Many so called Christians have no problem with the world because they look, act, and smell like the world.
 - i) Christians are not of the world. That's what Jesus said.
 - (1) We are in the world, but not of the world.

- (2) Our citizenship is in another country, heaven! We are pilgrims and strangers here (I Pet 2:11 "This world is not my home.")
- ii) Christians have been chosen out of the world.
 - (1) "Chosen" is the Greek word *eklegoma*: meaning, "to chose out, to pick out, to choose to one's self."
 - (2) Christians have been chosen, picked out, separated from the wicked of the world (II Thes 2:13; Eph 1:4).
 - iii) The world hates the chosen, the called out, because they are different.
 - (1) They don't go where the world goes (I Pet 4:4).
 - (2) They don't think as the world does.
- c) Vs 20, the world hates Jesus, and it hates His followers.
 - i) The world persecuted Jesus, and it will persecute you if you live godly (II Tim 3:12).
 - (1) The health and wealth crowd stays away from texts like this.
 - (2) Christians today do not want to suffer; they want to fit in with the world in music, dress, and activities.
 - ii) "If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." The sayings of Jesus condemns the world. If we preach the words of Jesus, it will bring conviction. If they receive His words, they are receiving and keeping the words of Jesus we preach.
 - d) Vs 21, Jesus tells this little band of believers, this early church, to prepare for what is coming.
 - i) The world hates Christians because they do not know God.
 - ii) If they had known God, they would have known Jesus the Son, the one sent by the Father (3:17, 34; 5:36-37).
 - e) Vs 22, If Jesus had not come and spoken the truth, they would not have been guilty of rejecting the Savior.
 - i) The world stands guilty of turning its back on Jesus.
 - ii) Sinner friend, you are guilty having heard the Gospel and having rejected it.
 - iii) Those who have heard the Gospel have no covering. They have no excuse; they stand guilty before God.
- 3) VSS 23-25, THE WORLD'S HATRED OF GOD
 - a) Vs 23, The Jews thought they could claim God as their Father (8:41) while rejecting Jesus the Son, calling Him demon possessed (8:48).
 - i) There are those today who claim to love God while rejecting the blood atonement.
 - ii) Jesus is the only way to God (14:6).
 - b) Vs 24, Jesus had given witness of His deity by His words and by His works "which none other man did."
 - i) The marvelous works of Jesus they witnessed:
 - (1) He walked on the sea.
 - (2) He turned water into wine.
 - (3) He took five loaves and two fishes and fed five thousand.
 - (4) He cleansed the leper.
 - (5) He gave sight to the blind.
 - (6) He raised Lazarus from the grave.
 - ii) Not only were the Jews of Jesus day guilty of rejecting the truth. Sinner friend, you are guilty of rejecting the Gospel!
 - c) Vs 25, Jesus, the sinless Son of God, was hated without a cause. He never harmed anyone; He was holy, just, and good; yet hated.
 - i) This verse is a quote from Psalm 35:19 and Psalm 69:4.
 - ii) The Old Testament scriptures condemned the Jews for what they did. The Old and New Testament scriptures condemn the sinner today. You are responsible before God.

4) VSS 26-27, THE TRUE CHRISTIAN WILL BE A WITNESS

a) Vs 26, Jesus told His disciples that He was sending the Holy Spirit to testify of Him.

i) In the midst of a wicked world, the Holy Ghost will testify (16:8-9) and condemn.

ii) In the midst of mankind, He will bear witness of man's need of salvation.

iii) In the midst of the church, He will comfort the body.

iv) The number one job of the Holy Spirit is to exalt the Son of God.

b) Vs 27, The church had been with Jesus from the beginning of His ministry.

i) They would received power to evangelize (Acts 1:8).

ii) To be witnesses, we must follow the plan laid out in John 15.

(1) "Abide"-- John 15:4.

(2) "Love"-- John 15:12.

(3) "Testify"-- John 15:27.

iii) The world will hate us, but we must demonstrate God's love for them in countenance, attitude, dress, and compassion.

CONCLUSION: There will be those who will be openly hostile to our witness; yet, there will be

some who will be drawn and brought from darkness to light (5:24).

Devotional: Psalm 34:14

(Continued from page 1)

by Bro. Jeff Short

Fourthly, we have another word concerning peace; we are to **"pursue it."** Most of us would be glad if we happened to come into peace. Our text is much stronger, instructing us to **"pursue"** peace. The hunter pursues his prey, and the hungry hunter does so even more. We must hunger after peace and pursue it relentlessly as Paul who said, **"And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men"** (Acts 24:16). Finally, this peace cannot be achieved by ungodly compromise, for at the beginning we are told to **"Depart from evil."**

To the modern mind, our text must seem radical indeed. Frankly, if we have any hope of following these precepts, we must be able to make decisive value judgments. We must be able to know what evil is and be able to distinguish it from the good. This is a mark of maturity and wisdom, **"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil"** (Hebrews 5:14).

Society today rejects this wisdom, wanting rather the moral ambiguity of "objectivity." Such objectivity is illusive, and in fact, is neither possible nor desirable. God's people cannot mill about in the fog of obscurantism. There is no such lack of clarity in God's Word. He says, **"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!"** (Isaiah 5:20). Solomon wrote, **"He that justifieth the wicked,**

and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 17:15). To confuse good and evil is a serious evil in itself. We must be able to discern good and evil, and **"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good"** (Romans 12:9).

News

News Blitz July 2014: Blue & under lined texts are links, if you're reading a printed copy of this newsletter you can find the links to these stories on our homepage.

Tuesday, July 1st

["New Georgia Health Freedom Law Goes into Effect"](#)

["Panama's New "Free-Market" President Wants Price Controls on Food"](#)

Wednesday, July 2nd

["Amendment Resolution Complements Wolf-PAC Con-Con Plan"](#)

["SCOTUS Ruling on Unions could mark the "End Of The Democratic Party" "](#)

[Rutherford Institute Files First Amendment Lawsuit Challenging Discriminatory Election Laws that Favor Major Party Candidates over Independent, Minor Ones](#)

["Puerto Rico Balances Budget by Taking More from Big Business"](#)

["Venezuelan Exiles: Dictator Maduro, Stay Away from Panama!"](#)

Thursday, July 3rd

["Congressman Denied Access To Military Facility Housing 1,200 Immigrant Children, Told To Make Appointment"](#)

["LOTFI: Fox News one of Hillary Clinton's biggest donors for better part of two decades"](#)

[U.S. Privacy Board Decides to Support NSA Data Collection](#)

[Cryptome: Remaining Snowden docs will be released to avert 'unspecified US war' in July](#)

The New American reported ["New Ukrainian Rulers Surrender Sovereignty to EU"](#)

Friday, July 4,

["APD Investigation Continues After Officer Who Shot 19-Year-Old Claimed Third Body Camera Error"](#)

["Will Latest Legal Challenge Kill ObamaCare?"](#)

["Lawsuit Responds To Argument That Voters Have No Rights in Primaries, But Must Pay For Them"](#)

Saturday, July 5th

["U.S. Troops Secretly Operating in Somalia Since 2007"](#)

Sunday, July 6th

["Libertarians Branded "New Communists" at Bloomberg.com"](#)

["Does UN Arms Trade Treaty Threaten the Second Amendment?"](#)

Monday, July 7th

["FARC Victims Demand Voice in Colombian Peace Process"](#)

["PD Editorial: Lopez case doesn't end with the D.A."](#)

["GDP and the Public Sector"](#)

["If conservatives start missing George W. Bush then the tea party really is dead"](#)

["Judicial Supremacy: How Did this Far-Fetched Claim Originate?"](#)

["Undocumented Immigration News: Republican Idaho Rep. Raúl Labrador Doubts Jeh Johnson Will Stop Unaccompanied Central American Children \[Video\]"](#)

["Families of Slain Israeli and Palestinian Teens Turn to Each Other for Comfort"](#)

Tuesday, July 8th

["Poll: American pro-lifers may soon be the majority"](#)

["The Fed Won't Let Germany Inspect Its Own Gold"](#)

["Watch 'South of the Border' for a Slanted, Romantic Delusion"](#)

["Iranian lawmakers want to restrict Khatami from public"](#)

Wednesday, July 9th

["Exclusive Video: Standoff in Murrieta, Town Residents and La Raza Agree That Obama Administration Has Failed"](#)

["Argentina Recruits DHS to Target Dissident Twitter Users"](#)

["How EU would lift Iran sanctions after nuclear deal"](#)

["Resolving Conflicts in Artificial States"](#)

Thursday, July 10th

["Ad Promises \\$6,000 a Month Tax Free To House Immigrant Children"](#)

["Don't let nativism cloud the immigration debate"](#)

["No Dollars. No Flights: Airlines Abandon Venezuela"](#)

["Venezuelan Army Destroys Three Key Bridges on Border with Colombia"](#)

["Media circus causes panic in Israel"](#)

["Iran considers move toward parliamentary system"](#)

Friday, July 11th

["William Binney: The NSA's Ultimate Goal is Total Population Control"](#)

["Maduro to Hand China Keys to Tower of David Slum Skyscraper"](#)

["Iraqi minorities victim of sectarian conflict"](#)

["Why I'm on the brink of burning my Israeli passport: I can no longer stand by while Israeli politicians like Ayelet Shaked condone the deaths of innocent Palestinian women and children"](#)

["Netanyahu, Ya'alon prefer airstrikes over ground attack"](#)

["Looking to take a break, Gazans find beaches a war zone"](#)

[" Hamas bites the hand that feeds it"](#)

["Global jihad benefits from Gaza crisis"](#)

["Who fired the rockets from Lebanon?"](#)

["Erdogan: Gaza strife threatens Turkish-Israeli rapprochement"](#)

Monday, July 14th

["Tax Cuts of Kansas Already Improving the State's Economy"](#)

["Egypt is publicly supporting Israel and hoping they will "destroy Hamas once and for all"'"](#)

Tuesday, July 15th

["Carbon Scam by UN and World Bank Behind "Genocidal" Land Grabs"](#)

["A Bomb Seemingly Misses Its Mark in Ukraine, and 11 More Civilians Die"](#)

[" Hamas Fires Rockets on Israel After Egyptian "Truce"'"](#)

["The Ceasefire Between Israel and Hamas Lasted Less Than Six Hours"](#)

Wednesday, July 16th

["Safe Haven: Ukrainian refugees flee to Russia from civil war horrors" This is a new report from RT \(Russian TV's English channel\)](#)

["Memphis Creates Task Force to Arrest, Fine Uber and Lyft Drivers"](#)

["Millennials Aren't More Democratic—They're Just Less Republican"](#)

["Initiative to Adopt Top-Two Open Primary in Oregon Qualifies for Ballot"](#)

["Rep. Massie on shocking 9/11 documents: "It challenges you to re-think everything"'"](#)

["Navy Nurse Refuses To Force-Feed Guantanamo Bay Prisoner"](#)

["British Surveillance Agents Create False Internet Information"](#)

["Dammed Forever"](#) This is a story from ViceNews regarding an indigenous people in Panama who are at risk of being wiped out by a damn and some of the violent resistance.

Thursday, July 17th

["Texas Congressional Duo Proposes Expedited Processing of Illegal Minors"](#)

["Malaysian Passenger Jet Shot Down Over Eastern Ukraine"](#)

Friday, July 18th

["Israel Begins Ground Invasion Into Gaza"](#)

Sunday, July 20th

["Who's Responsible for Downing Malaysia Airlines Flight 17?"](#)

["Truth About Gaza: Palestinians Killed by Israeli Military, Pawns for Hamas"](#)

Monday, July 21st

["Deadliest Day Yet in Gaza: 100 Palestinians, 13 Israeli Soldiers Killed"](#)

Monday, July 21st

["People in swing states don't talk politics on Facebook, poll shows"](#)

["In Riot Outside Synagogue, French Jews Were Left to Protect Themselves"](#)

Tuesday, July 22nd

["Gaza conflict exposes France's own struggles with xenophobia"](#)

["NYPD Has Received Over 1,000 Complaints Of Police Choke Hold Use Since 2009"](#)

["Hernández's 'Plan Honduras' a Recipe for More Drug-War Violence"](#)

Wednesday, July 23rd

["Mayor Has Senior Citizen Arrested for Asking Officials to Speak Up"](#)

["Leopoldo López's Wife Visits D.C., Denounces His Political Imprisonment"](#)

["UN 'Peacekeeping' Military Using Drones, With Obama's Support"](#)

["Top-Down Digital Currency Coming to Ecuador, with Ban on Competition"](#)

Thursday, July 24th

["ATF: Guns Are the Problem"](#)

["No Trial, No Hearing: Venezuelan Students Remain Imprisoned"](#)

[" Hamas Calls FAA Flight Suspension a 'Great Victory,' While US Politicians Call It an 'Overreaction'"](#)

["UN school in Gaza caught in the cross hairs, leaving 15 dead"](#)

["Released Sudanese Christian, Meriam Ibrahim, In Italy, Receives Pope Francis Blessing"](#)

["Stop violence in the name of religion"](#)

Friday, July 25th

["Doctor Uses Personal Firearm to Stop Active Shooter at Hospital"](#)

["Heritage Data Tool Brings US Culture, Economy Together"](#)

["The way some conservatives talk about the border children is racist and revolting"](#)

["Obama Admin. Considers Refugee Status for Youths Now in Honduras"](#)

["Russia, China Care for Power, Not Latin America" - Opinion piece](#)

Ben Swann: ["Media's Poor Coverage of MH17 Disaster"](#)

["Can Iraq's new president save country from fragmenting?"](#)

["Islamic State destroys sacred shrine in Mosul"](#)

["Iran, Hezbollah break with Assad to support Hamas"](#)

Sunday, July 27th

["Air Algeria Plane Crashes in Militant-Held Mali Region"](#)

Monday, July 28th

["At issue: Open carrying guns"](#)

["FBI Whistleblower and Teacher Expose Islamic Gülen Movement Infiltrating U.S. Through Charter Schools"](#)

Rutherford Institute Calls on Supreme Court to Prevent Unlawful Detentions, Ensure Prisoners Receive a Fair and Full Final Review of Constitutional Claims

July 22, 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Citing restrictive legislation, disparate rulings by the various circuit courts, and the Supreme Court's own unclear guidance, which have all combined to undermine the rights of prisoners to receive a fair and final review of their

constitutional claims, attorneys for The Rutherford Institute have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to remove unconstitutional roadblocks faced by state prisoners throughout the country in challenging their convictions in federal court.

In weighing in on the case of Jackie Ray King v. Mary Berghuis, Rutherford Institute attorneys point out that the federal courts have conflicting standards for what a person must do to “exhaust” his constitutional claims. Thus, depending on which judicial circuit hears a case, an accused might be subjected to unequal applications of what it means to present or “exhaust” one’s constitutional claim in the state courts. Jackie Ray King v. Mary Berghuis deals with the habeas corpus petition of a Michigan prisoner who was ordered to serve his sentences consecutively, rather than concurrently as agreed to in his plea deal, resulting in an increase of over 30 years in his prison time.

“The historical English Writ of habeas corpus has protected the rights of the convicted for hundreds of years, granting them one final opportunity to ensure that justice is indeed being served,” said John W. Whitehead, president of The Rutherford Institute and author of *A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State*. “Given the paramount importance of this right, it is our hope that the Supreme Court will adopt a consistent standard that guarantees all American prisoners a fair and full final review of their constitutional claims.”

Both the U.S. Constitution and federal statutory law allow persons who are in the custody of a state under a criminal conviction to ask the federal courts to review the legality of the confinement and whether a violation of the prisoner’s constitutional rights has occurred. These habeas corpus actions, also known as the “Great Writ,” have for centuries been applied as a bulwark against restraints on liberty resulting from fundamentally flawed criminal convictions. However, Congress has adopted restrictions on the right of prisoners to petition a federal court for relief, including a requirement that an application for habeas corpus shall not be granted unless “[t]he applicant has exhausted the remedies available in the courts of the State[.]” Exhaustion includes the requirement that the prisoner have “fairly presented” the “substance” of his federal constitutional claim to the state courts.

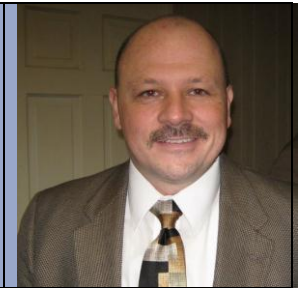
King brought a habeas corpus petition in the federal courts alleging that his agreement to plead guilty was based on a promise that his sentence would be served concurrently with any sentence on another charge, but the state court ordered the sentences be served consecutively, resulting in an increase of over 30 years in his prison time. King argued in state court proceedings that his guilty plea was not knowing and voluntary and violated the U.S. Constitution’s Sixth Amendment, but the state courts ruled against him. When King presented this claim to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, that court refused to hear the merits ruling that King had not fairly presented his

federal claim to the state courts because he had not cited a specific Supreme Court decision.

In asking that the U.S. Supreme Court review and overturn the court of appeals’ decision, Rutherford Institute attorneys point to decisions of federal courts around the country showing that there is no consistency in the standard applied in determining whether a prisoner exhausted his federal claim. The amicus brief asks the Court to establish a uniform standard for prisoners and attorneys to follow to “ensure that habeas corpus proceedings are not rendered inaccessible to deserving petitioners solely on the basis of inflexible procedural traps.” Attorney Ross W. Bergethon of Atlanta, Georgia, assisted The Rutherford Institute in advancing the arguments in the amicus brief before the Supreme Court.

“Devotional Genesis 13:7”

by Bro. Jeff Short



“And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.” ~ [Genesis 13:7](#)

In the time of our text, Abram had returned to Canaan from the land of Egypt, where he went with his household to escape the famine in the Promised Land. During their sojourn in Egypt, both Abram and Lot experienced an increase in their physical property. We read of Abram after he “*went up out of Egypt*” ([Genesis 13:1](#)), he “*was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold*” ([Genesis 13:2](#)). We read similarly of Lot that he “*had flocks, and herds, and tents*” ([Genesis 13:5](#)). Abram seemed to be blessed with many temporal blessings despite his marked departure from the word of God in leaving the land of Canaan. However, the apparent blessings of Abram and Lot began to be a problem between their respective houses. According to the Divine account, “*The land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great*” ([Genesis 13:6](#)). Their increases were such that they began to crowd one another and “*there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram’s cattle and the herdmen of Lot’s cattle.*”

There began to be strife in the family over earthly possessions and wealth. This is an ancient story with mankind and continues to be repeated today in the lives of modern families. There is many a strife in households over land, houses, money, estates, heirlooms, and many more trivial things. So, at once, we can all identify with their plight and feel familiar and even sympathetic with their situation.

The familiarity we can have with the narrative is good reason to exercise caution in evaluating the text. Taken at mere face value,

the verse seems to recount a typical and all too common contention among kinsmen. We might be hard pressed to find much deeper meaning in the verse if it was not for the last phrase of the text, **“and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.”**

Verse 7 is one whole sentence and the last phrase seems out of place in the verse and in the context. The inclusion of this phrase makes the verse stand out and suggests many questions to our minds. Is this an extraneous piece of information? Does this verse contain anything more than an account of the relational problems of Abram and Lot? What do the Canaanites and Perizzites have to do with the striving of these men’s herdsmen? Let us now *“apply our hearts unto wisdom”* ([Psalm 90:12](#)) and seek the blessing of the Spirit to our edification in understanding the verse before us.

Immediately, we note the similarity of this verse with the sixth verse of the twelfth chapter of Genesis. There we read, *“And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.”* Here, this last phrase does not seem joined with the verse in which it is found. Examining the circumstances, we realize that Abram had just entered the land of Canaan and **“passed through the land,”** and, in the next verse, **“the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land”** ([Genesis 12:7](#)). So, Abram received revelation that this land was to be the possession of his seed after him, but **“the Canaanite was then in the land.”**

Similarly, in the thirteenth chapter, Abram has again entered the land of Canaan. After the situation with Lot was settled, **“the LORD said unto Abram . . . Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to the will I give it, and to thy seed for ever”** ([Genesis 13:14-15](#)). Then, Abram received revelation concerning the extents of the land promised to his seed for a possession, but **“the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.”**

The meaning becomes more apparent when we consider the relation of Abram to the Canaanites. If we go back to the eleventh chapter of Genesis, we learn that Abram was a descendant of Shem; he was a Shemite, or Semite ([Genesis 11:11-26](#)). Shem was the blessed and favored son of Noah ([Genesis 9:26-27](#)). Through the lineage of Shem, the Messiah would be born into the world and the physically blessed descendants of Japheth would receive spiritual blessings by dwelling **“in the tents of Shem”** ([Genesis 9:27](#)).

However, Ham was the cursed son and his lineage, the cursed lineage. This curse was specially pronounced upon Ham’s son Canaan. So, in the time of our text, the occupants of the land of promise to Abram were the descendants of Canaan—Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaims, Amorites, Canaanites, Gergashites, and Jebusites ([Genesis 16:19-21](#)). These all dwelt in the land that Abram’s seed was going to possess or overtake.

In chapter twelve, Abram had first entered the land and learned that his seed was to possess it. However, in opposition to this promise, Abram knew **“the Canaanite was then in the land.”** So, [Genesis 12:6](#) is ominous of future conflict. The Canaanites were not going to vacate just because Abram passed through the land and it was going to be given to him. No, Abram’s seed was going to have to fight, waging war actively to take possession of the land of promise.

Likewise, the phrase pertaining to the Canaanites dwelling in the land has the same meaning in our text. The verse before us is ominous of the future conflict in the land of promise, but this is not all. In our verse, we have two conflicts mentioned and both of them are in prospect. The striving of the herdsmen is also ominous of future conflict, for strife between the servants will eventually lead to strife between the masters. Abram realized this potential problem with Lot and acted quickly to head off this conflict, as is evidenced by his words in verses 8, **“Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.”**

Let us tarry now for a little while longer and go yet deeper into the meaning of this passage. Our text is ominous of conflict for Abram and his seed. Abraham has the unique designation in Scripture of being the **“father of all them that believe”** ([Romans 4:11](#)). By faith, all who believe are the children, or seed, of Abraham: no matter whether they are Jew, Gentile, bond, or free. Paul instructed the Galatians, **“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise”** ([Galatians 3:29](#)). So, Abraham is the father of the faithful and lived the life of faith. As such, the people of God can expect to some degree to enter into his experiences.

The two conflicts in our text speak to us of two great conflicts in the lives of the people of God—the physical conflict and the spiritual conflict. The impending conflict with Lot signifies a physical conflict and the Canaanites represent a spiritual conflict.

As soldiers of Christ, we may expect a physical conflict with the people of this world. This conflict may range from light ridicule even to fierce persecution or death, as many who have gone before have faced—**“And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword”** ([Hebrews 11:36-37](#)). This should not surprise us considering that Christ declared of His people in His own prayer, **“I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world”** ([John 17:14](#)).

Abram’s conflict with Lot was one in his own family. Sometimes, this may prove a tough challenge to the children of God. Christ stated, **“I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man’s foes shall be they of his own household”** ([Matthew 10:35-36](#)). We certainly have the responsibility to live peaceably with all men, as much as it is possible. However, our Lord often found that **“there was a division among the people because of him”**

([John 7:43](#)). Let us be prepared to stand up with Christ and endure the shame to go to Him without the camp.

Space fails for us to go on further into these thoughts, but let us have a word or two more concerning the ominous spiritual conflict for Abraham's spiritual children. Paul instructed the Ephesians to **"Put on the whole armour of God,"** not to battle against father, mother, or neighbor, but **"that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"** ([Ephesians 6:11](#)). He makes it plain that **"we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places"** ([Ephesians 6:12](#)). Herein lays our toughest battle. Satan has put his forces in array against God and His people. This warfare requires that we **"Be sober, be vigilant"** ([1 Peter 5:8](#)).

Should we cowardly seek to leave him unopposed? Shall we relent or retreat? Our orders are plain. We are to **"Stand therefore,"** and **"Resist the devil."** Then let us also walk in the path of faith as Abraham did. The greatest testimony we have of him is that **"Abraham believed God"** ([Romans 4:3](#)). He had faith—walked by faith, and lived by faith. Oh that we might believe God and follow Peter's words concerning our adversary, **"Whom resist steadfast in the faith"** ([1 Peter 5:9](#)).

There is reason for us to have hope in this great conflict, **"because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world"** ([1 John 4:4](#)). We may safely conclude that as it was for Abraham when **"the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land,"** so it is for us that we live in a land inhabited by a hostile enemy of God and truth.

The Forum: "War Fare"

1. What should believers today learn from Luke 3:14 – "And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what she we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages"?

Bro. Todd Bryant (Pastor Sovereign Grace Baptist church Northport, Alabama): This question has more to do with the fruits of repentance than anything else. John had already addressed the people and the tax collectors. Then, the soldiers asked him what they should do in order to be baptized. That is, how could they prove that they had a repentant heart. John urged them to use their position honestly – do not intimidate people in order to gain from it; do not falsely accuse people of crimes in order to gain from it; do not try and increase wages by falsely representing oneself. All these things were common for a soldier under Roman leadership and were the fruits of the world, not the followers of Jesus. John urges them to show forth their inward change with outward works. It's very similar to James who said, "But someone will say, 'You have faith, and I have works.' Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works" (James 2:18).

I do not believe the subject of this passage has anything to do with whether a person should be a soldier or not. Rather, it is teaching that a person that is (was) a soldier should show forth the fruits of repentance prior to baptism.

2. What constitutes a just war?

Bro. Todd Bryant : The history of man proves that war is inevitable. Ecclesiastes 3:8 says the same. But, this question is not whether war is inevitable. The questioner has asked "What constitutes a just war?" I read an anonymous quote the other day. It said, "The problem with American Christianity is that it's too American and not enough Christian". I believe this is true. Understand, America is not Israel. And furthermore, you will receive no rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ because you were an American or because you recited the pledge of allegiance or because you fought for the Republican Party. Gasp!!! Did I really say that? Yes. You may receive a reward for being a good citizen as that is required of us. But this could and should be done in any country so long as that country isn't asking you to compromise the Bible.

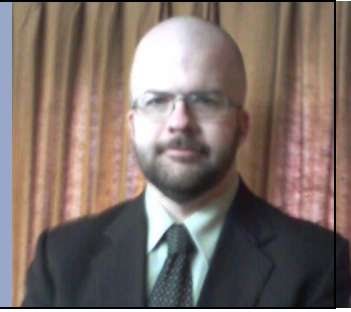
So, why does any of that matter? Simply, I think we often confuse Americanism with Christianity. Conservatives Christians today seem to have the idea that part of our faith is to support America and the armed forces no matter what. But, every war we've fought in has not necessarily been justified. Can a believer really justify killing another person because our taxes are a few percentage points higher than we think is fair? And yet, that has happened. Can a believer really justify killing another person because we are of the opinion that states should have more rights than the federal government? And yet, that has happened. What, exactly, do we think the Lord thinks about a Christian killing another Christian in war? And yet, this has happened. Now, I'm not saying that taxes should be high or that states shouldn't have the majority of the rule. In fact, I believe in low taxes and states' rights. However, I'm not prepared to kill anybody over those convictions. Wars fought over merely political reasons are unjust, in my opinion.

What constitutes a just war? Simply, when the safety of our citizens is threatened, war is necessary. And even then, we ought to enter it advisedly and with a desire to cause the least amount of casualties possible to accomplish our goals. Jesus said to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36). Perhaps we spend too much time fighting for a kingdom that is of this world rather than trying to further His kingdom, which is not of this world, by preaching the Gospel to the lost.

3. Should Christians be willing to fight in the United nations or other multinational organizations? Why or why not?

Bro. Todd Bryant : This question is really unanswerable. It's all according to what the war is for. If a country is threatening the entire globe and a multinational organization has been formed to combat it, certainly that cause is just. However, this is not a "blank check" meant to support any and all actions of any nation or group of nations.

***"The Faith of Abram
Demonstrated in
Genesis 14"***
by Bro. David Green



"And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed. And there came one that had escaped, and told Abram the Hebrew; for he dwelt in the plain of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abram." (Gen 14:11-13)

A confederacy of kings from the northeast had swept through the land and devastated everything in its path.

Humanly speaking, this would have caused alarm on the part of the human inhabitants – including Abram – yet the God of Abram was in control.

This confederacy consisted of the kings of Shinar (Babylonia), Ellasar (leading tribe in Babylonia), Elam (Persia), and Goiim (translated nations, but probably a tribe in Babylonia). Even though the kingdoms would have been small at this point, their armies were fierce and cruel. From what we read in the verses prior to our text, the local kings had been placed under the service of Chederlaomer, king of Elam. For twelve years these kings and their city-states (Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, Zeboim, and Zoar) in and around the Jordanian plain and southern Dead Sea (salt sea) area served without any issues. . In the thirteenth year they rebelled so this invasion of the confederacy was to bring them back into submission.

Unfortunately, as the events unfolded, Lot was taken captive. Thankfully, someone escaped and went to tell Abram. Notice what Abram's course of action was:

"And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people." (Genesis 14:14-16)

In this, some would say that Abram should not have done what he did. Some criticize saints for owning weapons, going to war, etc. Some would have simply stayed home and talked about the great faith they have that God will take care of Lot. Yet, I would

disagree...to sit around and talk about faith is not really faith at all. What we see in this passage is Abram's faith in action!

"Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" (James 2:18-20)

Lot had been taken by some fierce warriors. No doubt Abram knew this and was well aware of what had just happened to the rebelling kings.... No doubt he is well aware of the fact that they are severely outnumbered. But he went anyway, knowing God was with him.

When he received word of Lot's situation, he was able to gather 318 men, all of whom were trained in his own household, arm them and go to rescue Lot. There was no hesitation to be found in this passage, only action. And you know what? Abram won.

In the cover of night, Abram led his men and attacked from all directions at once. They soon became demoralized and fled but Abram chased them all the way to north of Damascus and recaptured Lot as well as the other captives and booty that had been taken by them earlier. No doubt this would have been a surprise to not only the armies but also to the captives who figured there would be no hope for them.

Whether it is Abram here, Gideon's 300 against the 135,000, or David against Goliath.....all praise goes to God.

"We Are Well Able To Overcome"

by Bro. Dr. M. J. Seymour, Sr.

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it. But the men that went up with him said, We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." (Num. 13:30-31)

Far too many churches are failing, falling apart, and closing their doors, which is to our shame! Has the hand of God shortened to where He cannot save? Has He grown too old? Has the blood of Jesus become too weak, or is there no more left of it for helpless sinners? Has the Holy Spirit's power fizzled out and can no longer give newness of life from the Father? Does heaven wrought salvation still exist? Have we become so ignorant of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit that we have collapsed into feeble unbelief?

Caleb expressed the power of belief – **"Let us go up at once, and possess it."** When? At once! If God commands His servants to a duty, will He not also empower them to do it, and will He not also go before them that they can achieve it? Has God only left a command but neglected to leave the Spirit with power? The absence of faith results in soldiers on the pews of "do nothing" singing "I shall not be moved," and "How dare you to try it; for

the outside world is 'stronger than we'! They suffer countless defeats rather than enjoy endless victories. Caleb's belief prospered in the "Can Do!" spirit while the naysayers stumbled amid the "I Can't!" spirit.

Jesus said: "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." To which the father cried out with tears: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." (Mk. 9:23, 24) Is it not time for the churches of the Lord to do likewise? Dare we remain in unbelief?

God **is** present in His power, and by faith we can do all things He has commanded of us! Believest thou this? We have not because we ask not! The power to overcome the world is no further than the heart of faith that activates it. In belief we are well equipped to overcome. But, who will cry out with tears to overcome the world?

Historical Marker: "The God Of Peace"

by Bro. Charles H. Spurgeon

Delivered on Sabbath Morning,

*November 4, 1855,
At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark*

Delivered on Sabbath Morning, November 4, 1855, by C. H. Spurgeon At New Park Street Chapel, Southwark.

"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen,"—Romans 15:33.

AUL ONCE ADVISED the Romans to strive. Three verses before our text he actually gives them an exhortation to strive, and yet he here utters a prayer that the God of peace might be with them all. Lest you should think him to be a man of strife, you must read the verse. He says: "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me." That is a holy strife, and such a strife as that we wish always to see in the church, a strife in prayer, a surrounding the throne together, besieging God's mercy seat, a crying out before God, until it actually amounts to a striving together in our prayers. There is also another kind of striving which is allowed in the church, and that is striving earnestly after the best gifts: a sweet contention which of us shall excel all others in love, in duty, and in faith. May God send us more strife of that kind in our churches, a strife in prayer, a strife in duty; and when we have mentioned these strifes we find them of so peaceable a kind that we come back to the benediction of our text: "Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen." Without any preface, we shall consider, first, the title—"the God of peace;" and secondly, the benediction—"the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

I. First of all, the title. Mars amongst the heathens was called the

god of war; Janus was worshipped in periods of strife and bloodshed; but our God Jehovah styles himself not the God of war, but the God of peace. Although he permits war in this world, sometimes for necessary and useful purposes; although he superintends them, and has even styled himself the Lord, mighty in battle, yet his holy mind abhors bloodshed and strife; his gracious spirit loves not to see men slaughtering one another, he is emphatically, solely, and entirely, and without reserve, "the God of peace." Peace is his delight; "peace on earth and goodwill towards men." Peace in heaven (for that purpose he expelled the angels): peace throughout his entire universe, is his highest wish and his greatest delight.

If you consider God in the trinity of his persons for a few moments, you will see that in each—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—the title is apt and correct, "the God of peace." There is God the everlasting Father, he is the God of peace, for he from all eternity planned the great covenant of peace, whereby he might bring rebels nigh unto him, and make strangers and foreigners fellow-heirs with the saints, and joint-heirs with his Son Christ Jesus. He is the God of peace, for he justifies, and thereby implants peace in the soul, he accepted Christ, and, as the God of peace, he brought him again from the dead; and he ordained peace, peace eternal with his children, through the blood of the everlasting covenant; he is the God of peace. So is Jesus Christ, the second person, the God of peace for "he is our peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us." He makes peace between God and man. His blood sprinkled on the fiery wrath of God turned it to love, or rather that which must have broken forth in wrath, though it was love for ever, was allowed to display itself in loving-kindness through the wondrous mediatorship of Jesus Christ; and he is the God of peace because he makes peace in the conscience and in the heart. When he says, "Come unto me all ye that are heavy laden "he gives "rest," and with that rest he gives; the peace of God which passeth all understanding," which keeps our heart and mind. He is moreover the God of peace in the Church, for wherever Jesus Christ dwells, he creates a holy peace. As in the case of Aaron of old, the ointment poured upon the head of Christ trickles down to the very skirts of his garments, and thereby he gives peace,—peace by the fruit of the lips, and peace by the fruit of the heart, unto all them that love Jesus Christ in sincerity. So is the Holy Ghost the God of peace. He of old brought peace, when chaotic matter yeas in confusion, by the brooding of his wings: he caused order to appear where once there was nothing but darkness and chaos. So in dark chaotic souls he is the God of peace. When winds from the mountains of Sinai, and gusts from the pit of hell sweep across the distressed soul; when, wandering about for rest, our soul fainteth within us, he speaks peace to our troubles, and gives rest to our spirits. When by earthly cares we are tossed about, like the sea-bird, up and down, up and down, from the base of the wave to the billows' crown, he says, "Peace be still." He it is who on

the Sabbath-day brings his people into a state of serenity, and bids them enjoy

"That holy calm, that sweet repose Which none but he that feels it knows."

And he shall be the God of peace when at life's latest hour he shall still the current of Jordan, shall hush all the howlings of the fiends, shall give us peace with God through Jesus Christ, and land us safe in heaven. Blessed Trinity! however we consider thee, whether as Father, Son, or Holy Ghost, still is thy name thrice well deserved, the God of peace, and the God of love.

Let us now enter into the subject, and see wherein God is a God of peace. We remark that he is the God of peace, for he created peace originally. He is the God of peace, for he is the restorer of it; though wars have broken out through sin. He is the God of peace, because he preserves peace when it is made; and he is the God of peace because he shall ultimately perfect and consummate peace between all his creatures and himself. Thus he is the God of peace.

First of all, he is the God of peace because he created nothing but peace. Go back in your imagination to the time when the majestic Father stepped from his solitude and commenced the work of creation. Picture to yourself the moment when he speaks the word and the first matter is formed. Before that time there had been neither space, nor time, nor aught existing, save himself. He speaks and it is done, he commands and it stands fast. Behold him scattering from his mighty hands stars as numerous as the sparks from an anvil. Witness how by his word worlds are fashioned, and ponderous orbs roll through that immensity which first of all he had decreed to be their dwelling place. Lift up now your eyes and behold these great things which he has created already, let the wings of your fancy carry you through the immensity of space and the vast profound, and see if you can discover anywhere the least sign or trace of war. Go through it from the north even to the south, from the east even unto the west, and mark well if ye can discover one sign of discord; whether there is not one universal harmony, whether everything is not lovely, pure, and of good report. See if in the great harp of nature, there is one string which when touched by its Maker's finger giveth forth discord, see if the pipes of this great organ God has made do not all play harmoniously, mark ye well, and note it. Are there bulwarks formed for war? Are there spears and swords? Are there clarions and trumpets? Hath God created any material with which to destroy his creatures and desolate his realms? No; everything is peaceable above, beneath, and all around; all is peace, there is nothing else but calm and quietness. Hark when he makes the angels. He speaks—winged seraphs fly abroad, and cherubs flash through the air on wings of fire. He speaks, and multitudes of angels in their various hierarchies are brought forth, while Jesus Christ as a mighty Prince of angels is decreed to be their head. Is there now in any one of those angels

one sign of sorrow? When God made them did he make one of them to be his enemy? Did he fashion one of them with the least implacability or ill-will within his bosom? Ask the shining cohorts, and they tell you, "We were not made for war, but for peace. He has not fashioned us spirits of battle, but spirits of love, and joy, and quietness." And if they sinned, he made them not to sin. They did so; they brought woe into the world of their own accord. God created no war. The evil angel brought it first. Left to his free will, he fell. The elect angels being confirmed by grace, stood fast and firm; but God was not the author of any war, or any strife. Satan of himself conceived the rebellion, but God was not the author of it. He may from all eternity have foreseen it, and it may even be said in some sense that he ordained it to manifest his justice and his glory, and to show his mercy and sovereignty in redeeming man; but God had no hand in it whatsoever. The Eternal abjures war; he was not the author of it. Satan led the van, that morning star who sang together with the rest, fell of himself, God was not the author of his confusion, but the author of eternal and blessed order. Look, too at God in the creation of this world. Go into the garden of Eden: walk up and down its bowers; recline under its trees, and partake of its fruits. Roam through the entire world. Sit down by the sea-shore, or stretch yourself upon the mountain. Do you see the least sign of war? Nothing like it. There is nothing of tumult and of noise no preparation of destruction. See Adam and Eve: their days are perpetual sunshine, their nights are balmy evenings of sweet repose. God has put nothing in their hearts which can disturb them; he has no ill will towards them, but on the contrary, he walks with them in the evening under the trees in the cool of the day. He condescends to talk with his creatures, and hold fellowship with them. He is in no sense whatever the author of the present confusion in this world; that was brought about by our first parents through the temptation of the evil one. God did not create this world for strife. When he first fashioned it, peace, peace, peace, was the universal order of the day. May there come a time when peace once more shall be restored to this great earth, and tranquility to this world! Do you not observe that God is the God of peace because he created it originally? When he pronounced his creation "very good," it was entirely without the slightest exception, a peaceful creation. God is the God of peace.

But, secondly, he is the God of peace because he restores it. Nothing shows a man to be much fonder of peace than when he seeks to make peace between others; or, when others have offended him, he endeavors to make peace between himself and them. If I should be able at all times to maintain peace with myself, and should never provoke a quarrel, I should of course be considered a peaceful spirit, but if other persons choose to quarrel and disagree with me, and I desire and purposely set to work to bring about a reconciliation, then everyone says I am a man of peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they are the children of God." God is the great Peacemaker; and thus he is indeed the God of peace. When Satan fell, there was war in

heaven. God made peace there, for he smote Satan and cast him and all his rebel hosts into eternal fire. He made peace by his might and power and majesty, for he drove him out of heaven, and expelled him by his flaming brand, never again to pollute the sacred floor of bliss, and never more to endanger Paradise by misleading his peers in heaven. So he made peace in heaven by his power. But when man fell, God made peace not by his power, but by his mercy. Man transgresses. Poor man! Mark how God goes after him to make peace with him! "Adam, where art thou?" Adam never said "God, where art thou?" But God came after Adam, and he seemed to say with a voice of affection and pity, "Adam, poor Adam, where art thou? Hast thou become a God? The evil spirit said thou wouldst be a God, art thou so? Where art thou now poor Adam? Thou wast once in holiness and perfection, where art thou now?" And he saw the truant Adam running away from his Master, running away from the great Peacemaker, to hide himself beneath the trees of the garden.

Again God calls, "Adam, where art thou?" But he says, "I heard thy voice in the midst of the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." And God says, "Who told thee that thou wast naked?" How kind it is. You can see he is a Peacemaker even then; but when after having cursed the serpent, and sent the cursed obliquely on the ground, he comes to talk to Adam, you see him as the Peacemaker still more. "I will," said he, "put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." There he was making peace through the blood of the cross. Do not conceive, however that that was the first preparation of peace God ever made. That was the first display of it, but he had been making peace from all eternity. Through the covenant he made with Jesus Christ from all eternity, God's people were at peace with God. Although God saw that man shall fall; though he foresaw that his elect would with the rest depart from rectitude, and become his enemies, yet he did long before the fall draw up a covenant with Jesus, wherein Jesus stipulated that he would pay the debts of all his people, and the Father on their behalf did actually and positively forgive their sins, and justify their persons, take away their guilt, acquit them, accept and receive them unto peace with him. Though that was never developed until the fall, and though to each of us it is not known until we believe, yet there was always peace between God and the elect. I must tell you a tale of a poor bricklayer who met with an accident, and every one thought he was going to die, and he did die. A clergyman said to him, "My poor fellow, I am afraid you will die. Try to make your peace with God." With tears in his eyes, he looked the clergyman in the face, and said, "Make my peace with God, sir? I thank God that was made for me in the eternal covenant by Jesus Christ, long before I was born." So beloved, it was. There was a peace, a perfect peace which God made with his Son. Jesus was not our ambassador merely, but he was our peace; not the maker of peace merely, but our peace; and since there was a Christ before all worlds, there was peace before

all worlds. Since there always will be a Christ, so there always will be peace between God and all those interested in the covenant. Oh, if we can but feel we are in the covenant, if we know we are numbered with the chosen race, and purchased with redeeming blood, then we can rejoice, because God has been to us the Restorer of breaches, the Builder of cities to dwell in, and hath given us peace which once we lost; he is the Restorer of peace.

Thirdly, he is the preserver of peace. Whenever I see peace in the world, I ascribe it to God, and if it is continued, I shall always believe it is because God interferes to prevent war. So combustible are the materials of which this great world is made, that I am ever apprehensive of war. I do not account it wonderful that one nation should strive against another, I account it far more wonderful that they are not all at arms. Whence come wars and fightings? Come they not from your lusts? Considering how much lust there is in the world, we might well conceive that there would be more war than we see. Sin is the mother of wars; and remembering how plentiful sin is, we need not marvel if it brings forth multitudes of them. We may look for them. If the coming of Christ be indeed drawing nigh, then we must expect wars and rumors of wars through all the nations of the earth; but when peace is preserved, we consider it to be through the immediate interposition of God. If then we desire peace between nations, let us seek it of God, who is the great Pacificator; but there is an inward peace which God alone can keep. Am I at peace with myself, with the world, and with my Maker? Oh! if I want to retain that peace, God alone can preserve it. I know there are some people who once enjoyed peace, who do not possess it now. Some of you once had confidence in God, but may have lost it; you once thought yourselves to be in a glorious state from which now you seem to have somewhat departed. Beloved, no one can maintain peace in the heart but God, as he is the only one who can put it there. Some people talk about doubts and fears and seem to think they are very allowable. I have heard some say, "Well a sailor in the sunshine knows his reckoning, and can tell where he is, he has no doubt; but if the sun withdraws, he cannot tell his longitude and latitude, and he knows not where he is." That is not however a fair description of faith. Always wanting the sun is wanting to live by sight; but living by faith is to say, "I cannot tell my longitude and my latitude, but I know the Captain is at the helm, and I will trust him everywhere." But still you cannot keep in that peaceful state of mind unless you have God in the vessel to help you to smile at the storm. We can be peaceful at times, but if God goes away, how we begin quarrelling with ourselves! God alone can preserve peace. Backslider! hast thou lost it? Go and seek it again of God. Christian! is thy peace marred? Go to God, and he can say to every doubt, "tie down doubt," and to every fear, "Begone."—He can speak to every wind that can blow across thy soul, and can say, "Peace, be still; for he is the God of peace, since he preserves it. Trust in him.

Fourthly, God is the God of peace because he shall perfect and consummate it at last. There is war in the world now; there is an evil spirit walking to and fro, a restless being, eager, like a lion to devour, walking through dry places, seeking rest and finding none; and there are men bewitched by that evil spirit who are at war with God, and at war with one another; but there is a time coming—let us wait a little longer—when there shall be peace on earth and peace throughout all God's dominions. In a few more years we do look for a lasting and perpetual peace on earth. Perhaps, to-morrow, Jesus Christ, the Son of God will come again, without a sin offering unto salvation. We know not either the day or the hour wherein the Son of man shall come; but by-and-bye he shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the noise of a trumpet; he shall come, but not as once he came, a lowly and humble man, but a glorious and exalted monarch. Then he will cause wars to cease. From that day forth and for ever they will hang the useless helm on high, and study war no more; the lion shall lie down with the kid and eat straw like the ox; the cockatrice and the serpent shall lose their hurtful powers; the weaned child shall lead the lion and the leopard, each one by his beard with his little hands. The day is coming, and that speedily, when there shall not be found on earth a single man who hates his brother, but when each one shall find in every other a brother and a friend; and we shall be able to say, as the old poet did, but in a larger sense, "I know not that there is one Englishman alive with whom I am one jot at odds more than the infant that is born to-night." We shall all be united; rationalities will be levelled, because made into one, and the Lord Jesus Christ shall be king of the entire earth. After that time shall come the consummation of peace, when the last great day shall have passed away, and the righteous have been severed from the wicked, when the monster battle of Armageddon shall have been fought and won when all the righteous shall have been gathered into heaven, and the lost sent down to hell. Where will be the room for the battle then? Look at the foemen, bruised and mangled in the pit, perpetually howling, the victims of God's vengeance; there is no fear of war from them. There is Satan himself, crest-fallen, bruised battered, slain; his head is broken; there he lies despoiled a king without his crown; there can be no fear of war from him; and mark the angels, who were once under his supremacy, can they arise? No; they writhe in tortures, and bite their iron bands in misery; they have no power to lift a lance against the God of heaven; and look on sinful man, condemned for his sin to dwell with those fallen being; can he again provoke his Maker? Will he again blaspheme? Can he oppose the gospel? No, injured in dungeons of hot iron, there he is, an abject, ruined spirit; ten thousand times ten thousand lost and perished sinners are there; but could all unite in solemn league and covenant to break the bands of death and sever the laws of justice, he that sitteth in the heavens would laugh at them, the Lord would have them in derision. Peace is consummated because the enemy is crushed. They look up yonder; there is no fear of war from those bright spirits; the angels cannot fall now; their period of

probation is passed for ever, a second Satan shall never drag with him a third part of the stars of heaven; no angel will totter any more, and the ransomed spirits, blood-bought, and washed in the fountain of Jesu's blood, will never fall again. Universal peace is come, the olive branch hath outlived the laurel the sword is sheathed, the banners are furled, the stains of blood are washed out of the world; again it moves in its orb, and sings like its sister stars; but the one song is peace, for the God who made it is the God of peace.

II. Now we come to the benediction. "The God of peace be with you all." I am not about to address you concerning that inward peace which rests in the heart. I am sure I wish above all things that you may always enjoy a peace with your conscience, and be at peace with God. May you always know that you have the blood of Jesus to plead, that you have his righteousness to cover you, that you have his atonement to satisfy for you, and that there is nothing which can hurt you; but I wish to address you as a church, and exhort you to peace.

First, I will remind you that there is great need to pray this prayer for you all, because there are enemies to peace always lurking in all societies. Petrarch says there are five great enemies to peace—avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride. I shall alter them a little, but use the same number. Instead of avarice I shall commence with error. One of the greatest means of destroying peace is error. Error in doctrine leads to the most lamentable consequences with regard to the peace of the church. I have noticed that the greatest failings out have been among those who are most erroneous in doctrine. Though I admit that some called Calvinists are the most quarrelsome set breathing, this is the reason—while they have the main part of the truth, many of them are leaving out something important, and therefore God chastises them because they are some of his best children. It may be a sign of life that they are so eager after truth, that they kill one another in order to get it; but I wish they would leave off their quarrelling for it is a disgrace to our religion. If they had more peace I might hope better for the progress of truth. Everyone says to me—"Look there at your brethren! I never saw such a set of cut-throats in my life. I never saw a church, where they have the gospel, where they are not always falling out." Well, that is nearly the truth, and I am ashamed to confess it. I pray God, however, to send a little more peace where he has sent the gospel. There are, however, strifes among our opponents which we do not see. The bishop uses his strong hand, and the people dare not disagree; the pastor has such power and authority, that the crush of his mailed hand is sufficient to put down everything because there is no freedom. Now, I would rather have a row in the church than have the members all asleep. I would rather have them falling to ears than sitting down in indifference. You never expect dead churches to have strife, but where there is a little life, if there is error, it always begets strife. What is the most litigious denomination now existing? No one would have a difficulty in pointing to our excellent friends the Wesleyans, for just at this

moment they are quarrelling and finding fault with one another, splitting up into numberless sections, and making reformed churches, and so on. What is the cause of it? Because they are in the wrong track altogether with regard to church government, and with regard to some other things. John Wesley was a good man at making churches, I dare say; but he did not understand what the church ought to be in these days. He might do for a hundred years ago but he bound his poor followers too tightly, and now they are trying to break out into freedom and liberty. If they had been right at first they might have gone on, and a thousand years would not have spoiled their system. It would have done now as well as then. Error is the root of bitterness in the church. Give us sound doctrine, sound practice, sound church government, and you will find that the God of peace will be with us. My brethren, seek to uproot error out of your own hearts. If one of you do not really believe the great cardinal doctrines of the gospel, I beseech you, then, for the good of the church to leave it, for we want those who love the truth.

The next enemy to peace is ambition. "Diotrephes loveth to have the pre-eminence," and that fellow has spoiled many a happy church. A man does not want, perhaps, to be pre-eminent, but then he is afraid that another should be, and so he would have him put down. Thus brethren are finding fault, they are afraid that such an one will go too fast, and that such another will go too fast. The best way is to try to go as fast as he does. It is of no use finding fault because some may have a little pre-eminence. After all, what is the pre-eminence. It is the pre-eminence of one little animalcule over another. Look in a drop of water. One of these little fellows is five times as big as another, but we never think of that. I dare say he is very large, and thinks, "I have the pre-eminence inside my drop." But he does not think the people of Park Street ever talk about him. So we live in this little drop of the world, not much bigger in God's esteem than a drop of the bucket, and one of us seems a little larger than the other, a worm a little above his fellow worm; but, O how big we get! and we want to get a little bigger, to get a little more prominent but what is the use of it? for when we get ever so big we shall then be so small that an angel would not find us out if God did not tell him where we were. Whoever heard up in heaven anything about emperors and kings? Small tiny insects: God can see the animalculae, therefore he can see us, but if he had not an eye to see the most minute he would never discover us. O may we never get ambition in this church. The best ambition is, who shall be the servant of all. The strangers seek to have dominion, but children seek to let the father have dominion, and the father only.

The next enemy to peace is anger. There are some individuals in the world that cannot help getting angry very quickly. They grow on a sudden very wrathful; while others who are not passionate, who take a longer time to be angry, are fearful enough when they do speak. Others who dare not speak at all, are worse still, for they get brewing their anger.

"Nursing their wrath to keep it warm."

They go into a sulky fit, disagreeing with everybody, eternally grumbling; they are like dogs in the flock—only barking, and yielding no fleece. O that nasty anger! If it gets into the church it will split it to pieces. Somehow or other we cannot help getting angry sometimes. O that we could come into the church and leave ourselves behind us! There is nobody I should like to run away from half so much as from myself. Try, beloved, to curb your tempers; and when you do not exactly see with another brother, do not think it necessary to knock him on the eyes to make him see, that is the worst thing in all the world to do, he will not see any the better for it, for

"The man convinced against his will, Is of the same opinion still."

Then envy is another fearful evil. One minister, perhaps, is envious of another, because one church is full and the other not. How can teachers agree in the Sunday-school if there is any envy there? How can church members agree if envy creeps in? One member thinks another is thought more highly of than he deserves. Why, beloved, you are all too much thought of; but, after all, it does not matter what you are thought of by man, it only matters what God thinks of you—and God thinks as much of Little-faith as of Great-heart; he thinks as much of Mrs. Despondency as of Christiana herself. Drive, then, that "green-eyed monster" away, and keep him at a distance.

Again, there is pride, which gives rise to ill-feeling and bad blood. Instead of being affable to one another, and "condescending to men of low estate," we want that every punctilio of respect should be given to us, that we should be made lords and masters. That I am sure can never exist in a peaceable church.

Here, then, are our five great enemies. I would I could see the execution of them all Banish them, transport them for ever, send them away amongst lions and tigers; we do not want any of them amongst us; but though I thus speak, it is not because I conceive that any of these have thoroughly crept in amongst you, but because I would have kept them away. I am most jealous in this matter. I am always afraid of the slightest contention, and I desire the God of peace to be ever with us.

Now let me briefly show you the appropriateness of this prayer. We indeed ought to have peace amongst ourselves. Joseph said to his brethren when they were going home to his father's house, "See that ye fall not out by the way." There was something extremely beautiful in that exhortation. "See that ye fall not out by the way." Ye have all one father, ye are of one family. Let men of two nations disagree; but you are of the seed of Israel, you are of one tribe and nation; your home is in one heaven. "See that ye fall not out by the way." The way is rough; there are enemies to stop you. See that if ye fall out when ye get home, ye

do not fall out by the way Keep together; stand by one another, defend each other's character, manifest continual affection, for recollect you will want it all. The world hateth you because you are not of the world. Oh! you must take care that you love one another. You are all going to the same house. You may disagree here, and not speak to one another, and be almost ashamed to sit at the same table even at the sacrament; but you will all have to sit together in heaven. Therefore do not fall out by the way. Consider, again, the great mercies you have all shared together. You are all pardoned, you are all accepted, elected, justified, sanctified, and adopted. See that ye fall not out when ye have so many mercies, when God has given you so much. Joseph has filled your sacks, but if he has put some extra thing into Benjamin's sack, do not quarrel with Benjamin about that, but rather rejoice because your sacks are full. You have all got enough, you are all secure, you have all been dismissed with a blessing, and, therefore, I say once more, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

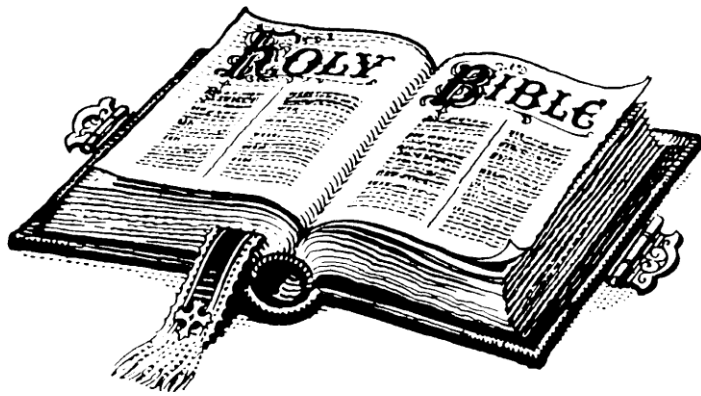
Now, dear brethren is there anything I can plead with you this morning, in order that you may always dwell in peace and love? God has happily commenced a blessed revival amongst us, and under our means, by the help of God, that revival will spread through the entire kingdom. We have seen that "the word of the Lord is quick and powerful." We know that there is nothing that can stop the progress of his kingdom, and there is nothing that can impede your success as a church except this. If the unhappy day should arrive—let the day be accursed when it does come—when you amongst yourselves should disagree, there would be a stop to the building of the Lord's house at once, when those that carry the trowel and bear the spears do not stand side by side, then the work of God must tarry. It is sad to think how much our glorious cause has been impeded by the different failings out amongst the disciples of the Lamb. We have loved one another, brethren, up till now, with a true heart and fervently and I am not afraid but that we shall always do so. At the same time, I am jealous over you, lest there should come in by any possibility any root of bitterness to trouble you. Let us this morning throw around you the bands of a man, let us unite you together with a three-fold cord that cannot be broken, let us entreat you to love one another; let us entreat you by your one Lord, one faith, one baptism, to continue one; let us beg of you, by our great success, to let our unity be commensurate therewith. Remember "how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" The devil wants you to disagree, and nothing will please him better than for you to fall at ears among yourselves. The Moabites and Ammonites cut down one another. Do not let us do that.

"Those should in strictest concord dwell, Who the same God obey."

It is continual bickering and jealousy that has brought disgrace upon the holy name of Christ. He has been wounded in the house

of his friends. The arrows we have shot at one another have hurt us more than all that ever came from the bow of the devil. We have done more injury to the escutcheon of Christ by our contentions than Satan has ever been able to do. I beseech you, brethren, love one another. I know not how I could endure anything like discord among you. I can bear the scoff of the world, and the laughter of the infidel, methinks I could bear martyrdom; but I could not bear to see you divided. I beseech my God and Master to suffer me first to wear my shroud, before I ever wear a garment of heaviness on account of your divisions. While I feel that I have your love and affection, and that you are bound to one another, I care not for the devils in hell, nor for men on earth. We have been, and we shall be omnipotent, through God; and by faith we will stand firm to one another and to his truth. Let each one resolve within himself—"if there is strife, I will have nothing to do with it." "The beginning of strife is like the letting out of water," and I will not turn the tap. If you will take care not to let the first drop in, I will be surety about the second. Brethren, again I say, for the gospel's sake, for the truth's sake, that we may laugh at our enemies, and rejoice with joy unspeakable, let us love one another.

Though I may not have preached to the worldly this morning, I have been asking you to preach to them, for when you love one another, that is a beautiful sermon to them. There is no sermon like what you can see with your own eyes. I went to the Orphan-house, last Wednesday, on Ashley Down, near Bristol, and saw that wonder of faith—I had some conversation with that heavenly-minded man Mr. Muller. I never heard such a sermon in my life as I saw there. They asked me to speak to the girls, but I said, "I could not speak a word for the life of me." I had been crying all the while to think how God had heard this dear man's prayer, and how all those three hundred children had been fed by my Father through the prayer of faith. Whatever is wanted, comes without annual subscriptions, without asking anything, simply from the hand of God. When I found that it was all correct that I had heard, I was like the queen of Sheba, and I had no heart left in me. I could only stand and look at those children, and think, did my heavenly Father feed them, and would he not feed me and all his family? Speak to them? They had spoken to me quite enough, though they had not said a word—Speak to them? I thought myself ten thousand fools that I did not believe God better. Here am I, I cannot trust him day by day; but this good man can trust him for three hundred children. When he has not a sixpence in hand he never fears. "I know God," he might say, "too well to doubt him. I tell my God, thou knowest what I want to-day to keep these children, and I have not anything. My faith never wavers, and my supply always comes." Simply by asking of God in this way, he has raised (I believe) £17,000 towards the erection of a new orphan-house. When I consider that, sometimes think we will try the power of faith here, and see if we should not get sufficient funds whereby to erect a place to hold the people that crowd to hear the Word of God. Then we may have a tabernacle of faith as well as an orphan-house of faith. God send us that, and to Him shall be all the glory.



Labor In Love

“My name is Michael Dewitt Jr, I am a member of Parkway Landmark Baptist Church, I am married and have three boys under the age of 5, and I work as a cable installer and am a co owner of a jiu jitsu school.”

What form of martial arts do you practice?

I practice nogi Brazilian jiu jitsu which is a form of grappling consisting of chokes and joint locks.

How long have you been learning and practicing martial arts?

I started training karate at a very young age for a short time, but I started brazilian jiu jitsu around 6 years ago.

How does it differ from others?

Jiu jitsu differs from other martial arts in that it is focused on using leverage and momentum so that a much smaller and weaker person can defend against a much larger person. There are no strikes in jiu jitsu either, although they can be incorporated, in pure jiu jitsu there are no strikes. There’s also no sun salutations or katas to memorize and perform.

Have you ever had people question you on martial arts being unchristian because of it's Asian/ Eastern philosophy?

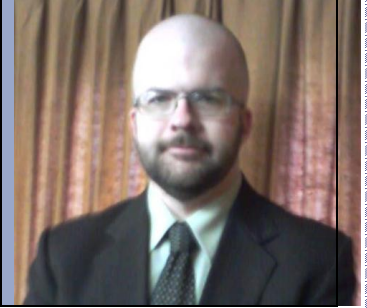
I have not had many people question my chosen form of martial art and I think that is because of how far removed from the Asian traditional martial arts philosophy it is. Brazilian jiu jitsu doesn’t have input at a spiritual level, there isn’t meditation or like I said before salutations to gods or the sun moon and stars.

How about people thinking martial arts is too aggressive for Christians?

As far as aggression goes the translation of jiu jitsu to English is the gentle art, in jiu jitsu the ones who flow and are loose are usually better able to perform the techniques. It can obviously be used in an aggressive manner but that can apply to many things like a vehicle or a firearm. As a Christian I like it as a sport and a form of fitness and it makes me think strategically.

“Weapons in Church?”

by Bro. David Green



Within these United States of America, there are differing laws dealing with guns in church. I would submit to you, the reader, that the government of the state (any state) cannot dictate what you as a member can or cannot carry into the church building. I would also submit to you that supporting such an idea when it comes to weapons is a slippery slope that could lead to the banning of other items. For example, if a governmental authority can block a person from carrying a gun or sword into a private church building then that same authority can legislate whether you can carry a KJV Bible in there as well.

Indeed, let us examine then, what the Scriptures have to say about weapons in the house of God for His Word is our final rule of faith and practice.

"Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born. Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples. Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then saith he unto them,

My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me. And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt. And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me. And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast. And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, master; and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear." (Matthew 26:20-51)

In this commentary of the events as given here there is absolutely no indication that Peter went home to get his sword. He must have had it with him the whole time: when the Supper was given, during the all night prayer session and then when Jesus was arrested. Nowhere do we have the idea that Jesus opposed it in any of these places.

"And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." (John 2:13-16)

When Jesus cleansed the Temple, He did not take with Him a weapon. Now, I know that the temple is not the church, but Jesus called it "my Father's house." The church is also called the house of the living God (see I Timothy 3:15). Our Lord is our best example. He did not have a "do as I say, not as I do" kind of an attitude. He never sinned and did not anywhere in all of Scripture do we find that Peter or the other Apostles were forbidden from carrying their weapons into any place where the saints were gathered as a church.

If your state is one of those who forbids the carrying of weapons into "places of worship," then write to your elected representatives and explain to them that the law must change! If the church you attend calls itself a "Bible believing" church but forbids weapons then ask them for Biblical proof as to why they have such a rule.

All human opinions, confessions, and creeds must submit to the authority of Scripture! Church authority must always be limited by Biblical authority!

"The Armor of God"

by Bro. Todd Bryant



"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" – Ephesians 6:10-12

I can think of no better day to consider the battle against evil that we face daily than Halloween. Tonight, streets will be filled with happy children expecting candy at every door they knock on. These may be dressed up as goblins, demons, vampires, ghosts and witches. Certainly, most of these are imaginary characters and we are cognizant of that. However, demons are real. When you see these children begging for candy, let it be a constant reminder to you that we are in a much bigger battle than what the eye can see.

How do we win the battles we have in life with demonic forces? Thankfully, we are not left in the dark concerning that. In fact, the very passage before us empowers us to win these spiritual battles if we will only heed to the Word of God. As members of God's army, we must arm ourselves with the equipment God has supplied to us. This equipment is called "the whole armor of God".

First of all, we must have "the truth" (vs. 14). It is simply impossible to stand against the devil without the truth. Jesus said, "...the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Nothing has changed here. Truth cannot be set aside for any purpose. If we are to battle Satan, the truth must be fought for.

Next, we must put on the "breastplate of righteousness" (vs. 14). Children of God cannot flirt with the sin. This is the armor of the

opposing forces. We must take a stand for what is right! Jesus set the greatest example of doing right. As He is our great Leader, we must follow Him in this!

Thirdly, we must certainly prepare ourselves to share “the gospel of peace” (vs. 15). It’s unthinkable that a soldier would ever go to war without some type of training. And yet, many children of God try to battle demonic forces daily without the proper training. We get our training in regular church attendance as we fellowship with the saints. We ask for help when we pray to our Lord!

Next in line, we are to put on the “shield of faith” (vs. 16). Certainly, this begins with the gift of faith that God gives to us. However, we must build up from that. Without the proper training, faith will not be built up. Many people enter the army with certain physical gifts. The army seeks to find these talents and enhance them. As believers, we must seek to strengthen our faith daily!

Lastly, we must put on the “helmet of salvation” as we wield the “Word of God” (vs. 17). Understand, God’s Word is not our sword. It is the “sword of the Spirit”. We are merely to share it and allow the Lord to use it as He sees fit (Isaiah 55:11).

Child of God, every time you see a child dressed up this night, remember that our battle is bigger than our physical eyes can see. We battle against demonic forces every day whether we realize it or not. Pray to the Lord now that He will help us as we seek to put on the armor He has graciously supplied.



The 68th Psalm

- 1 To the chief Musician, A Psalm or Song of David. Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him.
- 2 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.
- 3 But let the righteous be glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.
- 4 Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him.
- 5 A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation.
- 6 God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.
- 7 O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; Selah:
- 8 The earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God: even Sinai itself was moved at the presence of God, the God of Israel.
- 9 Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby thou didst confirm thine inheritance, when it was weary.
- 10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.
- 11 The Lord gave the word: great was the company of those that published it.
- 12 Kings of armies did flee apace: and she that tarried at home divided the spoil.
- 13 Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.
- 14 When the Almighty scattered kings in it, it was white as snow in Salmon.
- 15 The hill of God is as the hill of Bashan; an high hill as the hill of Bashan.
- 16 Why leap ye, ye high hills? this is the hill which God desireth to dwell in; yea, the LORD will dwell in it for ever.
- 17 The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.
- 18 Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them.
- 19 Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah.
- 20 He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death.
- 21 But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses.
- 22 The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea:
- 23 That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same.
- 24 They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary.
- 25 The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels.
- 26 Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel.

27 There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali.
 28 Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us.
 29 Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee.
 30 Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war.
 31 Princes shall come out of Egypt; Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God.
 32 Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah:
 33 To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice.
 34 Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds.
 35 O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.

“Bring It On!”

by Bro. Dr. M. J. Seymour, Sr.

“My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.”(Jer. 4:19)

“No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.” (II Tim. 2:4)

O, the great agonies of war! Why must that which is created in the image of God be such brutal beasts? Is it not because sin has entered in and has bequeathed to the human race the putrefying stench of their grotesque condemnation in the nostrils of God? Mankind by the nature of its spiritual death is at enmity with a Holy God. Lucifer cast out of the Heaven of Heavens has been in combat mode since he received the penalties of his rebellion against the Almighty. That Wicked One is the father of the viciousness of war launched against the portals of heaven, the angelic host, and the sons of God. There is no neutrality in this endeavor, for all are drafted into its ranks. Brethren, may our bowels burn within and give us no peace until we cry out, “Here am I, O Captain of my Salvation!”

The spirit of Anti-Christ has been a formidable archenemy of the saints of God since the times of antiquity. It is prophesied: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them;” (Dan. 7:21) Thus, we are made to know that the intensity of the battle shall cause the saints to wail and yearn for their Redeemer, and He shall come. Enoch foretold: “Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,” (Jude 14) Do we not also know that when He comes he will “smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God?” (Rev. 19:15)

Let our bowels pain with cravings for the coming of our Captain! Let our voices cry out to the Wicked One, “Bring it on, for the sword of our Lord shall destroy you!” We bow not to tyranny but to grace!

“We Love Him Because He First Loved Us”

by Bro. Curtis A. Pugh



“We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19). Eight words make up this one-sentence verse in our commonly used English Bible. These are simple words that require no explanation other than to say that the Greek word for “love” and “loved” transliterates as “agapao” which is the word used of God’s love in contrast to “phileo” which is used of brotherly love. We note that the two pronouns, “we” and “us” must refer to the same people. The grammar of the sentence requires it. English language rules do not support the idea that God loves everyone unless it can be demonstrated that everyone loves God and that is obviously not true. These people are said to love God and God is said to love these people. Those people who love God is not a larger group than those whom God loves. Conversely, those people whom God loves is not a larger group than those who love God. The people represented by the “we” and the “us” are the same people. It cannot be otherwise. “We” who love Him are the “us” whom He loved first. Everyone whom God loves loves Him! There is no reason given as to why God loves these people, but these people love God because God loved them first. We must ask this: When did God begin to love these people? Did He once hate these people? Or did He just somehow once upon a time not love them? Did He change and for some reason begin to love these people whom He had not loved before? Such a change is not possible with God for He declares, “For I am the LORD, I change not...” (Malachi 3:6). Again the Bible tells us, “God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent...” (Numbers 23:19). With God “...is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” (James 1:17). So we learn that God neither repents nor changes! He is constant and has been forever. He may appear to change because men neither understand Him of His eternal plan, but He does not change. If God were to change it would mean that either He was prior to His change less than perfect or that He changed from perfection and became less than perfect.

Since God does not change and since the Bible says, “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18), we must understand that God loved these people from before the foundation of the world. These people and God’s love for them has always been a part of God’s great eternal plan of redemption. He planned to act in a particular way toward these people because God’s love is neither in active nor is it just a sentimental feeling. God’s love is a determination to do

good to the object of His love regardless of what it costs Him. It was God's love to all the nations of the world that was displayed when He gave Christ to pay for the sins of a multitude in all nations – see John 3:16.

What did God do in eternity for these people whom He loved then? How is it that He included them in His eternal plan? The Bible makes it clear in Ephesians 1:4-6: "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved." In these verses we learn that God predestinated these people to be His children, that He chose them in Christ before the foundation of the world and that He made these people accepted in the beloved Son, Christ Jesus. These are plainly stated facts and above disputation although most people do not understand these things and many openly state their disbelief of these great truths. This passage also states that the reason God did these things was "according to the good pleasure of his will." So then, these things were done before the foundation of the world for those people whom God loved "according to the good pleasure of his will." Not because of anything these people ever did. God does not love "us" because of anything we ever did or will do. Romans 9:10-16 says: "...when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." God loved Jacob and hated Esau according to this passage and did so before either had been born. So then Bible believers must conclude that God predestinated, chose, and made some people accepted in the beloved before the foundation of the world – and that He did so without regard for anything they would ever do. Nothing that these people would ever will to do or attempt to do or accomplish caused God to love these people. God willed to love the unlovely!

And so when we read that, "We love him, because he first loved us" we must understand that this verse speaks of a particular people whom God loved from before the foundation of the world. We must also understand that it was because of God's great eternal plan that He chose to love them and do all for them in order to make them His sons and daughters. If you are one of the "we" who love Him because He first loved you – give Him all the glory for your blessed spiritual condition and take no glory unto yourself for "...Salvation is of the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

Morning Devotion:

"We Are The Children Of God"

by Bro. Stephen McCool Sr.



I John 5:19 **"And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."**

Oh how marvelous to know we are the children of God! For if we were not we would be with the world. Everything in the world is a lie. The world has denied the truth of God's Word and therefore they live a lie. But through the blood of Jesus Christ we are saved from the world and it's lies.

Even though we were once living as the world and part of the world. God chose to save us from the sins of the world. He saved us from death and hell. Knowing exactly how evil we would be, He still chose us from before the foundations of the earth.

The God of all creation sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth in the body of a man, to die for our sins, to be buried, and to rise again so that His chosen people would have eternal life. Yet while we travel through this world on our journey for our Lord, doing His great commission, we slip and fall back into our old sinful selves. But His mercy and grace and love brings us back every time. No matter how small or great the sin, He will draw us back.

Oh how wonderful is the love of our Lord and Savior toward His elect children



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