

The Saints' Weapons of War

(Go To Meeting)

Lyall Johnston—December 9, 2022

Last week we had a message from Hollister: *When Satanism Abounds* by Fred R. Coulter, and satanism is definitely abounding more and more each day. It's coming to a conclusion.

You know something about Satan? Satan is in warfare against the Church of God. It's like Satan is in a chess game. In chess he's already lost the game! But do you think he will give up? *No! Even though he's in the wrong, he will never admit that he's in the wrong!* He's just going to continue to the end until Jesus Christ is going send His angels to bind him and put him in prison for a thousand years.

God's plan for the salvation of mankind begins back in Gen. 1 when God created these two human beings. He created Adam and then took a rib from Adam and created his wife Eve.

Because of Eve giving into the temptation of Satan the devil... Of course, we know that Satan didn't sneak into the garden until God allowed him in. Satan tempted Eve, and he knew that he should go to Eve and not to Adam. So, he must have understood something about what God had done with the creation of man and woman.

We know the story and how that Adam followed his wife and they were cast out of the garden. Then they began the beginnings of the first covenant, which really came into play with ancient Israel and God delivering the people of ancient Israel out of Egypt.

Why does God show particular favor to the people of Israel? *The question is really an interesting one, because God did not bless Israel because who they were!* God blessed ancient Israel because of Abraham's obedience, and that was the blessing!

We know that so much of the time that Israel just went off the track. Israel came through the history of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who God had named Israel, and he had 12 sons and they became the children of Israel. God gave them His covenant, which was a physical covenant with physical blessings. We know from the history of the Bible that God tells us that again and again they:

- rejected the way of God
- rejected His laws
- rejected His commandments
- rejected His judgments, statutes, ordinances and precepts

So, much of the time they turned to pagan gods, pagan idols, even one who we see as picturing Jesus Christ Himself, Solomon allowed many women (1-Kings). What did they do? *They turned his heart against the Lord God Almighty!*

God had appeared twice to Solomon. He hasn't appeared to us in that sense, but every day as we read the Scriptures:

- Is God not appearing to us?
- Is God not speaking to us?

Jesus said, 'The words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and Life!' in other words they never pass away! They're constantly alive on the pages of our Bible! We read them and they activate in our mind as we study and come to understand.

So, ancient Israel failed that first covenant! God promised that He would make a New Covenant with the people of Israel, but not before Jesus Christ built His Church. The New Covenant, as we know, begins with you and me and all saints going clear back to righteous Abel. Then we have the righteous prophets and some of the righteous kings. Of course, we then come to the time of Jesus Christ.

God says that He was the God of ancient Israel. But that, remember, is because of Abraham's promise. We know also that God is a God of all people, of all nations. But today, we know that all nations are being deceived and led by Satan the devil. All nations also means *all people, all religions* that do not have the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as their God.

What churches might we say are involved in that? *Catholicism, Protestantism and all the other religions:* Hindus, Islamics, Bahai, all of them; they're all under the sway of the devil!

The Church of God is subject ourselves. Didn't Paul say to the Corinthians that *'we have been purchased by the blood of Christ'* and *we now belong to God!* Our allegiance is to Him and we have become sacrifices and, like ancient Israel in one sense, we become like the daily burnt offering. What we do every day is offering up our lives completely and totally to God the Father with the help of Jesus Christ.

- Are we perfect? *Not by a long shot!*
- Are we striving to become perfect? *Absolutely!*

God tells us *'be you Holy!'*

- Why, God, do you want me to be Holy?
Because I am Holy!

It's what God decided in our very first parents Adam and Eve. It's not that that failed. It's just that that's the option God set, because God gave Adam and Eve and you and me, *free choice!* We can choose! God will never interfere if we choose to take a path that will lead us away from Him, from His Truth, from His Word, from the very Body of Christ, the Church.

Of all the Churches around the world that are following the laws and commandments of God, and obeying and loving Him, collectively are called the Churches of Christ, which is Paul's terminology.

But Jesus Christ said in John 17 that He keeps the Church in the Father's name. So, the name that we come under—The Church of God—is because we belong to God! We have decided, we made the choice:

- to obey Him
- to obey His commandments
- to obey His Laws
 - every day we're learning a little bit more
 - every day we endeavor to get closer to God through
 - ✓ our prayers
 - ✓ our study of His Word

The more that we study that Word, the more it comes alive in our mind! *God feeds us!* Not just us, God is feeding that incorruptible seed, the Holy Spirit, *which is the mind of Jesus Christ that He's put in us!* Think about that!

We plant a seed in the ground and God sends the water/rain, He sends us sunshine and that seed germinates. That's what we're doing! We're developing all the fruits of the Spirit! We're to be growing in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

As we do that, we begin to produce fruits! We begin to look more and more toward God the Father. More and more we're putting the world away, putting it behind us.

Last time I talked about the incorruptible seed, and we know that that is the Holy Spirit. We also know that it's the mind of Jesus Christ—His own mind—within us. Just a very small seed like the seed that's planted at conception of a human child, for any living being really.

That seed grows and the mother's body feeds that. That's part of the responsibility of the Church, to feed! Jesus said to Peter to feed His lambs, feed His sheep and to protect them or

shepherd them. As that happens we develop and grow in the fruits of God's Spirit.

- How does that happen?
- Do we really need to ask that question?

If we're doing the right thing, it is God Who is working within us!

The Scriptures tell us that God the Father and Jesus Christ are within us, within your life because of that seed, which is the very mind of and Spirit and power of God the Father through Jesus Christ that He's given it to us!

Hebrews 8:8: "But since He found fault with them, He says, 'Behold, *the days are coming,*' says *the Lord,* 'when I will establish a New Covenant...'"

We can read that in the Old Testament, but I decided to use Paul here because we're living in the days of the New Covenant. Only the Churches of God today are living under the New Covenant. We know that there are various segments or branches of the Church of God.

"... 'Behold, *the days are coming,*' says *the Lord,* 'when **I will establish a New Covenant** with the house of Israel and the house of Judah'" (v 8).

That has not happened, yet; it will happen after the return of Christ! However, it is happening to us today. We are the only ones... This is not being proud or boasting ourselves. ***It's God's glory, and we praise God*** because He chose us, wretched human beings that we were. He's changing us into fully grown sons and daughters!

Paul tells us what category were when God called us. He didn't call us because we were so great, so brilliant, that we're the best human beings we could ever be. When a human being gets to that state, God says he's 'altogether nothing.' All those high and mighty people are going to have to start in the Kingdom of God on the bottom rung, where we are now.

What's God going to do to us? *He's going to exalt us to be with Him in His heavenly realm!* We are the ones who are going to teach these people:

Look! You're going to have to forget everything you've learned in the past, because that was all guided, directed and inspired by Satan the devil ***so that you would not know*** the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The Lord God of Israel! The One Who created the entire universe!

I've often wondered, God says that the heaven is His Throne, and the Earth is His footstool. If that's true, then what else is there way beyond the

created universe? If the whole physical universe is just His Throne? What's the rest of the heavenly realm like? *It's so expansive!*

Paul said that we only see 'through a glass darkly.' But it should be enough to inspire us and to carry us on.

Verse 9: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in *the* day that I took hold of their hand to lead them out of *the* land of Egypt..."

Does God take our hand today and lead us out of spiritual Egypt? *Absolutely, He does!*

"...because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them,' says *the Lord*" (v 9).

This is Paul speaking in the 1st century, so this is past history that he's talking about of Israel.

Verse 10: "'For this *is* the covenant that I will establish with the house of Israel after those days'..."

We're living in those days now, the history of the Church. The beginning was the Day of Pentecost 30_{A.D.} right through to the first resurrection. That's where the New Covenant is being established and confirmed and given. We're made a part of that New Covenant.

"...says *the Lord*: 'I will give My laws into their minds, and **I will inscribe them upon their hearts...**'" (v 10).

That's what God is doing to you and me today. First of all, He's giving them, but the choice is ours, will we obey? As we obey, what is God doing? **'I will give My laws into their minds, and I will inscribe them upon their hearts...'**

Not on tables of stone! But the fleshy tables of the heart; God is changing the heart, our feelings, our emotions to take us out of Satan's world so that we have:

- the knowledge
- the understanding
- the wisdom
- the desire
- the zeal

to walk in the Way of God!

God actually reverses this order in Heb. 10 to reinforce what He's doing in our lives and our minds regarding the New Covenant.

"... 'I will give My laws into their minds, and **I will inscribe them upon their hearts** and **I will be their God...** [your God, my God and of all

people whom He has called out of this world] ...and **they will be My people**" (v 10).

- God has given us repentance
- we repented
- we were baptized
- we buried the old man/woman

We came up out of the water and in God's eyes we were new beings! Now to begin ***to learn fully***—with the help of His Word and His Spirit—***to build the mind of Christ!***

In doing that, one of the most important things is ***to love one another!*** Read the Epistles of John in particular. So much we find the apostles establishing and repeating over and over how we are ***to love one another!***

We're going to have problems in the Church, we know that. We've just been through and actually still going through the aftermath of a difficulty and problem in the Church.

Whatever we do, don't let that affect us by withdrawing our love from the brethren. God says through the words of John, 'If you hate your brother/sister, you don't know God!' But if you love your brother/sister what are you doing? *God sees that and He knows that because you love your brother/sister who are part of the Body of Christ, God knows you love Him!*

That's the message that you're sending to God when we demonstrate that love toward one another. That's another subject and the Bible has much to say about that key message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"...I will give My Laws into their minds, and I will inscribe them upon their hearts..."

He gives His Laws into the mind, and inscribes it—itching deeply with His finger—on the fleshy heart within us. One day we're going to find out that was not just idle words. God really was changing the chemistry, our DNA. So, we no longer follow the old man/woman, but has given us that capacity and ability now to follow the new man/woman.

I believe that spiritual change took place in our heart, and God's rewriting that code, based on His Law! It's written by His hand and His Spirit on our heart. We must never ever let that die. We've got to keep feeding that seed, that incorruptible seed, because we also have within us a corruptible seed.

Our body is corruptible (Rom. 7). It's the sin that dwells within us! It's the seed that Satan planted in the mind of Eve right back at the beginning. Of course, she allowed it, and Adam went along with it.

Ever since that day, mankind has walked contrary to the Way of God! Unless God intervenes in our lives!

Let's see how Paul writes this, and how changes the order. Paul is reconfirming the New Covenant, how God is going about it and working with us. But it does require our effort, daily contact with God:

- daily repenting of the sin that lies within, which is always there with us
- the deeds against God's Law that we are aware of

I believe that it's good if we prayed that God would wash us clean with the precious blood of Christ, even of those things that we're not aware of until He makes us aware of them. He will do that through His Word and Spirit.

Hebrews 10:16: "“This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,” says *the* Lord, ‘I will **give My Laws into their hearts**, and I will **inscribe them in their minds**.’”

That's a very important factor for us to understand. However, along comes Satan (2-Cor. 4:4). He's the god of every religion—this is what God says—

- unless we are keeping His commandments
- unless we are keeping the Sabbath Day
- unless we are keeping the Passover

Anyone who is not doing at least those two laws and commandments that God has given to us are not even at the starting block.

‘Oh, I know Jesus!’ *What does Jesus say?* ‘Lord Jesus, we have even cast out demons in Your name!’ *Jesus doesn't deny it!* Maybe they were and maybe they weren't, we're not told!

Jesus says to them, ‘Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness!’ All those who are in the traditional ‘Christian’ churches: ***unless they repent and come out of those churches, come out of the Babylonian system...*** Because the so-called ‘Christian’ churches, their traditional Christianity is all a part of the Babylonian system, which God hates and coming back to destroy. ***God says, ‘Come out of her My peoples so that you will not be partakers of her sins!’***

We know the punishments, the total power of God is going to come and just totally destroy and crush that whole religious system. What's going to happen then?

Once all of that is established,

- What's Jesus going to do? *He's going to come back and teach Sunday worship, Easter, Christmas and Halloween!*
- Is He?
- Where do we find that in God's Word? ***We don't!***
- What's Jesus going to teach?
- What are the saints, working under and alongside Jesus, going to be teaching?

The representatives of the nations are going to come up to Jerusalem to learn the ways of God!

What are the ways of God so they may be blessed? *The laws and commandments of God!* That's where the nations are going to have to be, that's the starting block to the nations before they begin the race. Then they will have to walk the same route and path that we have.

I would like to make the point about Rev. 12. We've heard this many times. It gives a synopsis of the birth of Jesus Christ through the nation of ancient Israel, through the tribe Judah. Rev. 12 covers the birth and death of Christ. Then it covers the eras of the Church right up until the Church—the remainder or small remnant—is taken and protected from Satan's actions. Jesus stated that the ‘gate of the grave will never overcome the Church.’ So, God is going to take a small portion of the faithful people and preserve them so that that prophecy will be true.

The rest of the world is going to be following Satan. The rest of the Churches of God are going to be destroyed by Satan the devil, and that's all history there. But here in 1-John 5 it's interesting, and I just want to point this out, because you can tie this into 2-Cor. 4:4 that Satan is the ‘god of this world.’

This is very helpful to go along as a supporting Scripture.

1-John 5:17: “All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not unto death.... [John also talked about *the sin unto death*] ...We know that anyone who is begotten by God ***does not practice sin...***” (vs 17-18).

That's such an important statement that so many need to understand. We all sin, but we've stopped ***practicing*** sin. We buried the old man/woman at baptism and there was a new man/woman that came up. Every day we know that the way God knows and sees us, as we go through the day we get spots, stains, wrinkles and sometimes pretty big blotches. Every day we repent of our sins and confess our sins, and God willingly, freely forgives us as long as we have that attitude of repentance.

“...anyone who is begotten by God **does not practice sin...**” (v 18)—*habitual practice!* Do we get caught up from time to time? Absolutely! That’s why Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive us our sins.’

- What are our sins? *Trespassing the Law of God!*
- What does that do? *That puts us in debt to God!*

We go before God’s Throne, we cry out in the presence of God the Father for Him to apply the sprinkling of blood to our lives.

Like it happened in ancient Israel, the sprinkling of blood for the cleansing. The term that I like where Peter talks about the precious blood of Jesus Christ; we’re cleansed by the precious blood of Christ. It’s of more value than any other object, silver or gold, precious stones, diamonds. They’re nothing compared to that precious blood of Jesus Christ given once for a sacrifice for us. It’s there constantly. It’s there to be taken and applied as we come before the Throne of God.

“...for the one who has been begotten by God **keeps himself...**” (v 18).

We do what God says to Cain, but Cain did not. Cain sinned because he was angry, God said, ‘You must rule over it!’ Cain didn’t! What happened? *He became an outcast!*

We keep ourselves “...for **the one who has been begotten by God keeps himself by the power of God, and the wicked one does not touch him...** [this is a powerful text for us to keep in mind] ...We know that we are of God, and *that the whole world...* [every last human being] ...**lies in the power of the wicked one**” (vs 18-19).

Do we believe that? *Of course, we must!* We can’t turn aside from that! We also know the history of the Church of the first century is in Rev. 2-3^[transcriber’s correction] and is the history of the church problems, but also a history of the problems that we face.

Let me show something that you may not have seen before, and it’s repeated almost to every one of the churches.

Talking to the Church at Ephesus; the message is to the Churches. Jesus—through John—completes the message to each Church. Here’s a very important phrase and it’s repeated throughout all the other Churches:

Revelation 2:7: “**The one** who has an ear, let him... [or her] ...hear what the Spirit says to the Churches. To **the one**... [that’s you and me] ...who overcomes I will give *the right* to eat of the Tree of

Life that is in *the* midst of the paradise of God.”

The message is to us individually, but overall it’s addressing each of the seven churches that were in Asia Minor—Turkey today. It’s also a message for each one of us as there is in all Scripture.

We talk about the incorruptible seed and how God called us, because our bodies are corruptible. Paul talks about the ‘wretched’ body and a number of things, the carnality that he was still facing within himself. He still had to get hold of it and overcome.

Look at David’s sins! Yet, when God point out David’s sins he didn’t hesitate, he repented immediately. Look at the penalties that were on Israel because of David’s sin. Tens of thousands of people died. God caused them to be slaughtered because of the king’s sin.

Is there a message there for us? *I think there is!*

1-Corinthians 15:50: “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit *the* Kingdom of God...”

Aren’t we so pleased about that? I like to thing that when I die the sin that dwells within my flesh is overcome and it ceases to exist. *It’s gone, the flesh dies and so does the sin that lies within!* The spirit that returns to God, the sin doesn’t go with it. Memory does, yes, of course, but not the sin. That sin will no longer affect us when God gives us that new body.

“...nor does corruption inherit incorruption” (v 50). ***Our bodies are corruptible***; therefore, they will not inherit incorruption, that is our physical bodies: bones, flesh and blood.

Verse 51: “Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in *the* twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for *the* trumpet shall sound, and **the dead shall be raised incorruptible...**” (vs 51-52).

That incorruptible seed that Peter talks about is the means by which God’s very Spirit is going to raise us and give us a spiritual body.

“...and we shall be changed. For this corruptible... [mortal] ...must put on incorruptibility, and **this mortal must put on immortality**” (vs 52-53).

What an incredible promise that God has given to us, and provided a way to it through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Giving us His laws and commandments so that:

- we can walk in His ways
- we can learn to love Him
- we can learn to love one another
- we can learn to be filled with His love

So that He will shed His blood abroad in our heart!

Verse 54: “Now, when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility...”

Think about that! That's not hearsay, that's an absolute! That's set in spirit, spiritual concrete; unmovable!

“...and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory?” (vs 54-55).

When we die, Satan thinks he's won! But he hasn't seen the resurrection, yet. I don't even know that this is going to take place. His mind is so corrupt, so perverted, so twisted that we just don't know how much he knows. We do know that he's ‘the prince of the power of the air’ and he can control things.

Verse 57: “But thanks *be* to God, Who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”—*through His precious blood and indwelling seed within us!*

Verse 58: “So then, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in *the Lord.*”

We know that we've had in the Church. We know that the problems, although human beings—men and women—were involved, we have to keep in mind Eph. 6. Who is our real enemy?

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the Lord*, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God **so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil**, because we are not wrestling against flesh and blood...” (vs 10-12).

Yes, people create problems, but what and who is behind those problems? *Here Paul tells us*; we have to keep in mind that when there are problems in the Church, “...**we are not wrestling against flesh and blood...**” We have to deal with the issues of flesh and blood, but we also have to recognize the force and power behind those people.

- What was the force that had twisted their thinking?
- Who's behind the perversion of their thinking?

To me, the Passover and the Day of Atonement are inexorably linked together. You cannot separate them! To say that the two goats are ***not relevant*** to the Day of Atonement ***is a gigantic deception!*** What is it the covering up? *The precious blood of Jesus Christ!* That blood was shed at the Passover, and we commemorate the remembrance of the death of Christ every year until He comes again.

We know that the Passover and the sacrifice pictured there is for the Church. So, we come to Atonement and we have the death of a male goat to represent the death of Christ. In other words, ***it's a re-enactment of the Passover, because the goat is the same as the lamb for Passover!***

Now what we do know is that the death of that male goat selected to represent Jesus Christ is a substantiation of the sacrificial lamb sacrificed at Passover. Now at Atonement that sacrifice is opened up to the rest of humanity. It's one sacrifice, but it's two occasions. The first time the blood of Christ for the Church, the saints—those whom God has called now—and Atonement is that same blood, the blood of Jesus Christ.

Is the blood of some other animal or other human being going to pay for the sins of all of those who live on into the reign of Christ? ***NO! It's only the blood of Christ, the precious blood of Jesus Christ!*** It's eternal, immortal!

I have a feeling we're all going always celebrating that occasion, because it's by that sacrifice that God is building His Family.

Referencing Heb. 4:12-16: Who is the Word of God? *Jesus Christ!* That whole segment is talking about Jesus Christ, the Word of God!

2-Corinthians 10:1: “Now, I Paul am personally exhorting you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ. **On the one hand, when present with you I am base...**”

Paul has been criticized for this as you can read in the rest of the chapter. Paul is contradicting or challenging those who are calling themselves super-doooper extra apostles. We will find out who they are in 1-Cor.11.

Paul wanted to be meek and gentle, but when he came and was being resisted by some in the Church then he was going to be bold! He didn't want to come bold, come there and tell them off left, right and center. He had done enough of that in 1-Cor.

They repented and changed, but there were still problems. The problems were *false teachers!*

“...but on the other hand, when absent I am bold toward you” (v 1)—*and he was!* If they were to take Paul’s instruction he could be gentle and meek.

Verse 2: “But I am beseeching *you* so that, when I am present, I may not have to be bold...”—as he did in 1-Cor., as a rod.

He says he would rather come as your brother and be able to just have that loving time together with you, and to be able to teach you more of the ways of God, the Gospel of Christ and Him crucified.

“...with the confidence with, **which I intend to show boldness toward some...**” (v 2).

We find that there was an element within the Church that thought they were superior to Paul. They are well identified. Throughout the next 3-4 chapters of 2-Cor. Paul is talking about and making reference to these people in order that the Church would understand that they have to be dealt with.

Sidebar: If you read 3-John you’ll notice there that John knew that there was a problem with Diotrephes, who was absolutely malevolent. He was speaking out and criticizing and maligning the Apostle John and others. What John says is ‘I will deal with that problem.’ He didn’t say he was going to deal with it now, but he would get all his reports in from the various ministers who would not accommodate Diotrephes, so John said: ‘*When the time is ready I will deal with Diotrephes.*’

We don’t know if he was an elder or a minister, or what. We’re not told. But what he was doing, he loved the preeminence of the people. This is one of the really deep problems that we can have within the Church. When people want to have the preeminence and set themselves up as little kings and queens and draw people to themselves, to be followers of them and taking them away from being followers of Christ. *Hence the case against Diotrephes in 3-John!*

1-Corinthians 10:2: “...**I [Paul] intend to show boldness toward some...** [a special little group that were against Paul] ...who think that we are walking according to *the flesh.*”

We have to live! But we’re not going to live *after the flesh!* We’re not going to be following the ways of this world, the corruption of this world.

Verse 3: “For although we walk in *the flesh*, we do not war according to *the flesh.*”

We, the Churches of God, are at war! It’s not a physical battle, it’s a spiritual battle. There’s a man who was teaching at a seminary in California. I had a very good friend who was in all his classes. He

was a leader in the church growth movement, where ‘we can grow the church, we don’t need God’s help.’

What did Jesus say, ‘**I will build My Church!**’ No man can build a Church of God. We’ve had people that tried and failed! This man was Peter Wagner and he wrote on *spiritual warfare!* This friend of mine said that he had done all of Peter Wagner’s classes, and he said that his wife was running around the world driving stakes into the world.

- Is that a spiritual weapon?
- To ward off and claim territory for God?

We can read about that in the Bible!

My friend said that he had difficulty in discerning what was spiritual warfare and what was demonism and witchcraft! So, I want everyone to be leery of that kind of writing of Peter Wagner: spiritual warfare, prayer groups.

Prayer is right and good and we should be using that. But it’s a total misunderstanding of the spiritual warfare that Paul is talking about here, which is a warfare that is empowered by God. ***It doesn’t matter how much these people pray, because it’s not of God!***

What are people going to say?

O Lord, look, we drove stakes into the ground to drive out the demons in this area. We cast out demons. We gained this whole city for You; we have all these prayer groups.

What is God’s answer?

*Depart from Me, you who walk in lawlessness! You rejected My Sabbath Day. You’ve rejected the Passover, which is the very basis of Christianity. ***I don’t know you!****

Are you able to accept that as the Word of God? A lot of it’s going on in the world and we’ve got to keep this out of God’s Church.

Verse 4: “For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to *the* overthrowing of strongholds.”

At wartime the enemy sets up territory. In Europe we had the Germans. In the Islands of the Pacific we had the Japanese. They set up strongholds. How did the allied forces overcome those strongholds? *In Europe they had all their battleships and cruisers*, and they put salvo after salvo of high explosives to try and soften up the enemy. Then they sent in a landing barge, probably had aircraft and dropping bombs, as well.

Then there were the troops; what was their

role? *Where the stronghold was they were to setup a beachhead!*

As Christians we can fight our warfare, we attack the enemy's territory within the Church or within ourselves, because the strongholds can be one of us.

Once the troops establish a beachhead then they can bring in the heavy equipment, the tanks, their field gun, etc. Little by little they can destroy the enemy and take over that territory.

Our spiritual warfare, in a sense, is the same. Sometimes in the Church strongholds have to be broken, as Paul goes through in this particular chapter to show us how to do that by spiritual weapons. We need to consider in our lives how we can do that. We can do it

- through fasting and prayer
- by resisting

As God told Cain, ***'You must rule over it!'***

Then it's a day-by-day battle of confessing our sins and asking God to shed His love abroad in our heart. Giving us His strength, His mind—the thinking of Jesus Christ—so that Satan doesn't get a stronghold in our lives.

If there are, do you know if you have a stronghold in your mind? *A good question to take before God,*

Father show me if I have them. What is it that I may be hanging onto that is a stronghold against the way of God? Something that I'm not giving up on, something that I'm not letting go of.

To some degree, I'm sure we all have those that we personally know. God is there offering us all the help we need:

1. the blood of Christ
2. the Word of God
3. the Holy Spirit

All together!

Verse 4: "For **the weapons of our warfare are not carnal**, but mighty... [the weapons that God has given to us are mighty] ...through God to the overthrowing of strongholds, casting down *vain* imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought into the obedience of Christ" (vs 4-5).

We had this problem in the Church where there were some who were bring strongholds into the Church and having the people follow them and creating a difficulty. So, Paul was attacking them? *He was using spiritual weapons!* He was exposing

them, saying that they were not the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Verse 6: "And having a readiness to avenge all disobedience, whenever your obedience has been fulfilled."

In one sense Paul was waiting for the Church, that when the Church was fully committed and ready for sin, the Church itself makes it possible for these intruders. When the members are not ready when they hadn't had all that readiness, yet, to avenge all this disobedience within the Church and, yes, within ourselves.

So, we come to a point in time when the whole Church is ready, then that gives the ministry the support to deal with the problems. We can go to 1-Cor. 5 where the man was committing adultery with his step-mother.

The Church had to come to the understanding that Paul had, and once they come to that understanding, then they were able to put the man out and remove the leaven from the Church.

Remember what Jesus said to Peter: *Satan demands to have you!* There it's plural, so Fred has translated it correctly: "...all of you." Then Jesus directs His comments to Peter, 'I've prayed for you, so when you're converted strengthen your brethren.'

My point here is: Is Satan demanding to have you or me?

Luke 22:31: Then the Lord said, 'Simon, Simon, listen *well*. Satan has demanded to have **all of you**...'"

We need to take that very seriously, because he is! Satan hates us with a passion! That's why we have to stand tall. There's another Scripture that says:

1-Corinthians 10:12: "Therefore, **let the one who thinks he stands**... [we should never have that self-confidence: 'I'm ok, I'm good.']. ...**take heed, lest he fall**."

Our confidence is not to be in the flesh! **Our confidence must be 100%:**

- in God the Father and Jesus Christ
- in the Word of God
- in the indwelling of the Spirit
- in the precious blood of Jesus Christ

Our confidence is not in ourselves! Not in the flesh! Our confidence is in Christ Jesus. Who is backing up Christ Jesus? *God the Father!*

2-Corinthians 11:6: "For although *I may be* unpolished in speech, yet, *I am* not in knowledge;

for in all things I have demonstrated this to you. Now, did I commit sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I preached the Gospel of God to you freely?" (vs 6-7).

I didn't charge you, other churches paid for me to preach the Gospel to you. I didn't put any burden on you.

Verse 8: "I robbed other churches, receiving wages *from them* for ministering to you."

Verse 12: "But what I am doing, I will do, so that I may cut off *any* occasion from those who are desiring an occasion; so that in the things they boast of, they also may be found even as we *are*."

Paul is talking about these 'super apostle' not anyone of the apostles of Jesus Christ. These are men who came up from Jerusalem, 'we're Jews, what do you Gentiles know.'

So, Paul is cutting them off here, showing and exposing them for what they are. Have we seen this in the Church today? *You can answer that question!*

Verse 13: "For such *are* **false apostles**... [clearly not talking about the 12] ...**deceitful workers** who are transforming themselves into apostles of Christ."

- Have we seen that in the past?
- Will we see it in the future? *Yes, we will!*

Verse 14: "And *it is* no marvel, for Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore, *it is* no great thing if his servants also transform themselves as ministers of righteousness—whose end shall be according to their works. Again I say, no one should consider me a fool; but if otherwise, receive me even as a fool, that I also may boast a little" (vs 14-16).

Then he goes into a little foolishness to expose the errors of these false apostles. So, we had them in the past and we'll have them in the future.

Heb. 4:12 is so important! It talks about the Sword of the Spirit. One of our basic weapons of attack and defense. We have the whole armor of God. We have weapons of defense and weapons of attack. But most of all, let's never forget that our salvation depends not on things of corruption, not corruptible things, but the most precious gift of all that God has give to us.

I'll end with these words:

The precious blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and to God may be all the glory, all the power and all dominion and sovereignty now and into the ages of

eternity. Amen!

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 8:8-10
- 2) Hebrews 10:16
- 3) 1 John 5:17-19
- 4) Revelation 2:9
- 5) 1 Corinthians 15:50-55, 57-58
- 6) Ephesians 6:10-12
- 7) 2 Corinthians 10:1-6
- 8) Luke 22:31
- 9) 1-Corinthians 10:12
- 10) 2 Corinthians 6-8, 12-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 17
- Epistles of John
- Romans 7
- 2 Corinthians 4:4
- Revelation 12; 3
- Hebrews 4:12-16
- 1-Corinthians 11
- 3 John
- 1 Corinthians 5

Also referenced: Message:

When Satanism Abounds by Fred R. Coulter

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