

**Greetings, dear reader, in the Magnificently Matchless Name of Jesus!**

Here we see the Church pictured as the Army of the Lord.

The weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor 10:4). Our battle armour is listed in Eph 6 as: truth around our loins, the breastplate of righteousness, the gospel of peace for our feet, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. We see also in 1 Jn 5:4 that the victory that overcomes the world is our faith, and we note from verses like Eph 6:18 the importance of prayer and fasting for ourselves and others, in particular for our brethren on the front lines (pastors & missionaries, etc.) who tend to be the ones most targeted by our enemy. In Rev 12, re the spiritual warfare between God's people and satan, we read that "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev 12:11). Let us ask ourselves how much we are willing to lay down our lives not only for the Lord, but for the brethren in our battle (I John 3:16).

The apostle Paul admonished his spiritual son, Timothy, to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim 6:12) and to "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim 2:3). He also noted that "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" (2 Tim 2:4). We should ponder these words.

In the words of one of my poems:

**There's an army marching onward  
An army with God's sword,  
There's an army moving forward  
The army of the Lord.**

**This army shall never waver,  
It conquers with God's Word,  
It is marching on for ever,  
The army of the Lord.**

**God's banner is waved before it  
It moves with one accord,  
Empowered by the Holy Spirit -**

## **The army of the Lord.**

**Singers in front are praising God! (2 Chron 20:21)**

**Its triumph is assured!**

**Its goals are high, its vision broad!**

**The army of the Lord!**

**It presses on to victory,**

**And great is its reward**

**Both now and in eternity,**

**The army of the Lord!**

May we be a united army for Jesus, not breaking ranks but marching side by side like the conquering army in Joel 2.

Our enemy the devil specialises in telling lies and deceiving us as to the true status of the ongoing war with him. The truth is that, through the finished work of Christ on the cross, satan is already a defeated foe, and we should be merely carrying out mopping up operations in taking over enemy territory. In fact, the land we are capturing is already legally ours through the shed blood of Christ; we are merely taking what belongs to us.

Another point - re our weapons of the Holy Spirit, in modern jargon we are the holders of the true "weapons of mass destruction" - the enemy cannot match the power in prayer & praise that we possess, and no weapon formed against us shall prosper (Isa 54:17)!

Also, we need to have on our battle gear at all times; we can't, or shouldn't, run from the battle of faith the Lord is calling us all to.

In Joshua 2, we see that while the Israelites were so fearful of the giants in the Promised land, all the time those "giants" had been fearful of the Israelites! Check what Rahab the harlot in the enemy "stronghold" of Jericho told the Israelite spies:

*"And she said unto the men, I know that the LORD hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you. For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we had heard*

*these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the LORD your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath."* Joshua 2:9-11

Even so it is the devil and his army who are fearful of us. As the Lord thrice instructed Joshua to be (Joshua 1:6-9), we must be **strong and of good courage** in this battle because **Our Commander** (Isa 55:4), a.k.a. the **Captain of the Host of the Lord** (Joshua 5:14), a.k.a. **Jesus Christ the Lord of Lords and King of Kings** (Rev 19:6), is with us!

One day in eternity we will look on at the devil in captivity in hell and wonder "*is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?*" (Isa 14:16-17).

Praise the Lord, even though the devil wanted to keep us shut up in "the house of his prisoners", and in bondage as war prisoners of the enemy, Jesus has come to "*proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound*" (Isa 61:1). He has come to set us free and he whom the Son sets free is free indeed (Jn 8:36).

Check Zech 9:12: "*Turn you to the strong hold, ye prisoners of hope: even to day do I declare that I will render double unto thee*". We are or were "prisoners of hope", but the Lord is our strong hold, and he will render double blessing upon us for our troubles. The previous verse (v 11) says: "*As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.*" Since the passage (see verses 9-10) is speaking of the Christ the Messiah (v9 is the prophecy of His riding to Jerusalem meekly on an ass), this verse is saying that by His blood - the blood of Jesus - by the covenant He has made with us... we who were once prisoners, who were stuck in a pit which did not even have water in it to drink, have been set free! Read the passage : v10 - Jesus speaks peace to us His people...v 11...He has set the captive free from a waterless pit... v12... we have new hope and today He declares He will render double blessing to us in exchange for our former captivity! Amen! No longer prisoners but in the new battle gear of Ephesians 6, let us march forward under the banner of the Lord, knowing that the battle is not ours but the Lord's, and the victory is His. Read the next few verses in Zech 9:

*When I have bent Judah for me, filled the bow with Ephraim, and raised up thy sons, O Zion, against thy sons, O Greece, and made thee as the sword of a mighty man. And the LORD shall be seen over them, and his*

*arrow shall go forth as the lightning; and the LORD God shall blow the trumpet, and shall go with whirlwinds of the south. The LORD of hosts shall defend them; and they shall devour, and subdue with sling stones; and they shall drink, and make a noise as through wine; and they shall be filled like bowls, and as the corners of the altar.* Zech 9:13-15

Put another way, the army of the Lord will be so blessed it will appear "drunk" with victory, which is indeed how it appeared on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-21)!

**As the hymnwriter wrote, soldiers of Christ, arise, and put His armour on!**

**PC**