



The Lord is with you in the battle

Judges 7:20

Did you know there is a war going on...all around us?

Not a war against flesh and blood but a war against evil. Not a physical battle but a spiritual one, a battle *to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners*. Isaiah 61:1 & Luke 4:18

And did you know that you have been enlisted to fight in this battle to defend your freedom – not to defend your country but to defend the Gospel, the kingdom of God, as we build with Him, *a kingdom of peace, righteousness and joy in the Holy Spirit?* Romans 14:17

If the thought of fighting evil alone fills you with fear, then take heart, the victory has already been won on the cross of Calvary.

For those who are 'in Christ' the war with God is over but the battle rages on to save those who remain captive under a yoke of slavery, *so be on your guard and stay awake, your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour* I Peter 5:8. *He comes to steal, kill and destroy* John 10:10, that is destroy the peace, righteousness and joy you are entitled to through the shed blood of the lamb.

The truth is 'in Christ' we have been taken from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of light, turning away from our old life by faith and receiving forgiveness for sin. However, if we believe the lies and the propaganda of our adversaries, it will prevent us from living in freedom and enjoying the abundant life God has promised.

So be encouraged that we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus! We have not been left defenceless either, as in Christ we have all that is needed to live a victorious life, even in the heat of the fiercest battle or in the middle of the darkest night!

The Apostle Paul writes in Ephesians 6:

¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms...

Paul explains there is a battle taking place in the heavenly realms, not one we can see with our eyes but one which does touch our life here on earth.

He goes on to encourage us that we have a wide-range of defences against this attack, not physical defences like Israel's Iron Dome, or weapons of modern warfare like Reaper Drones and Inter-ballistic missiles. We have supernatural defences of *truth, righteousness, peace, faith and salvation*. We also have an armoury of 66 supernatural weapons, which are held in our hands and hidden in our hearts: *the power (dunamis) of the dynamite 'sword of the Spirit' the Word of God!*

¹³...Therefore put on the full armour of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand. ¹⁴Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, ¹⁵and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. ¹⁶In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God...

Paul counsels us not only to proclaim the word of God to overcome evil but to watch out and listen for further instructions. We are to communicate (that is pray) with our 'Commander in Chief' the Lord God, and ask Him to defend the builders of His kingdom – we are also to look out for those around us who may be struggling in the heat of the battle.

He counsels us to: *¹⁸...pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*

This spiritual warfare has been going on since the beginning of time and as we take our last look at the life of Gideon, we will see how the Lord was with him. Judges 7:20-22

This was an actual battle against real enemies and recorded for us in the Old Testament. Romans 15:4 *for everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.*

So let's open our bibles to Judges Chapter 7 and verse 20.

How did Gideon and 300 men overcome an army of 135,000 without using physical force or shedding a single drop of their own blood? The Lord asked them not to fear and trust that He was with them in the battle; Judges 6:12. However, God arranged some very unusual weapons to fight with!

First, a little background to Gideon's calling:

- He was chosen to bring God's people out of idol worship
- He doubted his ability, background and family
- He finally agrees to take a stand against Israel's enemies
- His army was reduced from 32,000 to 300

Judges 7:20-22 *the three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands ...they shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"* ²¹ *While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.* ²² *When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the Lord caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords.*

Did you identify the weapons Gideon and his men used to win the battle?

They don't seem like very effective weapons to overcome an army of 135,000 men but perhaps it is what they represent that reveals the dynamite power behind them! The Lord wanted Gideon and his reduced army to completely depend upon Him, otherwise they would boast and claim the victory for themselves; that is was won in their own strength; Judges 7:2

These unusual items represent something, which may help us understand the Lord's choice of weaponry.

1. Blew the trumpets/shofar – (mentioned 72 times in the OT) shofars were blown to warn of danger; make declarations of truth, herald arrivals or celebrate victory in warfare, as in the battle of Jericho. They were also used in temple worship to hold anointing oil.

2. Smashed the jars – demonstrating the fragility and weakness of man.

Isaiah 64:8 *Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.*

3. Grasping the torches – representing the Light of the World, the living Word of God.

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God,*

John 1:4 *The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone.*

We can perhaps see why these three symbols are used on the cover of the Gideon's bible, which have issued over 2 billion copies since 1908.

What do these spiritual weapons represent for us and how can we use them to resist and fight evil in our day?

Charles Spurgeon said: "When you plead the name of Christ, you plead that which shakes the gates of hell and that which the hosts of heaven obey, and God Himself feels the sacred power of that divine plea."

1. Declare the word of God

SHOFAR – We are to declare the truth of God's word, just as Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy when the devil tempted him in the desert. Believe the truth of God's word not the lies of the enemy.

2. Don't fight evil in your own strength but in His mighty power

CLAY JARS - 2Cor. 4:7 *But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

I John 4:4 *...because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*

3. Lift up the name of Jesus and shout to the Lord all the earth let us sing...

TORCH – John 8:12 *Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."*

Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good. Pray in the Spirit at all times in name of our Good Shepherd, the Light of the world, the king of Kings and Lord of lords, in the name of Jesus.

AMEN