

## Christian Soldiers - the Commitment

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**Jesus expects his servants to be able and willing to fight** (Jh18:36a). **John the Baptist** was a fully committed servant of God (Lk1:15, Mt11:11a). Of and by ourselves, we cannot possibly succeed in our mission – **only through the Holy Spirit, do we have chance** (Rm7:18b,24b, 8:10b,11b). **Temptation is Satan’s primary tool** to draw people away from God (Hb2:18). **God is love** – our purpose in life is to learn to reflect God’s love (1Jh4:8b-9).

**The Life of a Soldier: Jesus’ servants expectation and faith of a Roman soldier** (Jh18:33-36,Lk7:2a,3-6,7b-9).

**A soldier is required to be fully committed.** Paul explicitly compared the Christian life to soldiering (2Tm2:1-4, 1Cr9:7a, Pp2:25, Philemon 2). **John the Baptist was fully committed by God from his birth** (Lk1:8,11a,12-13,15-17).

**Jesus and John the Baptist:** Probably at about age 18, John commenced his preaching in the wilderness (Lk1:80).

Jesus was baptized by John early in the year, probably late January or early February of 27AD (Mk1:9). Later that year,

**John affirmed his loyalty to Jesus** (Jh3:30). Soon after that, John was arrested and Jesus commenced his Galilean Ministry (Mk1:14). John the Baptist was held in prison at Machaerus for perhaps one year before Herod Antipas executed him. **While he was in prison, John wanted to point his disciples to Jesus** (Lk7:18b-23). After the discussion with John’s disciples, Jesus addressed the crowd (Mt11:7-11a). **John was the “last prophet” and the “first Christian”** – his role was unique. Jesus ends his speech by alluding to the metaphor of violence, **“the violent take it by force”** – to be considered a candidate for admittance to the Kingdom, a person must learn to violently hate sin (Mt11:12-15).

**We face overwhelming odds** – of and by ourselves, we cannot possibly succeed (Rm7:18b,24-25a).

Only through the power of the Holy Spirit can we possibly succeed (At1:8a, Rm8:10-11).

**Temptation – the Weapon of Satan:** From the beginning, Satan has used “temptation” to draw people away from God. Consider some of **Jesus’ last words to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane** (Mk 4:38). Jesus had previously highlighted the danger of “temptation” in the model prayer (Mt6:13). James, the brother of Jesus, goes right to the heart of the problem (Jm1:13-14). **Satan knows how to appeal to each person’s weaknesses.** Satan thought he could defeat Jesus through temptation (Mt4:1-10). **Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we also can defeat Satan** (1Cr10:13). Our High Priest and Advocate is there to help us (Hb4:15, 2:18).

**The Armour of God:** God has given us the weapons we require to win the war (2Cr10:3-6, Rm13:12, Eph6:10-17).

**Satan attacks us at our weakest points** – we must be ready (1Pt5:8-9a, Eph4:26-27, 1Tm3:2a,6-7, Lk8:12).

The **Belt of Truth** (1Kg17:24, Ps51:6, Is45:19b, Jh1:14, 8:31b-32, 17:17). The **Breastplate of Righteousness** (Gn15:6, Dt6:25, Ps119:138, Mt5:6, 6:33, Rm1:17). The **Gospel of Peace** (At20:24, Rm1:16a, 1Cr9:23, Eph1:13).

The **Shield of Faith** (Gn15:1, 2Sm22:3, Pr30:5). The **Helmet of Salvation** (Is59:15b-17, 1Th5:8-9).

The **Sword of the Spirit** – the **Word of God** (Mt10:34, Hb4:12, Rv1:16, 2:16, 19:21).

**God is Love – hesed:** The New Testament authors adjure us to hold fast to our commitment (Mk13:13, Hb3:14, 6:11, 1Tm6:12, Rv2:26, 2Tm4:7). **The definition of commitment is “hesed”** (Dt7:9,11-13a,14a). **The main theme of the Book of First John is hesed, “God is Love”.** The Divine Being known as **“YHWH”** to Israel was **the covenantor of the Old Covenant**, the Sinai Covenant. At the First Advent, the same Divine Being became known as **“Jesus Christ”**. He is **the covenantor of the New Covenant** into which those called enter by the right of Baptism. The Old Covenant created a physical nation, “Israel”. The new Covenant creates a spiritual nation, “true Christians”, “the children of God”. **The basis of both covenants is hesed. John reiterates the words of Deuteronomy in New Testament style** (1Jh2:1-6). The Greek word “*agape*” in itself does NOT carry a covenantal connotation like *hesed*. The Covenantor, **“the faithful God”**, is now in an expanded role: **“we have an advocate”**. Both covenants stipulate the Ten Commandments as the fundamental teaching under the covenant: **“do the commandment”, “keep his commandments”**. Those under each covenant are required to **“obey my voice”**: **“listen”, “keep and do”, “keeps his word”**. Both covenants require living by the Way of God: **“do ... the mish<sup>a</sup>patim”, “walk in the same way in which he walked”**. The benefit of the Old Covenant was physical: **“you shall be blessed above all peoples”**. The benefit of the New Covenant is spiritual: **“he is the propitiation for our sins”**. Israel was God’s **“firstborn son”** (Ex4:22-23a). Those called to the New Covenant are **“children of God”** (1Jh2:28, 3:1a,2). The **Love of God** comes from the Holy Spirit (Rm5:5b). **Those called to the New Covenant are required to attain hesed** – the **Love of God** (1Jh3:16,21b-24, 5:3-4). **This is how we win the war.** The propitiating sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the provision of the Holy Spirit are the foundation of the New Covenant (1Jh4:7-10, 13, 16). The accomplishment of the Plan of God is contingent on the New Covenant. **God will NOT let it fail – the war will be won.**

**Jesus expects his servants to be able and willing to fight – we are in a war.** The commitment to the Christian life must be unequivocal to the end. John the Baptist provides a living example of the commitment required by God.

**Satan knows how to attack us at our weakest points.** Only through the power of the Holy Spirit using the full armour of God, can we hope to succeed. **God’s commitment is expressed in hesed.** God requires us to attain *hesed* through our Christian life. The **Book of First John** provides clear insight into **the meaning of God’s Love, hesed.**

The material is based on the paper “**God of Every Nation**” available at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/>.

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