

## **Christian Soldiers - the Enemy**

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**We are in a war against sin** (Rm7:22-23). God has given us **weapons** – the most important being **the Bible** (Hb4:12). Throughout the Old Testament there is a series of prophecies which depict a **metaphor of violence** (Is19:21-22). Jesus alludes to the metaphor to emphasize our war against sin (Mk9:43). **God will test us** to ensure we win the war (Jm1:2).

**Know Your Enemy:** A fundamental rule of warfare: who or what is our enemy? **Our enemy is sin** (Eph6:12, Rm7:15,17,22-23). The objective of war is to eradicate the enemy. To eradicate sin, **we must develop a violent hatred of sin**. Satan the Devil is the source of sin (1Jh3:8, 2:15-16). Our war must be fought on two fronts: against sin in ourselves, and against sin in the world (Jm4:4b,7b, Jh12:31, 15:18, 16:33, 17:11a,14-15).

**The Metaphor of Violence:** The Jews at the time of the First Advent were expecting the coming of the prophesized Messiah (Jh6:11,14-15). They expected him to be a warrior king and establish “Israel”, i.e., the Jews, as the dominant nation on earth. There is a whole group of prophecies which deal with **the eradication of sin in the World Tomorrow using a metaphor of violence** – part of the Jews’ confusion was taking these prophecies literally and applying them to their Messianic Expectation (Obadiah 15,17-18, Is11:12-14, 14:1a,2, Mc4:6-7,13, Zph2:7,9). These prophecies of “violence” present an obvious contradiction with the **many prophecies of “peace”** in the World Tomorrow (Is2:2,4b, 9:7a, 57:19b, 52:7, Ez34:25, 37:25-26a, Zc9:10). **The meaning of the metaphor** is hinted at in Psalm 149, **“Let the godly exult in glory ... two-edged swords in their hands, to execute vengeance on the nations and punishments on the peoples”** (Ps149:2,4-6). **The Bible is the sword of God** (Eph6:17b, Hb4:12, Rv19:21a); the **“vengeance”** and the **“punishments”** are learning the Way of God. Isaiah is explicit, the “violence” has a spiritual purpose (Is25:9-11, 19:21-22, 41:8-16). Jeremiah uses the metaphor to depict repentance (Jr51:17-23). **The purpose of the metaphor is to teach violent hatred of sin.**

**The War Against Ourselves:** Prerequisite to being considered a candidate for the gift of eternal life and the opportunity to participate in the First Resurrection, each one of us must demonstrate to God that we are sincere in rooting sin out of ourselves. We must develop violence towards personal sin and eradicate it. **Jesus graphically alludes to the metaphor applied personally** (Mk9:43,45,47). We must come to understand God’s perspective when he looks at us and sees **our inherent nature to sin** (Jr17:9-10a, Rm3:9-12,23). **God hates all sin.** Commandments five through ten define moral and ethical sins (Pr6:16-19). Commandments one through four define sins against God (Dt27:15a) – **idolatry is the mother of all sin** (Dt4:10,12-13,15a,16a,19a). **Self-satisfaction leads to idolatry** (Dt8:11a,12-14a,17-19). We must be constantly on guard against self-satisfaction (1Jh5:18-21, 1Cr10:14).

**Baggage from the Past:** We have all dragged with us baggage from our pre-conversion lives. The Christian life is to learn to jettison all that baggage (1Jh1:4-10). **Conquering sin is NOT quick or easy** – a collage of “sins” from Proverbs identifies common failings of human nature (Pr16:5a, 3:32a, 24:9, 11:20a, 12:22a, 15:26a, 21:27, 17:15, 26:24-25). Whatever baggage we have from our pre-conversion lives, we are called to conquer it after conversion – to overcome (Rv2:7b,11b,17bα,26, 3:5a,12a,21). As long as we have human nature, we have something about which to repent on an ongoing daily basis (Jm4:1,7-8, 1Pt2:1,11, Rm6:6,12).

**God Looks on the Heart:** The objective of repentance is that **through the Holy Spirit our innermost heart and mind can become acceptable** to God so that he is willing to grant us the gift of eternal life (Is1:16a,18, Ps51:2,6-7,10, 1Sm16:7, At13:22, Ps17:3, 1Kg8:61, Jr3:15). **The Christian life is one of trial and testing:** God has to know the true nature of our innermost being (Jm1:2-4, Dt8:5, Ps26:2, 139:23, Hb12:7a,8,11).

**An Object Lesson on the Heart:** When **God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac**, Abraham was around 120 years old, God had been working with Abraham for about 45 years (Gn22:1-2). Abraham did NOT understand how God would do it, but **he proceeded in faith** (Gn22:8). In Abraham’s mind, Isaac was already dead (Gn22:10-12). **Abraham had to pass the test before God knew his heart.**

The New Testament explicitly uses the metaphor of **the Christian life being a war in which we are soldiers for God**. The Old Testament has a whole series of prophecies which depict violence upon the nations by Israel in the World Tomorrow. The **metaphor of violence** is used to teach us to **violently hate sin**. In our Christian life we are at war with the world and with our own human nature – both can drag us into sin. We require **ongoing repentance** so that God can purify our hearts and minds through the Holy Spirit. **God will test us** to determine whether or NOT to grant the gift of eternal life.

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

The PowerPoint slides are located at <https://mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca/presentations>.