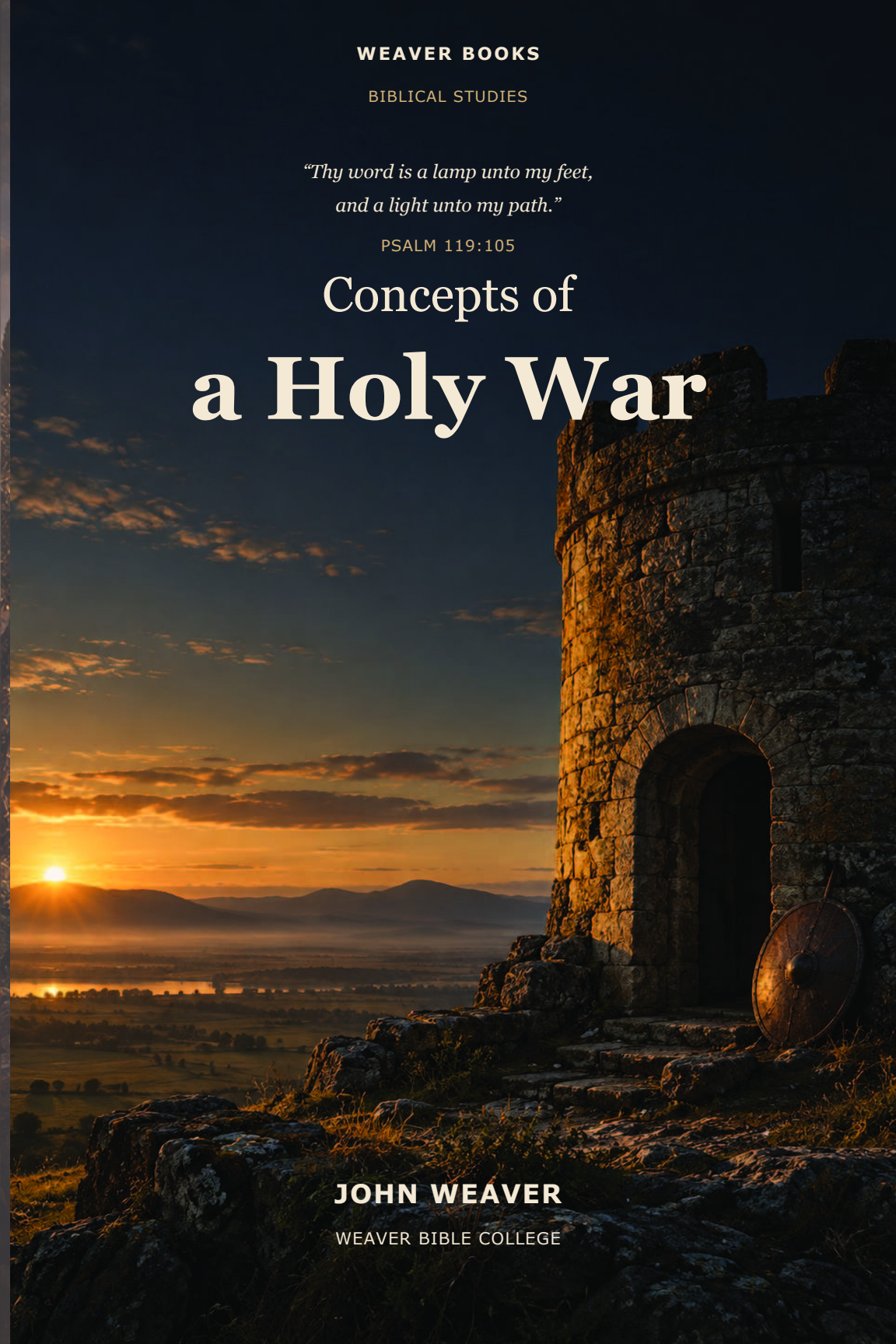
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"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105

Concepts of
a Holy War



JOHN WEAVER

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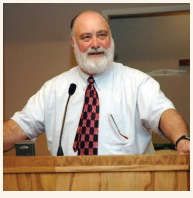
The battle is the LORD'S.

1 SAMUEL 17:47, EXCERPT

This volume examines warfare as a question of cause, covenant, conduct, and dependence upon God. John Weaver considers discernment, obedience, fear, and the responsibilities of a people facing conflict. These messages ask readers to judge claims of righteousness by biblical standards rather than by enthusiasm, advantage, or the strength of a party.

“That means we must know what God teaches in every area of life, and we must always act in accordance with the Word of God.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

Concepts of a Holy War,

Part One

Introduction: The Need for Biblical Thinking on War

Today I want to lay a principle foundation and build upon it more next week. Today I am bringing the introduction to the second message, which deals with the concept of a holy war. I will give you this idea in principle, and then, Lord willing, enunciate it more clearly and distinctly next week.

Look in Joshua chapter 4, verse 13. We will come back to this verse before I finish today. The Bible says, "About 40,000 prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle to the plains of Jericho." Note that again: "About 40,000 prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle to the plains of Jericho."

I mentioned last week in my introduction how humanism had basically captured the minds of modern-day Christians, and the fact that we do not think scripturally or biblically anymore. When biblical truth is taught, it seems so strange to our ears; we think that it possibly cannot be right or true. But the truth is, we have been

humanized, and we need to be Christianized and understand that there is a biblical concept of the fact that God is a warrior.

I gave you five truths from the Bible concerning the theme that God is a warrior. I am not going to give you all the Scriptures today, but I will repeat these five truths.

Five Truths of God as a Warrior

First, in the Old Testament, God appeared as a warrior who fought against Israel's flesh-and-blood enemies. You know how God fought against Egypt, the Canaanites, the Hittites, and the Perizzites. Secondly, when Israel sinned and rebelled against God, God appeared as a warrior and fought against Israel, as the Scriptures show.

Thirdly, the Old Testament ends with the prophets looking forward to the future and proclaiming the advent of a powerful divine warrior. Fourthly, Christ comes in the New Testament as a divine warrior to deliver His people from sin, death, and their lesser enemies as well; we read this in Luke chapter 1. Fifthly, Christ will return a second time as the divine warrior who will destroy all of His human and spiritual enemies.

I went through the Bible and showed you that truth. I also pointed out that one of the main titles of God in Scripture is the Lord of Hosts, which indicates that God is the God of the armies.

The Concept of Holy War

The Islamic Jihad and the Biblical Concept of Holy War

In fact, we find that stated over and over in the Bible. This is simply the concept of God as a warrior.

Now we come to the concept of holy war. Probably everyone has heard of what is known as the Islamic Jihad. Jihad refers to the holy war of Islam. In other words, this term refers to the Muslims as they fight against the great Satan. In their concept of holy war, they are fighting against the great Satan, which usually refers to America in general and Christians in particular. The Muslims refer to Christians

as infidels, or unbelievers, because we do not believe in Allah. Their concept, then, is that they have a holy war they are fighting against the infidels. While their concept of a holy war is misapplied, it is nonetheless a biblical concept.

It is extremely interesting that those who live in the Middle East have still retained the idea of a holy war, while that idea is totally foreign to us who live in the West. When I mention the concept of holy war, most people stand aghast at the idea. How can war be holy? How can anything so destructive, devastating, and deadly as war be classified as holy in any way whatsoever? It is true that the term holy war does not appear in the Bible, but the concept of holy war appears over and over in Scripture.

Turn to Numbers 21:14. I read this passage last week, but let me give it to you in a different light this week: "Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, what he did in the Red Sea and in the brooks of Arnon." Note carefully: "Wherefore it is said in the book of the wars of the Lord, what he did." Would anyone be so bold and so blasphemous as to declare that the wars of the Lord were not holy wars?

Biblical Evidence for Holy War

God fought because God is a warrior. Whatever God does, very obviously, is holy and right. All of these wars that God engaged in and had His people engage in were classified and called the wars of the Lord. Very obviously, they must be holy if they were His wars.

Look in your Bibles, if you would please, to Deuteronomy 4:34. I pointed out last week how God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt and the means that He used to deliver them. The Bible says, "Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation by temptations, by signs, by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, by a stretched-out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes."

The very fact that God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt by an act of war means undoubtedly it was a holy war, for it was God who was doing the fighting, and God who was doing the delivering.

Do you not remember? It was God who passed over and smote the firstborn. It was God who destroyed Pharaoh and his armies in the Red Sea. The Bible says that God delivered the children of Israel by an act of war. Therefore, God's wars must be right. If something is right, that means it is righteous; and if something is righteous, it is holy. So we have the concept of holy war, for God Himself has engaged in it.

For those individuals who say that war cannot possibly be holy in any way, look in Revelation chapter 19 and verse 11. John writes, “And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True.” Who is this? The Lord Jesus Christ. “And he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.”

If Jesus Christ makes war, if Jesus Christ is a divine warrior, and if Jesus Christ is the righteous one, that means the war that He wages is a righteous war. And if it is righteous, then it is holy. So very obviously, not only does God the Father wage holy war, but God the Son wages holy war as well. So there is the concept of holy war.

Spiritual Warfare and the Holiness of War

Now look at Ephesians chapter 6, beginning with verse 10. The Apostle Paul writes: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.”

“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” The Apostle Paul is

talking about putting on the full armor of God. He is talking about a warfare, and this warfare is holy. This warfare is righteous.

Inevitably, someone is going to object and say, “But Brother Weaver, this passage is talking about spiritual warfare.” I concur with that, and I will certainly admit it, but let me tell you something: do you realize that all warfare, whether it is physical or whether it is classified as merely spiritual, is spiritual in reality? It is. Let me give you an illustration.

Do you realize I could stand up and say, “The trouble in our country is that we have an ungodly, unbiblical, unconstitutional money system”? And we do. The funny money, the monopoly money that is floating around as money, is not money. Money according to the Bible is silver and gold. Money according to the Constitution is silver and gold. Do you understand that? But let me ask you, why is it that we have paper money?

Because we have forsaken God. The reason we have a Federal Reserve Board, an Act, and the reason we have a Fractional Reserve Banking System is because we have forsaken God and forsaken His Word. Here we have the enemy waging war upon us physically, but it is a spiritual principle that is behind it. You understand that?

Now, you can look at public education as such. If you go back, you will find out that it was originally started by men, and here is one of the quotes: “…the tentacles of Satan from around our children,” with the tentacles of Satan referring to biblical Christianity, when it’s undue biblical Christianity. By the way, I must admit, he has been quite successful, and his successors have done that. They have unraveled the tentacles of biblical Christianity from around the children of America.

But I’m showing you that, although there are physical acts, behind all of those physical acts is a spiritual principle. But you say, “Brother Weaver, if Ephesians chapter 6, verses 10–18, deals with spiritual warfare, let me ask you a question: Is war holy only when it is spiritual?” I want you to think about that for a moment. If the concept of war is wrong in and of itself, if the concept of war is inherently sinful, then it would be wrong whether you engage in it either physically or spiritually.

Now, let me give you an illustration. Is the physical act of adultery wrong? Sure it is. Sure it is. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Everybody knows that. Well, let me ask you another question. Is the mental and the spiritual act of adultery wrong? Why? Because adultery is wrong in and of itself, whether it's physical or whether it's spiritual. Now you see, if war was inherently wrong in and of itself, it would be wrong spiritually just like it would be physically. So very obviously, you cannot say that spiritual war alone is holy. No, no. War has to be holy. Because it is holy spiritually, and it would be holy physically when it is fought for the right reasons, which I'll explain later on.

Now, someone said, "But Brother Weaver, you don't understand. In spiritual war, nobody gets hurt." Oh? Well, let me put it like this. Number one, you get hurt if you don't engage in it. And number two, let me point this out. War, whether it is physical or spiritual, has as its goal the infliction of damage or destruction upon one's enemies. And I hope that when you fight spiritually, you are inflicting at least some damage upon Satan and his minions.

You see what I'm saying? Very obviously, someone does get hurt, even in spiritual warfare.

Now, it's impossible to have a war without casualties. That's physically and spiritually true as well, because the goal in warfare is to damage your enemy.

Now, let me just try to show you how there is a concept of holy war and how that concept is a legitimate and lawful and biblical concept. If I were to ask you this morning, how many of you believe in the death penalty for murderers? I'm sure that every one of you would raise his hand. You believe that the murderer should be put to death. Now, let me show you what the Scripture teaches on that.

The Death Penalty as a Foundation for Holy War

Look in your Bibles, first of all, to the book of Numbers, chapter 35, and let's read verse 31. Numbers 35, verse 31. I want to try to get to you mentally today and show you the concept of holy war. Numbers chapter 35 verse 31, look what God says: "Moreover ye shall take no satisfaction for the life of a murderer, which is guilty of death: but he

shall be surely put to death." Now God says, here's a murderer. He's been found guilty. He's been proven guilty. God says you're to take no satisfaction, you're to put him to death. Now, what if a murderer happened to be a multi-millionaire? Say a billionaire.

A murderer may even offer every member of the jury a million bucks each to acquit him, and offer the judge five million. And they may agree. Would that be right? No. God says you are to take no satisfaction; he is to be put to death. Would it be right to give him twenty years in prison? No. He is to be put to death.

Deuteronomy 19:11–13 says, “But if any man hate his neighbour, and lie in wait for him, and rise up against him, and smite him mortally that he die, and fleeth into one of these cities”—that is, the city of refuge—“then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence, and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die. And thine eye shall not pity him, but thou shalt put away the guilt of innocent blood from Israel, that it may go well with thee.”

Here is a man who has premeditatedly murdered someone. He hated the man he murdered, so he murdered him and fled to the city of refuge. He thinks, “Well, I’m going to be protected there.” But God says that when he flees to the city of refuge, your eye is not to have pity upon him. You are to take that man, hand him over to the avenger of blood, and watch that avenger put him to death. There are some people in the Bible upon whom God forbids you to have pity.

A murderer is one of them. Another group is described by the words, “If he will not work, neither should he eat.” I can be very sympathetic with Ed if Ed is sick and cannot work; I am willing to help him. But if Ed is too sorry to work, let him starve. That will correct the situation one way or the other. There are certain people and certain groups upon whom God forbids us to have pity, and a murderer is one of them. God says we are to take no satisfaction; we are to put him to death.

Romans 13:4 speaks of the civil magistrate, or civil government: “For he”—that is, the civil magistrate—“is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”

Two things should be observed about this verse. First, twice in the verse the civil magistrate is called the minister of God. Each time, the word "minister" is diakonos in the Greek, from which we get our English word "deacon," literally meaning servant. Thus, the civil magistrate is to be the servant of God. In what area is he to serve God? Paul says, "For he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger...to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

The word "revenger" is ekdikos in the Greek. Dikē is the word for righteousness, and ek is a preposition meaning out of. The revenger, then, is one who exacts righteousness, or draws righteousness out of. What is right for a murderer? It is righteous to put him to death. God says that the civil magistrate is to exact His righteousness and put the murderer to death.

Capital punishment is based upon the fact that man was made in the image of God. When a man maliciously murders someone else, it is not merely an attack upon another man or the taking of another man's life. It is an attack upon God Himself and the image of God.

Genesis 9:6 says, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Why does God demand the death penalty? Because when you murder someone, you are not merely murdering a man; you are attacking God by attacking God's image in that man. Therefore, God says it merits the death penalty.

Does the Bible teach the death penalty? The answer is yes. Is it righteous to put a murderer to death? Is it holy to put a murderer to death? We have established a principle: the murderer is to be put to death, and it is righteous and holy.

Suppose five men ganged up on one man, and all five participated in beating him to death. How many deserve to die? All five, because each one is guilty of murder, although only one may have struck the fatal blow. What if twenty men ganged up on two men and beat them to death? How many deserve to die? All twenty. If a hundred ganged up on thirty men and beat them to death, how many deserve to die? One hundred.

Once the principle of justice is embraced, once you understand that the death penalty reaches the murderer, it makes no difference whether the murderer is one or many. By extension, the same principle can be applied to an army or a nation. If it is right to put a single murderer to death, it is also right to put an army of murderers to death. It is also right to put a nation of murderers to death, because here you have the principle.

National Destruction as Holy War in Scripture

It is the principle of holy war that led to national destruction in the Bible. In Genesis 15, God tells Abraham that his descendants are going to be strangers in a strange land for four hundred years. Genesis 15:13 says: "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance."

"And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age." God says that Abraham's descendants will go down into a strange land for four hundred years, and those people will persecute and afflict them. But Abraham will die in a good old age and will not be involved in that. God will take care of him. When He brings out Abraham's descendants, they will not come out empty-handed; they will come out full.

Why did Israel have to spend four hundred years in the land of Egypt? God decreed it, but why did He decree it? Genesis gives the reason: "...but in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." God allowed the wicked Amorites four hundred more years to fill up their measure of sin, wickedness, and rebellion. Then, when Israel was brought out of Egypt by an act of God—an act of war—God put a sword in the hand of the children of Israel and said, "Kill everyone."

Why were the Amorites to be killed? Because they were a nation of murderers and wicked, ungodly people. This is the concept of holy war. It was this concept of holy war that led to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

We often speak of Sodom and Gomorrah, but have you ever read about Zeboim and Admah? It was not only Sodom and Gomorrah that were overthrown, but also the cities of the plain. Zeboim and Admah were two of those cities. I do not know how many cities were overthrown, but many of them were consumed.

Consider also Black's Law Dictionary, fourth edition. Under "burying alive," it gives, "The punishment for sodomites in England, and for those who make covenants with the Jews." If you were a sodomite in England, they buried you alive. Why? God says, "He that lieth with mankind, as with womankind, shall surely be put to death." In other words, the source argues that the state should enforce that biblical penalty. Yet this is not the place to pursue the point that government today promotes it instead of restraining it.

The point is that God waged a righteous and holy war against Sodom and Gomorrah. It was also a righteous and holy war that led to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, because God was warring against murderers and rebellious individuals.

The same principle will be enforced upon Judgment Day. It will be a holy Christ who wages a holy war against His enemies. The concept of holy war has Christological implications; that is, it refers to Jesus Christ, because Jesus Christ comes back, and the Bible says that in righteousness He makes war. Do you not remember what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians in 2 Thessalonians 1, beginning with verse 7?

He said, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." That is a righteous and holy war. Warfare in the Bible is therefore a divine activity. God was Israel's sovereign Lord, and as Israel's sovereign Lord, He promised to protect Israel from all her enemies.

The Covenantal Aspect of Warfare

There is a covenantal connection, or covenantal aspect, to warfare. Consider Leviticus 26, beginning with verse 2. God says, "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord. If ye

walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them; then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit. And your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time: and ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land safely. And I will give peace in the land."

"And ye shall lie down, and none shall make you afraid: and I will rid evil beasts out of the land, neither shall the sword go through your land." Here is God as Israel's sovereign Lord protecting her from her enemies. "And ye shall chase your enemies, and they shall fall before you by the sword. And five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you shall put ten thousand to flight: and your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. For I will have respect unto you, and make you fruitful, and multiply you, and establish my covenant with you." Now look in verse 14 of the same chapter.

SCRIPTURE READING - Leviticus 26:14-17, 25 (KJV)

> "But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye shall despise my statutes, or if your soul abhor my judgments, so that ye will not do all my commandments, but that ye break my covenant: I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. And I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies."
>
> "They that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins."
>
> "And I will bring a sword upon you, that shall avenge the quarrel of my covenant: and when ye are gathered together within your cities, I will send the pestilence among you; and ye shall be delivered into the hand of the enemy."

There is a covenantal aspect to warfare. God says that if we obey Him, He will protect us, and our enemies will be defeated before us. But if we disobey God, He will not protect us, and our enemies will have the upper hand.

Deuteronomy 28 is one of the most important passages in the Bible. It contains the blessings and the curses. Everybody knows that presidents take their oath of office with a hand placed upon a Bible. Today it does not mean very much. But originally, when presidents placed their hand upon the Bible, it was opened to Deuteronomy 28, because they realized the blessings and the curses of God and took their oath as unto God, based upon this chapter.

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.”

What are these blessings? “Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face.”

"They shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. The Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways."

So here are all the blessings if we obey, and one of the blessings is when our enemies rise up against us one way, they are going to leave seven ways. But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.

God says, if you do not obey, hear the curses. Most of these curses are just the reversal of the blessings. "The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against

them, and flee seven ways before them: and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth. And thy carcase shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth, and no man shall fray them away. The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt, and with the emerods, and with the scab, and with the itch, whereof thou canst not be healed. The Lord shall smite thee with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and thou shalt grope at noonday, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways: and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee."

That almost sounds like America today, doesn't it? There is a covenantal aspect to warfare. We boast of being the most powerful military nation upon the earth, but that boast is absolutely worthless without the protection of the Sovereign God of heaven and earth. It is worthless. I've often thought it would be something if God let some little puny two-bit dictator like Castro or Hussein take us down, just to show us that it doesn't take much when God's against you.

If we disobey God's covenant, God's going to curse us. If we obey, God's going to protect us. Now, warfare is divine activity. I'm going to explain that more next week. Remember this statement: warfare is divine activity.

Turn back to Joshua chapter 4 and verse 13. Let me show you what I mean. In Joshua chapter 4, the battle of Jericho is familiar to everyone, but the Bible says, "About 40,000 prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle to the plains of Jericho."

Warfare as Divine Activity and Worship

The amazing thing is the little phrase, "before the Lord." About 40,000 were prepared for war. They were going to fight. They had swords, spears, bows, and their instruments of warfare. They were prepared for war and passed over before the Lord unto battle.

The Hebrew word "before" is paneh. Paneh does not simply mean "in the face of" or "in the presence of." You could read, "About 40,000 prepared for war passed over in the presence of, or in the face of, the Lord, unto battle to the plains of Jericho." But it has

more meaning than that. The word "before" here literally means "as unto": "About 40,000 prepared for war passed over as unto the Lord." In other words, their warfare was as unto the Lord.

It was part and parcel of their worship of God and giving honor and glory to God. Even if you limited this word to "in the presence of" or "in the face of," it would still indicate high approval. Forty thousand prepared for war marched over in the presence, or as unto the face, of the Lord. God would have to approve of it, because very obviously they were doing it in His presence. So 40,000 prepared for war passed over unto battle.

The text not only indicates divine approval, but also indicates that warfare, at certain times, is an act of obedience and therefore an act of worship. Literally, they pass over worshipfully, religiously, unto the Lord. In other words, what they were doing was part and parcel of their worship. It was war, but it was worship. Worship is holy. If war is an act of worship, it means it is holy as well when it is done worshipfully unto the Lord.

In 1 Samuel chapter 15, we see the impact of this little word “before the Lord.” In this passage, God sends King Saul upon a mission. What was that mission? He was to destroy utterly the Amalekites. “Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.”

Who is initiating this war? God is. So this is a holy war. He tells Saul, “You go and kill everything. Don’t leave anything alive.”

Saul and the people spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and the best of the oxen and the best of the sheep. About that time, something went baa, moo. Samuel said, “What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?” If they had obeyed God, everything would be dead. Saul said, “But the people spared them, that they might sacrifice unto God.”

“And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold,

to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." God would rather have obedience than all the sacrifice that can be given Him. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." What happened to a witch? Stoned or put to death. What happened to an idolater? Put to death. Rebellion and stubbornness are just like that; they merit or deserve the death penalty.

"Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king." Through his disobedience and rebellion, Saul lost his position as king. Remember, Saul spared Agag.

Look down in 1 Samuel chapter 15, beginning with verse 26: "And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou. And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent. Then he said, I have sinned: yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the Lord."

"Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites." "And Agag came unto him delicately." Agag said, "Surely the bitterness of death is past." In other words, "I've been spared." And Samuel said, "As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal."

Was Samuel wrong in what he did? No. Notice the phrase, "He hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord." This means more than merely in God's presence, for God is omnipresent—everywhere in the totality of His being at every time. It literally means "as unto the Lord." Samuel did to Agag exactly what God would have done to Agag. God had told Saul to kill everything; God wanted Agag dead. Samuel said, "God wants him dead. I'm going to kill him, and I'm

going to do it as unto the Lord." It was part and parcel of worship and obedience in that time, in that sense, and in that place, because Samuel was doing exactly what God wanted done. I am trying to show you that in this concept of holy war, God gives not only divine approval, but holy war is also an act of worship as well as an act of war.

Everyone remembers the battle on Mount Carmel between Elijah and the prophets of Baal. The prophets of Baal had tried to get Baal to hear their cries and answer their prayers, and there was only silence.

Beginning with verse 36: "And it came to pass at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the Lord fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench."

"And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God." Watch! "And Elijah said unto them, Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there."

Did Elijah do wrong? No, he did right. What he did was an act of warfare. This began as spiritual warfare. Were not the prophets of Baal praying to their god, and was not Elijah praying to his God? Although spiritual, it ended up physical. What Elijah did was right and holy. There is a concept of holy war because what Elijah did, he did as unto the Lord. He did exactly what God would have done to the prophets of Baal. There is always a mixture of spiritual and physical warfare.

Applications of Holy War

Always. We are just too blind to see it. When Ahab and Jezebel were killing Naboth and his family, along with many others and the

prophets of God, that was spiritual warfare with physical implications. They were warring against the people of God. Consider another aspect of it. You say, “Brother Weaver, there is nothing like that in America.” Did you hear about all those people in Waco who got burned to death? That was spiritual warfare with a physical implication.

Whether you agree with them or not is immaterial. I am simply pointing out that here was a spiritual war that ended in a physical application. So there is a concept of holy war.

Applications and Conclusion

The first application is this: war is not inherently sinful in and of itself. There are evil wars, wicked wars, and rebellious wars. That is true. But evil, wicked, and rebellious wars do not cancel the fact that there are holy wars. You cannot throw war out simply because some wars are wicked and wrong.

Warfare is a lawful act when it is conducted according to the will and word of God. Since the only war that is right is a holy war, we had better make dead sure, before participating in any war, that it is indeed a holy war. You follow me?

We have sent our sons to many parts of this country and the world to fight and die in unholy wars for no other reason than to protect somebody’s oil wells and make somebody millionaires. That is not a good reason to fight. If a certain family wants to fight to protect its oil wells, let them send their children—not mine. Let us make sure that any war in which we engage is indeed a holy war. But how can we know whether a war is holy?

We will continue next week. Let us pray.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are so thankful for Your love, grace, and mercy. Lord, help us to have our thinking scriptural. We have been so humanized, and one of these days we are going to get in trouble. It will be too late to figure all this out when we are in trouble.

We need to know beforehand what Your Word teaches and what we may or may not do in obedience unto Thee. Help us, Father, to be holy, to be godly, to be scriptural, and to always do that which is

honoring and pleasing unto Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray, amen. This program was produced by Dominion Ministry. For more information about Pastor Weaver's sermons, you may contact Dominion Ministry by mail at 7400 Abercorn, that's A-B-E-C-O-R-N Street, Suite 705, PMD 175, Savannah, Georgia, 31406. Or give us a call at 912-833-7000. You can also visit our website at www.dominionministry.com.

CHAPTER 2

Concepts of a Holy War,

Part Two

Introduction and Review

We have been dealing with the subject of the biblical doctrine of war. In the first lesson, I dealt with the fact that God is a warrior, showing you repeatedly in Scripture how the Word of God emphasizes that the Lord is a man of war and how the Lord fights over and over. In Joshua 4:13, we began last week with the concept of holy war. The Bible says that about 40,000 prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle to the plains of Jericho. I also told you about the Islamic jihad, which is simply the Islamic holy war. There is likewise a concept of holy war taught in the Bible. In fact, all the wars that God ordered Israel to engage in are referred to as the wars of the Lord.

The Bible calls God Himself a man of war and teaches that God delivered Israel by means of war. Very obviously, then, there is a concept of holy war. These 40,000 prepared for war passed over before the Lord; that is, they passed over not only in the presence of

the Lord, but as unto the Lord. It was part and parcel of their worship.

All Life is Religious and Covenantal

In ancient Israel, all life was religious, and all life was covenantally related to God. Warfare was no exception. Warfare is not only religious in the Bible, but it is covenantally related to God. In ancient Israel, as today, there is no such thing as a division between the secular and the sacred. You do not have a secular area here and a sacred area there. That is absolute heresy. According to the Bible, not only in the Old Testament but in the New Testament, absolutely everything is sacred, and war was certainly no exception. Warfare, according to the Bible, reminds us that the Bible is the book of the covenant. It gives us the rules, regulations, and parameters for engaging in warfare. Thus, war was an aspect of worship for Israel.

I want you to understand that it had to be conducted according to the rules laid out by the sovereign God of the Bible. We should not think these statements strange because of the teachings of the New Testament. First Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God." Now, whether I eat or drink, I am to eat and drink for God's glory. Whatever I do, whether it is digging a ditch, preaching, or fighting, I am to do all for the honor and the glory of God. So there is no division, then, between the secular and the sacred.

Colossians 3:23 says, "And whatsoever you do, do it heartily as unto the Lord, and not unto men." So whatever I am engaged in, once again, whether it is preaching, digging a ditch, farming, or fighting in a holy war, I am to do heartily as unto the Lord. Every sphere of our life is to be regulated by the Word of God. Every activity of our life is to be done in honor and in the glory of God. So very obviously there is no distinction between the secular and the sacred.

This is one of the errors of modern-day churchism. Most people will go to church on Sunday, and they will appear so pious and so holy and so godly, and then they leave and go out Monday through Saturday, and they are as wicked as the devil himself. In other

words, they are saying, "This part is sacred and this part is secular." That is absolutely hilarious in the sense that it is so absolutely false.

That is why many of you saw the articles in the paper over here where the judge wrote that Christians, especially preachers, should not be engaged in politics. That is absolutely ridiculous. That is saying, "Here is an area over which God has absolutely no authority and the Bible has absolutely nothing to say about." There is no area, there is no sphere, there is no room in any place whatsoever over which God does not have absolute authority and absolutely sovereign control. Every sphere, every activity, and every attitude of our life is to be regulated by the Word of God. War is absolutely no exception: when we fight, we fight according to God's terms, that is, in faith, for God's honor and glory, based upon God's law.

The Meaning of 'Prepare War'

I have been developing this concept of holy war, and I asked this question last week: How can something so devastating, so destructive, and so deadly as war be considered holy in any sense whatsoever? Let me give you a surprise today. Let us look at several passages, particularly in Jeremiah, because there is a particular word that I want you to underline.

In Jeremiah 6:4, God says, “Prepare ye war against her. Arise and let us go up at noon. Woe unto us, for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.” That is the word I want you to notice: prepare. “Prepare ye war against her.”

In Jeremiah 22:7, God says, “And I will prepare destroyers against thee, every one with his weapons, and they shall cut down my choice cedars and cast them into the fire.” Again, “I will prepare destroyers against thee.”

In Jeremiah 51:27–28, God says, “Set you up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz, appoint a captain against her, cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, and the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion.”

Twice now God has said prepare, and in the context He is talking about preparing war. In the little book of Joel, between Hosea and Amos, Joel 3:9 says, “Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles, Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up.”

In each passage, we have come across this one little word: prepare. God says, “Prepare war.” The interesting thing about the word prepare is that the Hebrew word is Kodesh. What does that mean? The Hebrew word Kodesh literally means to make clean. It means to make holy, ceremoniously or morally; to consecrate, to dedicate, to be holy, to be sanctified, and to be hallowed. Literally, when God said, “Prepare war,” He was saying, “Sanctify war.”

In Genesis 2:3, we read, "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it," or literally, "and prepared it." Earlier, in Genesis 2:2, we read, "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." It is exactly the same Hebrew word, Kodesh. God sanctified or prepared the seventh day.

If you turn over in your Bibles to Exodus 29 and look at verse 43, notice what God says: "And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory." Literally, the tabernacle shall be prepared by my glory.

Now, the interesting thing is this: the Hebrew word Kodesh, which is translated prepare when He said, "Prepare war," is the only Hebrew word in the Old Testament that is translated sanctified. So the word sanctify and the word prepare are synonymous. When God says, "Prepare war," He is saying, "Sanctify war." It is the only word that is used over and over in the Old Testament for sanctification, holiness, or righteousness as such.

Now look in your Bibles to Isaiah 13, and you will see this word used and translated sanctified. Let us begin reading with verse 1. Notice what God says: "For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose Israel, and set them in their own land. And the stranger shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob. And the Lord shall take them and bring them to their place, and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord for

servants and handmaids. And they shall take them captives, whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors."

"It shall come to pass in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from thy hard bondage where thou wast made to serve. Thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased, the golden city ceased? Note now, the Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the scepter of the rulers." He has broken the scepters of the rulers.

Biblical Principles of Holy War

The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amoz did see: “Lift ye up a standard upon the high mountain. Exalt the voice unto them. Shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.”

“I have commanded my sanctified ones.” This is referring to the army, to the invading army. “I have also called my mighty ones for mine anger, even them that rejoice in my highness. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people, a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together.”

“The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord, watch, and the weapons of his indignation to destroy the whole land.”

The point I want to make is this. First of all, in verse 4, the Lord of hosts mustereth—that is, He calls together the host of the battle. Note verse 5: they are the weapons of His indignation to destroy the whole land. But in verse 3, He said, “I have commanded my sanctified ones,” or “my prepared ones”; it is exactly the same word. So very obviously, there is a concept of holy war because the word sanctified is used over and over, not only in reference to war, but in reference to the holy things of God as well.

First Principle: The Cause Must Be Holy

In order for war to be holy, several biblical principles must be evident. I am going to give you four biblical principles of holy war today. Let me explain by making this statement: the list I am going to give you may not be exhaustive. There may be other things that

you could add to this list. But what I am giving you is an irreducible minimum. These four things must be present if war is to be holy.

Now, we know there is such a thing as holy war, for God Himself is engaged in it, and God has used the word sanctified over and over when He said, “Sanctify war” or “Prepare war.”

Now, what are the four principles that determine whether or not a war is holy? First of all, the cause must be holy. The cause must be holy. The cause is that for which one is fighting. It is his reason for fighting, his goal in fighting, and his aim in fighting. That means the cause must be holy. The cause is that which motivates one, which pushes one, and which exerts power over one.

What makes men fight? You say they have a cause. But let me tell you: Do you realize some people will fight without a cause? Psalm 109 shows that it is the wicked, the ungodly, who make war without a cause. Note Psalm 109. Let us begin reading there with verse 1.

"Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise. For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me, they have spoken against me with a lying tongue, they compass me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause." The wicked and the heathen fight without a cause. We could say that the wicked and the heathen will fight with an unholy and unjust cause. But when the godly fight, there is a cause, and it is to be a holy cause.

Simply because some person, some number of people, or one nation wishes to possess the resources of another people or nation is not a sufficient cause to fight. That is nothing more than selfishness, covetousness, and greediness. We do not whip people and fight people merely to possess their oil wells, diamond mines, and gold mines.

Now let me show you what I am talking about. There must be a cause, and the cause must be holy. Look in your Bibles to 1 Samuel, chapter 17. Everyone will be familiar with this passage, when David goes to fight Goliath. I am not going to develop the whole story, but everyone knows how the Philistine presented himself morning and evening for forty days, challenging the armies of Israel and, of course, the God of Israel as well.

Beginning with verse 22, David had been sent to check on his brothers. David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. As he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion of the Philistines, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words, and David heard them. David has now heard Goliath challenge God and the armies of Israel.

All the men of Israel, when they saw Goliath, fled from him and were sore afraid. They said, “Have you seen this man that has come up? Surely to defy Israel has he come up? It shall be that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel.” David asked what would be done to the man who killed this Philistine and took away the reproach from Israel: “For who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?”

Eliab, his eldest brother, heard David speaking, and his anger was kindled against him. He said, “Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride and the naughtiness of thine heart, for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.” Eliab was looking down his nose upon David, saying that he was not a warrior, was not fit to fight, and should leave.

David answered, “What have I now done? Is there not a cause?” He continued, “Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God.” Then, going out to meet Goliath, David said, “Thou comest to me with a sword and with a spear and with a shield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied.”

What was the cause? God was dishonored. His people were disgraced, and His army was dismayed. God was not receiving the honor and glory due His name. David said, “There is a cause. I’ll fight the man. I’m ready to fight. I’m willing to fight.” The same God who delivered him from the mouth of the lion and the bear would deliver him from the hand of this uncircumcised Philistine. Very obviously, there was a cause.

I am not going to take the time today to go down through Scripture and list all of the holy causes, but I do want to show you another one. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Nehemiah, chapter 4, right after the book of Ezra. Everybody knows the story, or at least should know it: Nehemiah was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arabian, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites conspired against him. They planned a surprise attack to destroy the work, Nehemiah, and the people who were helping him. Let us begin reading Nehemiah 4, verse 8: "And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem and to hinder it."

"Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God, and we set a watch against them day and night because of them. And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burden is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build a wall. And our adversary said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease." So they were planning a surprise attack to destroy the work and kill Nehemiah and the people working on the wall.

Verse 12 says, "And it came to pass that when the Jews who dwelt by them came, they said unto us, Ten times from all places whence ye shall return unto us, they will be upon you." Now, that is really encouraging, is it not? Here were the ones dwelling close to the enemy, telling them, "You cannot win. They will kill you before you know what is going to happen." Watch verse 13.

"Therefore, said I, in the lower places behind the wall, and in the higher places I even set the people after their families with their swords and their spears and their bows. And I looked and rose up and said unto the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren and your sons and your daughters, your wives and your houses."

They are going to come upon us and kill us. We better fight, first of all, for our God; secondly, for our brethren, our sons, our daughters, our wives, and our houses. In other words, it is a holy fight and a fight for the people that God has entrusted to you.

Whether defending your family, your neighbors, or your brethren, it is a holy fight.

In 2 Samuel 10, verse 6, we read, "And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah twenty thousand footmen, and of the king of Maacah a thousand men, and of Ishtob twelve thousand men. And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the hosts of the mighty men. And the children of Ammon came out and put the battle in array at the entering in of the gate. And the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob and of Ishtob and Maacah were by themselves in the field. When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, he chose of all the choice men of Israel and put them in array against the Syrians. And the rest of the people he delivered in the hand of Abishai, his brother, that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon. And he said, If the Syrians be too strong for me, then thou shalt help me, and if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come to help thee."

"Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God, and the Lord do that which seemeth him good." Be of good courage; let us fight for our people and for our cities—that is, for the possessions God has given us. It is a holy and just cause to fight to preserve your nation, city, family, or country. It is not my intent to list all the holy causes. That would be humanly impossible, because causes will arise that I do not even know about.

The Army Must Be Holy

There are circumstances that would arise that I would certainly be unfamiliar with. But the point is this: whatever cause we are going to fight for, that cause must be scrutinized, closely studied, and compared with the Word of God.

Let me put it plainly. It is your responsibility to make sure that the cause is holy and right. It is your responsibility to consider whatever you are willing to fight for in light of the Word of God, and to make sure that you do not fight for anything unbiblical, unchristian, and ungodly. It is your responsibility to make sure that you are not hoodwinked, suckered, or running off half-cocked into something

that you should not be involved in. You follow that? The cause must be holy. And how in the world can you determine whether or not a cause is holy unless you examine it in light of the Word of God?

Second Principle: The Army Must Be Holy

If you were to take that one principle and compare it with the wars that were fought in the last twenty or thirty years, you would probably find that we do not have a holy cause to fight in most of those wars.

So the cause must be holy. That is the first prerequisite. Secondly, the army must be holy. Deuteronomy 23:9 says, "When the host," that is, when the army, "goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing." God says, I not only want a holy cause; I want a holy army. If you are involved in fighting My battle, said God, make sure that you keep yourself from every wicked thing.

Here is the second principle: God not only demands that the cause be holy; He demands that the people who fight for the holy cause be holy themselves. "Keep thee from every wicked thing." The word wicked is the Hebrew word ra. It means that which is bad, evil, wicked, and wrong. Let me show you several passages. Turn first to Deuteronomy chapter 17, beginning with verse 1. Remember, God said, "Keep thee from every wicked thing."

God says, "Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any bullock, or sheep, wherein is blemish, or any ill-favouredness, for that is an abomination unto the Lord thy God. If there be found among you within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, man or woman, that have wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God, in transgressing his covenant, and go and serve other gods, and worship them, either the sun or the moon, or any of the hosts of heaven, which I have not commanded. And it be told thee that thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently. And behold, if it is true, and the thing certain, that such abomination is wrought in Israel, Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman which hath committed that wicked thing unto thy gates, even that man or that woman, and thou shalt stone him with stones till they die." What is the wicked thing in this context? It happens to be idolatry.

He says in verse 5, "...then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman which hath committed that wicked thing." Remember, he said, when your army goes forth to war against your enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing. In this context, the wicked thing happens to be idolatry.

In 1 Samuel 30, verse 22, we read: "Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them aught of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away and depart. And David said, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us."

“Who hath preserved us and delivered the company that came against us into our hand.” Now note, if you would, at verse 22: “Then answered all the wicked” what? “Men.” “Then answered all the wicked men.” That is the same word.

I am trying to point out the fact that in Deuteronomy 17, the wicked thing was idolatry. In 1 Samuel chapter 30, the wicked thing is an attitude. Look in your Bibles to 2 Kings chapter 17 and verse 11: “And there they burned incense in all the high places, as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them, and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger.” Once again, the phrase “wicked things” refers to idolatry and all of those things that go along with it.

Let me point this out. When God says, “When your host goes out to battle against your enemy, then keep thee from every wicked thing,” the word “thing” is dabar in the Hebrew. It means a word, a matter, a thing, or a cause. So when God says, “Keep thee from every wicked thing,” He is not just talking about actions. He is talking about attitudes. He is talking about ideas and speech as well. We are to keep everything holy—our minds, our bodies, and our attitudes. “Then keep thee from every wicked thing.” In other words, God desires to use holy vessels for His work.

Look in your Bibles, first of all, to Joshua chapter 3, verse 5. The children of Israel are crossing over the river. Look what God tells them through Joshua: “And Joshua said unto the people, Sanctify

yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." What did he tell them? Sanctify yourselves. Why? For tomorrow the Lord is going to do wonders among you.

Look in verse 13 of chapter 4: "About 40,000 prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle." Isn't it interesting? He had just said, "Sanctify yourselves," and now he says to pass over to the battle. Why? Because God not only desires a holy cause, but He desires a holy people to fight in that holy cause.

Turn to Joshua chapter 6. Since we are talking about Jericho, understand that Jericho was totally cursed. God says in Joshua 6, verse 17: "And the city," that is, Jericho, "shall be a curse, even it, and all that are therein to the Lord, only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in her house, because she hid the messengers that we sent."

SCRIPTURE READING - Joshua 6:17-18; 7:1-13 (KJV)

"And you in any wise keep yourselves from the accursed thing," you might also say wicked thing, "lest you make yourselves accursed, when you take of the accursed thing, and make the camp of Israel accursed and troubled." God said, Jericho is totally dedicated for destruction. The people and everything in it. I want it all destroyed. Now, God said, you make sure that you keep yourself from that accursed thing. If you don't, you're going to become accursed just like Jericho is accursed.

"But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing. For Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is beside Beth-Aven, on the east side of Bethel, and spake unto them, saying, Go up and view the country. And the men went up and viewed Ai. Then they returned to Joshua and said unto him, Let not all the people go up, but let about two or three thousand men go up, and smite Ai, and make not all the people to labor thither, for they are but few. So there went up thither of the people about three thousand men, and they fled before the men of Ai. And the men of Ai smote them, about thirty and six men,

> and they chased them from before the gate, even to Shebarim, and smote them in the going down.
>
> "Therefore the hearts of the people melted and became as water. And Joshua rent his clothes and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, until the eventide. He and the elders of Israel had put dust upon their heads, and Joshua said, O LORD God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us? Would to God we had been content to dwell on the other side of Jordan! O Lord, what shall I say when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies? For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us around, and cut off our name from the earth. And what wilt thou do unto thy great name? And the Lord said unto Joshua, Get thee up. Wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face? Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant, which I commanded them. For they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and have put it even among their own stuff. Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, but turned their backs before their enemies, because they were accursed."

God said, “Neither will I be with you any more, except you destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against tomorrow. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of you, O Israel. Thou canst not stand before thine enemies until thou takest away the accursed thing from among you.”

What had Achan done? He had seen the goodly Babylonian garment and the wedge of gold and silver, stolen them, and hidden them in his tent. He was caught and condemned. He and his family were burned to death, stoned, covered up, and left. Why? Because he had committed an unholy act. He took that which God had said was not to be taken.

Everything in Jericho was dedicated to destruction; everything was to be accursed. There is a law of booty in the Bible, and we will discuss that, but this was a distinct and separate matter, because

God had specifically said that everything in Jericho was dedicated to destruction. Achan brought the curse upon himself, upon his family, and upon the nation. God said, “Neither will I be with you any more until you deal with this.”

Sin does not affect us alone. Some say, “What if I get drunk? It is not affecting anybody but myself.” That is not true. It affects your wife, your children, and your family. If you have a car that can kill somebody, it affects somebody else too. You cannot sin by yourself and say it will affect no one but you. Sin always affects other people.

God wants a holy army because your sin will affect those with whom you associate. If I am in a hole fighting for a holy cause, I want somebody next to me who is holy as well. I do not want some drunken pervert beside me who will bring the wrath and curse of God down upon me because I am next to him. I want somebody next to me who will do what is right.

Third Principle: The Camp Must Be Holy

Whoever is next to me is going to want somebody next to him who is going to do what is right.

Turn in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles 25. Amaziah, king of Judah, had hired men of Israel to fight with him. The northern tribes of Israel were deeply involved in idolatry and Baal worship at that time, yet he had hired 100,000 Israelites. The passage says, “Moreover, Amaziah gathered Judah together and made them captains over thousands and captains over hundreds, according to the houses of their fathers throughout all Judah and Benjamin.” He numbered them from twenty years old and above and found 300,000 choice men, able to go forth to war, that could handle spear and shield. “He hired also 100,000 mighty men of valor out of Israel for 100 talents of silver.”

“But there came a man of God to him, saying, O king, let not the army of Israel go with thee. For the Lord is not with Israel, to wit, with all the children of Ephraim.” “But if thou wilt go, do it. Be strong for the battle. God shall make thee fall before the enemy, for God hath power to help and to cast down.”

The man of God told him not to let the Israelites go with him because God was not with them; they were unholy and involved in idolatry. If the king took them anyway, God would cast him down before his enemy, and he would lose. Then Amaziah asked, “But what shall we do for the hundred talents which I have given to the army of Israel?” What would he do about the money already spent? “And the man of God answered, The Lord is able to give thee much more than this.” Do not worry about the 100,000 talents of silver. God can take care of that. God said not to let them go because, at that time, they were unholy.

SCRIPTURE READING - Luke 3:14; Deuteronomy 23:9-14 (KJV)

God not only demands a holy cause, but a holy people to fight in that cause. John has been preaching repentance. There come some soldiers to John, and they ask the question, What shall we do? That is, what shall we do to evidence our repentance? Look what he says in Luke chapter 3, verse 14: "And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do?" That is, how shall we evidence our repentance? "And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely, and be content with your wages."

Let the camp be holy. Deuteronomy 23, beginning there with verse 9: "When the host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing. If there be among you any man that is not clean by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night, then shall he go abroad out of the camp, he shall not come within the camp. But it shall be when evening cometh on he shall wash himself with water, and when the sun is down he shall come into the camp again. Thou shalt have a place also without the camp whither thou shalt go forth abroad. And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon, and it shall be, when thou wilt ease thyself abroad, thou shalt dig therewith, and shalt turn back, and cover that which cometh from thee. For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of the camp to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemies before thee. Therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee."

> I want you to note how God is demanding holiness in the camp. First of all, the person who has become unclean through a nightly occurrence, or what we would call an accident, so to speak, wants to go out of the camp and remain there until evening, until he has ceremoniously cleansed himself. Moreover, God says you must have a latrine outside the camp. Each soldier was to have a paddle or a shovel or digging implement so that when he went outside to use the bathroom or to ease himself, he could cover that which came from him.

He dug a hole, and when he finished, he turned again and covered it. Now, this may be part of where we get our slogan, "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." By the way, that phrase is not in the Bible, although many people think it is. But let me tell you something: as important as sanitation and cleanliness are, this law does not have sanitary reasons in view. Why did God tell them they had to have a latrine outside the camp? They were to use a shovel and cover that which came from themselves.

Why would God say that? Look in verse 14. Here is why: "For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp to deliver thee, and to give up thine enemy before thee. Therefore shall thy camp be holy, that he see no unclean thing in thee, and turn away from thee." God says, "I want the camp to be holy." The camp must be holy and kept holy because Jehovah Himself walks there in the midst of His people.

These requirements were to be followed out of consideration for and reverence to God and His holiness. It is not that man's excrement was shameful in itself. It is not shameful that we have to go to the bathroom; that is the way God made us. But through disobedience and a lack of reverence, in failing to remove it, the people would offend the Lord and drive Him out of the camp.

Here is an argument from the lesser to the greater. If God is so fastidious, peculiar, and particular about what we would call little things—keeping a clean bathroom and maintaining cleanliness in the body—how much more concerned is He about impure thoughts, immoral words, ungodly attitudes, and wicked actions? God is saying, "I want this little thing taken care of," so that we may know He wants the big things taken care of as well. He said, "I am holy,"

and if He wants to walk in our camp, He does not want any unclean thing around. He wants absolute holiness. Therefore, we are not only to have a holy cause and a holy army, but also a holy camp.

Fourth Principle: The Leader Must Be Holy

One of the nicknames for a prostitute is “hooker.” The nickname came from the Yankee general, Fighting Joe Hooker. In order to boost the morale of his soldiers, he let the ladies of the night into his camp for his men. These prostitutes were known as Hooker’s Ladies. Later, the term “ladies” was dropped, and they were simply known as hookers. God demands that the camp be holy, as well as the men and the cause.

One last thing today, and that is this: fourthly, the leader must be holy. Divine warfare is usually not mediated by a Pentagon official or a cabinet officer. Schwarzkopf and Colin Powell would never make it as leaders in one of God’s wars. Bill Clinton certainly could never make it in his reign. God demands that the leader be holy when divine warfare is ordered. Not only do you have a holy cause, a holy army, and a holy camp, but you have a holy leader.

You have a Moses or a Joshua. In Exodus 17, verse 8, we read: “Then came Amalek and fought with Israel in Rephidim. And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand.” The rod spoke of authority.

“So Joshua did as Moses had said to him and fought with Amalek, and Moses and Aaron and Hur went up to the top of the hill. And it came to pass when Moses held up his hand that Israel prevailed, and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed. But Moses' hands were heavy. And they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon, and Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, the one on the one side and the other on the other side, and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.”

“And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua, for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven.”

Now, what in the world was Moses doing? Moses was up on the hill holding up the rod of God, which spoke of authority, no doubt interceding and praying at the same time while Joshua was down there fighting with a sword.

I wonder how many prayer councils and prayer meetings our leaders had over in Desert Storm or over in Vietnam. Do you understand what I'm saying? Probably none. I'm sure the men who prayed were in foxholes, but the leaders didn't have the prayer meeting. They didn't hold up the Word of God or the authority of God.

Look what the author of the book of Hebrews says, Hebrews 11, verse 32: “And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and of Barak and of Samson and of Jephthah and of David and of Samuel and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” I want to call your attention to the fact that it was Gideon and Samson and Barak and Samuel and Jephthah and the prophets.

In other words, they were godly men. We think from time to time that what we need in this country is a good, strong, tough, disciplined, knowledgeable military leader to lead us in a battle that we might win. I've got news for you, folks: you can pick the top and toughest, most disciplined military leader in the world, and we will not win without God. What we do not need is a taught leader. What we do need is a holy, godly leader who's tuned to the Lord Himself.

God's battles are built around the premise of holiness, righteousness, and justice. Let me make a couple of applications. First, it is each man's responsibility to determine, according to the Word of God, the holiness and justice of a cause. That means we must know what God teaches in every area of life, and we must always act in accordance with the Word of God.

Applications and Conclusion

In the last unregistered conference up in Indy, several hundred men went forward at the end of the service and made a covenant with God and with each other that if any agency ever came to take each other's children, the rest of them would go there and do whatever was necessary to preserve those children. You say, Brother Weaver, I wouldn't fight for that. Well, you had better find out what God says about children being the heritage of the Lord. We had better know what the Word of God teaches.

If we have to wait until it's too late, most of us will never act. We had better know what a holy cause is. We had better know that God demands His army to be holy, His camp to be holy, and His leaders to be holy.

Rules of Engagement

Secondly, once we determine to fight and war, we must remember that God has rules of engagement. God has laws and ordinances concerning war and fighting, and above all, we must be holy in order that we will not be an Achan in the camp. An Achan only destroys. He never protects. He never preserves.

If a man is in a battle for what he can get out of the battle, he is in it for the wrong reason. We have got to learn to be holy in every area of our life. We need to pray, “Lord, help me never to be an Achan. Help me to think of others, as well as Your honor and Your glory, and put You and others above myself and my desires, and I will be holy in every situation.”

There is holy war. Shall we pray?

Father, we ask You today to help us, to teach us, to build us up in the most holy faith. Enable us, Lord, to understand the concept that God is a warrior, and that Your wars are indeed holy. Enable us, Lord, to always be able to examine everything in light of the Word of God, and, once we know what Thou dost teach, to act upon it. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 3

Concepts of a Holy War,

Part Three

Introduction: Review and Continuation of Holy War

In 2 Chronicles 6:34, Solomon is praying: “If thy people go out to war against their enemies, by the way that thou shalt send them, and they pray unto thee toward this city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name, then hear thou from the heavens their prayer and their supplication, and maintain their cause.”

You will remember that for the last several weeks we have been dealing with the biblical doctrine of war. The very first message I brought established the fact that God is a warrior. Scripture says that God is a man of war, and that this is His name. I also dealt with the fact that the wars in the Bible are referred to as the wars of the Lord, going through numerous passages of Scripture proving that concept.

The second message addressed the concept of holy war. I showed in the Bible how God Himself wages war and how God Himself fights. Very obviously, whatever God is engaged in is absolutely holy.

The third message continued the concept of holy war by examining its prerequisites. I showed that there were prerequisites in the Bible for war being holy. First of all, the cause must be holy. Remember, David said in 2 Samuel 17, "Is there not a cause?" Not only must the cause be holy, but the army must be holy, because God told the army that they were to keep themselves from every wicked thing. Thirdly, the camp must be holy. God not only demands holiness in the cause and in the army, but in the camp as well.

I also showed that holy war is usually led by a covenant mediator—that is, a holy leader, someone who represents God and serves God. Today I will continue the concept of holy war. Lord willing, next week I will also preach on the concept of holy war, and then proceed to some other area.

We have been so humanistically taught and so humanistically developed that we have always thought all war was automatically wrong, and that war was inherently evil in and of itself. Those are untrue concepts. Holy war is always directed by God Himself. As we read in 2 Chronicles 6, and especially verse 34, Solomon prays, "If thy people go out to war against their enemies," and then adds, "by the way that thou shalt send them." God does send His people out to war from time to time. We must remember that God Himself is the captain of the host. Therefore, war is divine activity.

How to Know When God Orders a Holy War

In this introduction, we should ask and answer a question before proceeding to the spiritual preparation for war in the Bible. A question that should be absolutely fundamental to every individual is this: How in the world do we discern, or how do we know, whether or not God orders or demands a holy war? What is our basis? What is our foundation?

Suppose something arises in the next week, the next month, or the next year and warfare is taught. What do we do? How do we know whether or not a war is of God or not? We should know chiefly by three ways—or literally by four, I should say. The fourth one should be very obvious. First of all, on some occasions in the Bible, God revealed His will to His leader, or His covenant mediator, who then informed the nation. Sometimes God singled out a leader, His

covenant mediator, that holy leader, and revealed His will to that holy leader. That leader then turned around and informed the nation: this is what God would have us to do. We can establish this concept from Scripture.

Direct Revelation to a Covenant Leader

In Numbers 25, verses 16 and 17, God speaks to Moses: “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Vex the Midianites, and smite them. Why? For they vex you with their wiles, wherewith they have beguiled you in the matter of Peor, and in the matter of Cozbi, the daughter of a prince of Midian, their sister, which was slain in the day of the plague, for Peor’s sake.” God spoke to Moses and said, “Vex the Midianites, and smite them.” God literally told Moses to begin a war with them.

SCRIPTURE READING - Deuteronomy 2:1-9, 19, 24-25 (KJV)

> God told Moses, “What I want you to do is wipe them out.” Moses then informed the nation that this was exactly what they were supposed to do.
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> In Deuteronomy chapter 2, Moses writes, “Then we journeyed and took our journey into the wilderness by the way of the Red Sea, as the Lord spake unto me, and we compassed Mount Seir many days.” Mount Seir is where Esau lived. “The Lord spake unto me, saying, You have compassed this mountain long enough to turn you northward. And command you the people, saying, You are to pass through the coast of your brethren, the children of Esau, who dwell in Seir, and they shall be afraid of you. Take you good heed unto yourselves, meddle not with them, for I will not give you of their land, no, not so much as a footbreadth, because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for possession. You shall buy meat of them for money that you may eat, and you shall also buy water of them for money that you may drink.” Thus God said not to make war against them.
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> “And the Lord said unto me, Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle, for I will not give thee of their land for possession, because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.” “And when thou comest nigh over against the children of Ammon, distress them not, nor meddle with them.

> For I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession, because I have given it unto the children of Lot for possession." Here are three instances where God told the covenant leader not to make war against Edom, Ammon, or Moab.
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> But God then said, "Rise you up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon. Behold, I have given unto thine hand Sihon the king of the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land. Begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and shall be in anguish because of thee." God now told him to make war against Sihon, the king of the Amorites.

In Deuteronomy 3:1–3, we read: "Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan, and Og, the king of Bashan, came out against us, he and all his people, to battle at Edrei. And the Lord said unto me, Fear him not, for I will deliver him and all his people and his land into thy hand, and thou shalt do unto him as thou didst unto Sihon, king of Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon. So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also the king of Bashan and all his people, and we smote him until none was left remaining in him." So here God says, make war.

In Deuteronomy 7:1–2, God says, "When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou. And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee, thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them, thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." Here are seven nations that God told Moses to make war with and destroy.

It is very plainly stated. In Joshua chapter 5, God not only told Joshua to do battle against Jericho; in Joshua chapter 6, He even gave Joshua the strategy, the battle plan for defeating Jericho. Very obviously, God is saying, "Here is one place I want you to make war."

Consider 1 Samuel 15. “Samuel also said unto Saul, The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel. Now therefore, hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord.” What was the Lord saying to Saul? “Thus saith the Lord of hosts. I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up out of Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox, sheep, camel, and ass.”

Inquiring of God for Direction

So God says, kill them all. Now God has revealed His will to the leader, who is a holy and godly man. But sometimes the leaders were not told directly by God that they were to make holy war. They had to inquire of God and discern the mind of the Lord.

Inquiry of the Lord by Leaders

Turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel, chapter 23. There are times when the leaders must ask God what His will is. God does not always make His mind known to the leader directly. In 1 Samuel 23:1, we read: “Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing floors. Therefore, David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah, how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines. Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand. So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their cattle and smote them with a great slaughter.”

“So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.” Now watch verse 6: “...and it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand.”

David heard that the Philistines were attacking Keilah and asked God, “Should I go up and smite the Philistines?” God told him to go, because He would deliver the Philistines into David’s hand. But

David's men were afraid and told him to check with the Lord a second time. David did so, and once again God told him to go and smite the Philistines.

In this instance, God did not inform David immediately. David had to ask and seek God for direction. The Bible says that he inquired of God. How did he inquire of God? Verse 6 gives the answer: Abiathar, a priest and the son of Ahimelech, came down with an ephod in his hand.

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 27:21 (KJV)

> Now, in Numbers chapter 27, let me show you what this ephod was, at verse 21. Here is the direction. The Scripture says: "And he shall stand before Eleazar, the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord. At his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in, both he and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation."

The ephod contained what was known as the Urim and the Thummim. I do not exactly know how that worked, and I do not guess any Bible scholar does. We can generalize, but the Urim and the Thummim happened to be a way to discern the mind of God. Evidently, questions were asked in a yes-or-no fashion, and depending on which one the priest brought out, the answer came yes or no. When Abiathar came down to David, he brought this ephod, which was a priestly garment that the priest wore around his chest, and he stuck his hand in and pulled out either the Urim or the Thummim.

I want you to note that it says, "At his word shall they go out, and at his word shall they come in." Usually those phrases, going out and coming in, refer to making war. When Abiathar came down to David, he said, Let me check this out. Let me find what God would have us to do.

Here is another instance in Luke 22, where Christ is in the garden, and they come after Christ with their swords and staves. "And while he yet spake, behold, a multitude came, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him. But Jesus said unto Judas, Betrayest thou the Son of

man with a kiss? When they that were about him saw what would follow, they knew what was coming down. They knew these men had swords and staves, and they saw Judas betraying him with a kiss."

They said unto him, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" Look at the next verse: "And one of them smote the servant of the high priest and cut off his right ear." Here is the question: "Lord, shall we smite with a sword?" Like, Lord, we are asking, but while the answer is being delayed, we are going to cut our way through just in case. Very obviously, they did right in asking, and probably did right in slicing with a sword as well.

But the point is, at least they did ask. They may not have waited for an answer. Many times we do have to inquire of God.

We do not have Urim and Thummim today, but we do have the Word of God. We have our great High Priest, the Intercessor, and means of access into the holy of holies. Sometimes, number one, God simply makes His Word and His will known to the leader. At other times, leaders must fast and pray and ascertain the mind of God. There is a third way we can know the will of God about holy war.

God Places It in the Hearts of the People

In some instances, God simply placed in the hearts of the people what they were to do—what was right. I am not going into detail on this one because we will be looking at some of these passages in detail in the next few weeks, but let me give you an instance.

Consider Genesis chapter 14, when Lot and his family were taken captive by those kings. When Abraham heard that his nephew had been captured, he did not inquire of God. God did not tell him to do anything, nor did he seek the mind of God. He simply armed his 318 trained servants and went after him. Why? Because he knew it was right to do that. He knew it was the right thing to do.

Let me give you another illustration. Israel did not seek God when they warred against Benjamin, one of their own tribes, because Benjamin was protecting a bunch of sodomites and murderers and refusing to give them up. They did not inquire of God whether they should fight or not. They did inquire which tribe should fight first,

but they already knew that they should fight. God had simply put it in their hearts.

David did not have a direct revelation from God that he was to fight Goliath, nor did he seek God concerning whether it would be God's will for him to fight Goliath. He simply knew that it was the right thing to do, and he did it.

We are not told in Scripture that some of the judges, men like Ehud, sought the Lord or had a revelation from God. They simply knew it was time to do something God had placed in their hearts, and they did it. Thus, holy war is in order when God reveals it to a holy leader; when leaders cry, pray, and seek the face of God and He shows them; when God puts it in the hearts of His people; or when God simply begins sovereignly to destroy our enemies before us.

God Sovereignly Destroys Enemies

Sometimes God does that. You will find it in the Bible. Many times the people did not even have to fight; God simply started the war Himself.

Let me give you a word of caution before we go further. Usually, when holy war is in order, one of these four things will be made very clear. People have often asked me, especially in the last three or four years, “Pastor, when do we know when to fight?” My answer has always been this: when it is time to fight, we will all know. You say, “How will we know?” Either God will raise up a leader and say, “Now is the time, boy.” When God raises up a leader, guess what God will do? He will unite our hearts to follow him.

Or, secondly, our leaders will become so burdened—and by our leaders I do not mean merely civil leaders; I include spiritual leaders as well—that they will pray and seek the Lord’s face. God will say, “Now is the time,” and, listen again, God will bind our hearts to those leaders. Or, thirdly, God will put it in every man’s heart, and we will know that this is exactly what we are to do.

You say, “Brother Weaver, give me a further explanation.” I cannot, because the Word of God does it. All I am saying is that you will know. I guarantee you, if you had been alive in 1776, you would have known it was time to fight. If you had been alive in 1861, you

would have known it was time to fight. You simply would have known it, because God would have placed it in your hearts.

Spiritual Preparations for War: Introduction

War is normally holy because God makes it. War is normally holy because God demands a holy cause, a holy army, a holy camp, and a holy leader. In the Bible, there were numerous spiritual preparations for war. In fact, the spiritual preparations were more important than the physical preparations. What kind of spiritual preparations are we talking about? First of all, there was sacrifice. The application will be made at the end.

Sacrifice as Spiritual Preparation

"Saul reigned one year, and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him 3,000 men of Israel, whereof 2,000 were with Saul in Michmash and Mount Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin, and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent." Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba. "And the Philistines heard of it, and Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear." Remember that phrase, because it will be explained later. "And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten the garrison of the Philistines, and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines, and the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal. And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel."

"30,000 chariots and 6,000 horsemen and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude, and they came up and pitched in Michmash eastward toward Beth-Aven." When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, for the people were distressed, they hid themselves in caves, thickets, rocks, high places, and pits. They knew the odds were against them and said, "We'd better get out of here." Some of the Hebrews went over Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead; they simply left the country.

"And all the people followed him, that is Saul, trembling, that is the few that he had. And he tarried seven days according to the set time that Samuel had appointed. But Samuel came not to Gilgal, and

the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, 'Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings.' And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came, and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that people were scattered from me, and that thou camest not within the days appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash, therefore, said I, the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication of the Lord. I forced myself, therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly."

Samuel rebuked Saul: "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee. For now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever, but now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."

What was Saul's great sin? It was offering the burnt offering. This sacrifice was to be made before the war. Samuel had told Saul to wait for him at Gilgal and not begin anything without him, because he would come and offer the sacrifice. It was a religious act, an act of worship. When Saul saw the people defecting, hiding, and leaving him, and Samuel had not appeared at the appointed time, Saul forced himself, as he said, and offered the sacrifice.

The sacrifice was not only a means of worship and supplication; evidently, it was also a means of bonding the people with their leader. Saul said that when he saw the people leaving him and not following him, he forced himself and went ahead with the sacrifice. It was important because it was an act of imploring God for His blessing and protection. Thus, when the battle or war was to begin, there was this act of sacrifice and worship, seeking God's blessing. The people were then cemented with their leader because they knew he was acting in accordance with the will and word of God.

Does this mean that if we come to battle or war today, we must offer a burnt sacrifice? No. First Corinthians 5:7 says, "For Christ,

even our Passover, is sacrificed for us." We would not offer a burnt sacrifice, but we would gather together in prayer and worship the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true sacrifice, resting upon His shed blood, His merits, His works, and His sovereign protection and power. The principle is the same, although the circumstances have changed.

The very first preparation, therefore, was an act of sacrifice. In Judges chapter 6, before Gideon began his conquest, he offered sacrifice. He even tore down the altar of Baal and the altar of the grove, then used the cattle there and sacrificed unto God.

So there was, first of all, the act of sacrifice, which was an act of worship. Secondly, there was the act of circumcision. I want you to look in your Bibles to the book of Joshua. I read this passage last week. Let me read it again. Joshua chapter three and verse five, they're passing over. And Joshua said unto the people, "Sanctify yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." So the word sanctify means to sacrifice or make holy or to set apart yourself, consecrate yourself. So sanctify yourselves. Now, look in Joshua 5.

SCRIPTURE READING - Joshua 5:1-10 (KJV)

Circumcision as Spiritual Preparation

Joshua 5, verse 1: "And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, who were on the other side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we passed over, that their heart melted, neither was their spirit in them any more because of the children of Israel."

"And the Lord said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time." This does not mean the same men the second time. "...and Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel at the hill of the foreskins."

"And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise. All the men that came out of Egypt that were males, even all the men of war,

> died in the wilderness, by the way, after they came out of Egypt. Now, all the people that came out were circumcised, but all the people that were born in the wilderness, by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt, them they had not circumcised.
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> "For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness, till all the people that were men of war which came out of Egypt were consumed, because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord, unto whom the Lord swore that he would not show them the land which the Lord swore unto their fathers, that he would give us a land that flowed with milk and honey. And their children, whom he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised, for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way. And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people, that they abode in their places in the camp till they were whole. And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore, the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day. And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal and kept the Passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even in the plains of Jericho."

Why in the world would Joshua circumcise the men of war? Humanly speaking, that was a very unwise thing to do. You say, Brother Weaver, why was it a very unwise thing to do, humanly speaking? Do you remember the story of Dinah in Genesis chapter 34, where Shechem raped the daughter of Jacob and then wanted her for his wife? Shechem and Hamor, his father, said, “Give us this woman so my son can marry her.” The sons of Jacob said, “We cannot do that. It is a reproach unto us if we marry anybody who is uncircumcised.”

They told them, “You circumcise every man in the city, and then we will let you have our daughter. If you do not, we will not.” They went back to the city and said, “These people will dwell among us if we will just be circumcised. Will not their cattle be our cattle? Everything they have will be ours. Let us do that.” So all the men were circumcised. On the third day, when the men were so sore they could not move, Simeon and Levi took swords, walked into the city, and killed every man there. Just two men.

So, humanly speaking, it was a very unwise thing to do. But it was done not only in obedience to God; circumcision was also the sign of the covenant. Do you follow that? These people still had the reproach of Egypt upon them. You have to remember Exodus chapter 4, when Moses was going back to the land to deliver the children of Israel. The Bible says that God met Moses by the way and sought to kill him. God had sent him back. Why was God seeking to kill him?

Zipporah, his wife, took a knife and circumcised their son. She threw the foreskin at her husband's feet and said, “A bloody husband thou art to me.” God sought to kill Moses because he had failed to remember and keep the first act of covenantal obedience, which was circumcision.

Now, does that mean that every warrior who fights should be circumcised? I am going to answer that, yes, but you are going to have to understand what I mean by that. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Colossians 2. I am not preaching on this today, but I will tell you this much: there was not only a religious significance to circumcision in the Old Testament; there were also health benefits in the Old Testament, and that continues today.

I realize that many people do not circumcise their male children anymore, but studies have shown that, health-wise, it is one of the wisest things to do. But why did the warriors need to be circumcised? Look in Colossians chapter 2, and notice what circumcision is typical of. Paul writes to the Colossian Christians, “...in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.”

What is circumcision a type of? The new birth, the covenantal relationship with God through Jesus Christ. That is why he says, “...in whom now we are circumcised,” how? “With the circumcision made without hands.” In other words, man does not do it; God does it. It means our hearts are circumcised. All through the Bible, God commanded the people to circumcise their hearts before the Lord—that is, to obey the Lord. So the answer is yes: the people need to be circumcised, and all that means is that they need to be begotten

by God and have a relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Circumcision, then, was a spiritual preparation for battle. Very obviously, that is why God commanded it in Joshua chapter 5.

Now, I want you to turn in your Bibles to 2 Samuel chapter 11. Let me answer a question. When I read the Bible, I have questions, and I want to find out the answer. If it bothers me and I need to know the answer, it probably bothers other people as well. This one puzzled me for a while. In 2 Samuel 11, you remember that David has committed adultery with Bathsheba.

She now finds herself with child. David seeks to cover his sin by inviting Uriah, her husband, home from the battle. He automatically assumes that Uriah will go down and visit his wife and sleep with her; then he will think it is his child, and David's tracks will be covered.

In 2 Samuel 11:6, we read, “And David said to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. Joab sent Uriah to David, and when Uriah was coming to him, David demanded of him how Joab did and how the people did and how the war prospered.” David could have found that information from anyone. In fact, there were regular runners to David daily, letting him know how the war went. Verse 8 says, “And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.”

One man told David that Uriah had not gone down to his house. David asked, “Camest thou not from thy journey? Why didst thou not go down unto thine house?” Uriah answered, “The ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in tents. And my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go into mine house to eat, and to drink, and to lie with my wife, as thou livest?”

“And as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.” David told Uriah to remain another day, and then he would let him depart. Uriah stayed in Jerusalem. The next day David called him, and Uriah ate and drank before him; David made him drunk. At evening Uriah

went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

David then wrote a letter and told Joab to set Uriah in the foremost front of the battle and withdraw from him, that he might be smitten. Why was it that Uriah went not down to his house?

Why would Uriah not go down and visit his wife? Was he angry with her? Of course not. Bathsheba was a very beautiful and desirable woman. Let me tell you why: because of the spiritual preparations required for battle. Uriah was expecting to return to battle instantly. Look at what he said in verse 11: "And Uriah said unto David, The ark and Israel and Judah abide in tents, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are encamped in the open fields. Shall I then go into mine house to eat, and to drink, and to lie with my wife, as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing."

Uriah was a mercenary. He was a Hittite and a proselyte. In this instance, Uriah was more godly and more holy than David was. He not only had loyalty to Joab and the other servants, but, if you will read Leviticus chapter 15, verses 15 through 18, you will find that there is a discharge that is unclean and thus renders a man unable to fight. Uriah said, No, I am not going to go down and visit my wife. I want to keep myself spiritually prepared so I can fight the Lord's battles. Here was spiritual preparation on the part of Uriah, and Uriah was the one doing it right.

Vows, Atonement Money, Trumpets, and the Ark

Fourthly, another instance of spiritual preparation is what I am simply calling vows. Numbers chapter 21, beginning with verse 1: "And when King Arad the Canaanite, who dwelt in the south, heard tell that Israel came by the way of the spies, that he fought against Israel, and took some of them prisoners." There is a study of vows in the Bible, and I am not going to cover all of it. Vowing is a religious act, and many times before a battle, vows were given.

And Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, and said, "If thou wilt indeed deliver this people into my hand, then I will utterly destroy their cities." And the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel, and

delivered up the Canaanites, and they utterly destroyed them and their cities, and he called the name of that place Hormah. Israel vowed to kill every one of them if God would give them the victory. God held them to that vow. God gave them the people, they kept their vow, destroyed them all, and the place was called Hormah, which literally means utter destruction.

Jephthah had been cast out by his brethren because he was the son of a harlot. When they were in trouble, they wanted Jephthah back, and they wanted him to lead them in a war. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah, and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh, over Mizpah of Gilead, and from Mizpah of Gilead to the children of Ammon.

Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord: "If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into my hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the children of Ammon shall surely be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt offering." Jephthah passed over to fight against the children of Ammon, and the Lord delivered them into his hands. Jephthah was making a vow. Israel had come to him and said, "Will you lead us in this fight against the children of Ammon?" He said, "Will you make me your captain? Will you make me your leader?" They agreed. Jephthah was making a vow.

He said, "I'll do that." So he said, "God, if you will just give me victory, whatever comes to me out of the doors of my house first, I'm going to give to you." Stop and think about that. That is quite a vow: "I'll offer up as burnt sacrifice."

"And Jephthah came to Mizpah unto his house, and behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances, and she was his only child. Beside her he had neither son nor daughter. And it came to pass, when he saw her, that he rent his clothes and said, Alas, my daughter, Thou hast brought me very low, and thou art one of them that trouble me. For I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back. And she said unto him, My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth. Forasmuch as the Lord

hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon."

His only child came out. "Oh no," he said. "You've taught me very well." She said, "Just do to me whatever you said."

People have asked me, did Jephthah sacrifice his daughter to the Lord as a burnt offering? The answer is no. To do so would have been unscriptural; it would have been blasphemy. But he did sacrifice her to the Lord. How so? "And she said unto her father, Let this thing be done for me. Let me alone two months, that I may go up and down upon the mountains and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows." And he said, Go, and he sent her away for two months. She went with her companions, females, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains. At the end of two months she returned unto her father, who did with her according to his vow that he had vowed, and she knew no man. There was a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah, the Gileadite, four days in a year.

So she remained a perpetual virgin in his house. What does that mean? It meant the end of Jephthah's line. She was an only child, so no one succeeded him in his position of leadership. When she died, that was the end of it. Here was a vow, and many times there were vows before battles because that was part of spiritual preparation.

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 30:11-16 (KJV)

> "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them, that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them. This they shall give every one that passeth among them that are numbered half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary, a shekel is twenty gerahs, a half shekel shall be an offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered from twenty years old and above shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more, and the poor shall not give less than half a shekel when they give an offering unto the Lord to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and thou shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle

> of the congregation, that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls."
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> This is an atonement money. Note, if you would please, in verse 12, he said, "...when thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number." Let me tell you what the word number is here. In fact, I told you that the book of Numbers is an entire book given to war, and I prove that to you from the Bible. But let me just tell you that the word number itself literally means muster. Actually, the book of Numbers is a book of mustering the people. When you find a census in the Bible, it is not necessarily just counting heads, it is an act of war, it is an act that the military performed, but when you took the census, when you mustered the men, you always took this half shekel for the sanctuary.

This was the great sin of David, or at least part of his sin, when he numbered the people. He failed to take this half-shekel. Of course, it was only to be done in a time of war, except initially. This atonement money was given to God and His work, in recognition of God's protection, provision, and grace. The word atonement here means literally a covering or a protection. By means of this tax, the people placed themselves under God's sovereign authority and protection, recognizing God as their one true king and paying tribute to Him. This covering was given as a ransom for the life of the soldier, lest he should die in battle. There were wars in the Bible where not one Israelite died—not one. So this atonement money was taken. Today we do not necessarily take atonement money if there is a war, because Christ is our great atonement; but we still may vow to Him and give to Him based upon the principle. We do not do it exactly like this because Christ is the fulfillment of this.

Sixthly, turn to the trumpets, in Numbers chapter 10. I am trying to give you a number of things that went into spiritual preparation. You might call this message a potpourri of spiritual acts for war, but I am simply pointing out that war had to be holy because there were so many spiritual preparations. Look in Numbers chapter 10, beginning with verse 1.

SCRIPTURE READING - Numbers 10:1-10; Numbers 31:5-6 (KJV)

"The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver, of a whole piece shalt thou make them, that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to be at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes, which are the heads of the thousands of Israel, shall gather themselves unto thee. When you blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east part shall go forward. When you blow an alarm the second time, then the camps that lie on the south side shall take their journey. They shall blow an alarm for their journeys. But when the congregation is to be gathered together, you shall blow, but you shall not sound an alarm. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets, and they shall be to you for an ordinance forever throughout your generations.

"And if you go to war in your land against an enemy that oppresseth you, then you shall blow an alarm with the trumpets, and you shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies. Also on the day of your gladness and in your solemn days, in the beginnings of your month, you shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings and sacrifices of your peace offerings that I may be to you for a memorial before your God, I am the Lord your God."

These trumpets were used not just during the burnt offerings, not just during the new moons, not just ordering the camp, and not just calling the assemblies, but these same trumpets were used to sound before the Lord during the battle, before the battle. In other words, God said, when I hear the trumpets, I'll remember you. It's an act of calling upon God.

In Numbers chapter 31 and verse 6, the Bible says: "So they were delivered out of the thousands of Israel, a thousand of every tribe, 12,000, armed for war. And Moses sent them to the war, a thousand of every tribe, them and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the priest of the war, with the holy instruments and the trumpets to blow in his hand."

There were a multitude of verses. To be absolutely honest, I thought about bringing a whole message just on the trumpets, and I changed my mind. But trumpets are important in the Bible. Psalm 47:5 says, “The Lord, or God, has gone up with a shout, and the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.” First Corinthians 14:8 says, “And if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” The trumpets were used to call people to battle and for preparation.

Jeremiah describes the alarm of war: “My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart. My heart maketh a noise in me. I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.” Then, in verse 21, he says, “How long shall I see the standard?” That is the battle flag. “…and hear the sound of the trumpet.”

Trumpets were sounded, first, to call the people to arms; second, to sound an alarm; and third, to be remembered before God in the battle. These were the same trumpets used in regular worship and the regular sacrifices. Thus, the sound of the trumpet was an act of worship, and it was also an act of asking God to remember us in the battle.

The trumpets were also used to call the assembly or to tell people it was time to get ready for battle. King Saul sounded a trumpet, or an alarm, and said, “Let the Hebrews hear.” He blew a trumpet. When Jephthah escaped after killing Eglon, he blew a trumpet, and all Israel gathered and stuffed them in because the trumpets were used to call the assembly or to tell people it was the time to get ready for battle. The last matter to cover is the ark.

We’re going to have a war. Now let’s look at the ark. The ark is a very significant instrument. It represented the divine presence of God with the army during warfare. The ark was a mobile symbol of God’s presence. Usually the Levites from the clan of Kohath were charged with transporting the ark from site to site during the wilderness wanderings.

For instance, look in your Bibles to Numbers 3:31. The Bible says, “And their charge shall be the ark, and the table, and the candlestick, and the altars, and the vessels of the sanctuary, wherewith they

minister and the hanging and all the service thereof." If you look back in verse 13, the chief of the house of the fathers and families of the Kohathites—then look in Numbers 4:5: "And when the camp setteth forward, Aaron shall come and his sons, and they shall take down the covering veil and cover the ark of the testimony with it." Thus, the ark was a portable symbol of God's presence.

Now, in 1 Samuel 11:11, you remember when Uriah came back to David. You remember what he said? "Shall I go down to my house and enjoy myself while the ark and Joab and my servants are at the battle?" "I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to go there."

Here, look in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 14. You'll see the presence that the ark had. Let's begin reading with verse 18: "And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God, for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel. And it came to pass, when Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased. And Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand. And Saul and all the people that were with him were assembled themselves, and they came to the battle, and behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture. Moreover, the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan."

Likewise, all the men of Israel who had hid themselves in Mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, followed hard after them in the battle. So the Lord saved Israel that day, and the battle passed over to Beth-aven. But note verse 18: "And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark." The Ark, which represented God's presence, was in battle.

There was a time when the Ark did not save Israel. You can read about it in 1 Samuel 4. Hophni and Phinehas, those two wicked priests, the sons of Eli, said in the battle with the Philistines, "Let us send back for the Ark of the Covenant, that it may save us." They were trusting in the Ark instead of the God of the Ark. They were using the Ark the way many people use a rabbit's foot or a four-leaf clover for luck. It is not the symbols that save us; it is God who saves us.

In Numbers 10, verse 35, we see what was said when the Ark was taken up: “And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered, and let them that hate thee flee before thee.” Verse 36 says, “And when it rested, he said, Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.” When the Ark was picked up, Moses said, “Rise up, O Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered.” When it was set down, he said, “Return, O Lord, and protect us now as we rest.”

Psalm 68 was a battle song. It begins: “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered. Let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away. As wax melted before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be glad and let them rejoice before God. Yea, let them exceedingly rejoice.” Thus, “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered.” This battle song came from the Ark, from what Moses said every time it was picked up.

Spiritual Preparation for War

Now I have one application, and I want you to listen to it: spiritual preparation is far more important than all the physical preparation that you could ever make in war. I heard Bill Clinton say this week, talking about sending that force over to Zaire, “And shall not the most powerful nation on the earth do what is right and help these people?” Well, that is a real assumption, is it not, that we are the most powerful nation on the earth. We may be militarily speaking, but that does not mean that we are the most powerful nation spiritually speaking. All of our armaments, all of our weapons of war, are useless apart from God.

Application: Spiritual Preparation Over Physical Might

The Bible says in Proverbs 21:31, “The horse is prepared for battle: but safety is of the LORD.” In the book of Psalms, David said, “A horse is a vain thing for safety: neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.” You could paraphrase that: A tank is a vain thing for safety. Neither will it deliver any by its great firepower.

So the truth is, folks, the physical preparation for war is the smallest part. The greatest part is the spiritual preparation, because if God be against us, we will never succeed. We must make sure that we are with God, that we are right with Him, and that we are doing as He wills. Then I can assure you that victory is absolutely assured. No matter the amount of men, no matter the fewness of the weaponry, if God is on our side, we will win.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we pray and ask Thee today to let us see that war is not just something that is physical, but, Lord, it is something that is spiritual. It is a divine act, and there must be spiritual preparations. May our hearts be prepared to serve Thee in any way that we possibly can. May we keep our lives holy and godly so that we may worship Thee with reverence and godly fear. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

Concepts of a Holy War,

Part Four

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Chronicles 20:1-14 (KJV)

It came to pass after this also that the children of Moab and the children of Ammon, and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. And there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria. Behold, they be in Hazazon Tamar, which is Engedi. And Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah. And Judah gathered themselves together to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord. And Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen?

And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and

gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever? And they dwelt therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name's sake, saying, If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us.

Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee. And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children. Then upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, came the Spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation; and he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you.

SCRIPTURE READING - 2 Chronicles 20:15-23 (KJV)

"Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's. To morrow go ye down against them: behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to morrow go out against them: for the Lord will be with you. And Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground: and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before the Lord, worshipping the Lord."

"And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high. And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as

> they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten. For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir, utterly to slay and destroy them: and when they had made an end of the inhabitants of Seir, every one helped to destroy another."

"And when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude, and, behold, they were dead bodies fallen to the earth, and none escaped. And when Jehoshaphat and his people came to take away the spoil of them, they found among them in abundance both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels, which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away: and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much. And on the fourth day they assembled themselves in the valley of Berachah; for there they blessed the Lord: therefore the name of the same place was called, The valley of Berachah, unto this day. Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel."

Introduction and Review

We have been studying the biblical doctrine of war. We have looked at the fact that God is a warrior, and we have been dealing with the concept of holy war. Scripture shows that war is not inherently evil in and of itself, because God himself wages war. The Bible also gives several prerequisites for waging holy war: the cause must be holy;

the camp must be holy; the army must be holy; and the leader must be holy. We have also considered individual matters related to holy war, such as sacrifice, circumcision, vows, atonement money, trumpets, and the ark.

Today we go a little further, because God gives us another precept concerning holy war: the concept of praise. Warfare is holy activity, and God often fights for his people. Sometimes he fights alone.

God Fights Through Creation and Heavenly Hosts

This passage in 2 Chronicles chapter 20 is an excellent illustration. Not only does God himself fight for his people, but many times God allows creation itself to fight against the enemies of God. We will look at several passages. In Joel 2 and verse 11, the Bible says, “And the Lord shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great. For he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the Lord is great and very terrible; and who can abide it?” Note the army. Here is God uttering His voice before His army. It is a great and terrible day. Who can abide it? When God speaks, the enemy melts away.

There is a heavenly host as well as an earthly host. In 2 Kings 6, we read of the earthly host and the work of the man of God. The king of Syria warred against Israel and took counsel with his servants, but the man of God warned the king of Israel. The king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. This is very interesting: God was protecting His people and frustrating the plans of their enemies. The passage says, “Then the king of Syria warred against Israel, and took counsel with his servants, saying, In such and such a place shall be my camp. And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel, saying, Beware that thou pass not such a place. For thither the Syrians are come down. And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him and warned him of, and saved himself there, not once nor twice. Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing; and he called his servants, and said unto them, Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?”

“Lord, there is a traitor in the camp.” In 2 Kings 6, one of the servants of the king of Syria told him that Elisha, the prophet in

Israel, told the king of Israel the words he spoke in his bedchamber. The king therefore sent horses, chariots, and a great host to Dothan. They came by night and surrounded the city.

When the servant of the man of God rose early and went forth, he saw an army surrounding the city with horses and chariots. He asked, “Alas, my master! how shall we do?” Elisha answered, “Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” Elisha prayed, “Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see.” The Lord opened the young man’s eyes, and he saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.

So God had a heavenly host surround the enemy that had surrounded Elisha. In 2 Kings 19, you have another story where the angel of the Lord smote the Assyrians. In Matthew 26:53, when they came after our Lord, He said, “Know ye not that I could call and have at my disposal twelve legions of angels?” Very obviously, there is an angelic host that fights for God and for His people.

Now, God oftentimes uses creation itself, as I mentioned earlier. For instance, in Exodus 14:21, there was a great east wind that God used to divide the Red Sea, so that His people could walk across on dry ground. In Joshua 10:9–10, God caused great hailstones to fall out of the sky against the enemy. In Joshua 10 as well, God allowed Joshua to command the sun, and the moon would stand still in the valley of Ajalon until he finished defeating the enemies of God. In Judges 5, you have the song of Deborah and Barak, where creation itself fought against Sisera and his host. God is very capable of defending His people and His cause simply in and of Himself.

But in every one of these instances there was the concept and precept of praise to be given to God. Judges 5 is nothing more than the song of Deborah and Barak, praising God for His defeat over their enemies. There is so much in the Word of God about praise as a weapon.

A Grave Crisis

Praise is not only a necessary weapon; it is indeed a very powerful weapon. To demonstrate that, turn to 2 Chronicles 20, and let us

work our way through this passage to develop this one thought about praise.

A Grave Crisis in 2 Chronicles 20

To begin with, in 2 Chronicles 20, verses 1 and 2, we have a grave crisis—the first point. "It came to pass after this also, that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon," which were children of Lot, by the way, "and with them other beside the Ammonites, came against Jehoshaphat to battle. Then there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, There cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria; and, behold, they be in Hazazon Tamar, which is Engedi." So here is the crisis.

The enemy is planning an attack. They are going to destroy Jerusalem and Judah. The important thing to notice is that it was not just a single nation coming against Judah and Jerusalem, but a confederation. The children of Ammon and the children of Moab came, and verse 1 tells us, "other beside the Ammonites." If you look in your Bibles at verses 10 and 23, you will find out who the others were. Verse 10 says, "And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir," which means they were the Edomites, the children and descendants of Esau. Once again, verse 23 says, "For the children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of mount Seir." Thus, the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites formed a combination, or confederation, against Judah and Jerusalem.

A Glorious Confession of God's Sovereignty

It was almost as though China, Russia, and Germany got together to fight not just America, but two or three states within America. Here was a humongous army coming against them. Not only was Jehoshaphat terrified, but the people of Judah were terrified as well. Fear is a natural emotion, but fear should never control us or dominate us. It should, however, motivate us. Jehoshaphat and all of Judah were afraid.

Enemies Because We Are Christians

This is a glorious confession. Fear should always motivate us. Our fear should always drive us to God and not away from God, because fear can be used for us or against us. God is the only one who can calm our fear and deliver us from our fear. The confession in verses 3 through 12 shows that fear must be directed toward God.

We have enemies today simply because we are Christians. We have enemies by virtue of the fact that we are the children of God. Christ said, “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” Christ’s words make clear that the world’s hatred is connected with our being chosen out of the world.

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.” The servant is not greater than his lord; if they persecuted Christ, they will persecute His servants also.

Just simply because we are Christians, the world automatically hates us. So many people try to think, “I don’t have any enemies.” The truth is, you do have enemies if you are a child of God, and the world hates you.

Here are the historical enemies of Israel coming against them: the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Edomites. They hated Israel because Israel was chosen of God.

Look in verse 3 of 2 Chronicles, chapter 20. I want you to see the wisdom of the king. The Bible says, "...and Jehoshaphat feared, and set himself to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah." Isn't that interesting? Here is the civil ruler, the highest civil ruler in the land, afraid. What does he do? First, he seeks the Lord himself. Secondly, he proclaims a fast so that all Judah should seek the Lord. That means the king himself was fasting. He was terrified and afraid. He knew that he was in trouble as a king and as a ruler.

Look at verse 4: "And Judah gathered themselves together, to ask help of the Lord: even out of all the cities of Judah they came to seek the Lord." The nation comes together, fasting, praying, and seeking the Lord's help and protection. It is in this context that Jehoshaphat makes this glorious confession. When we are in trouble, it is time to start confessing that God is the only one who can get us out of trouble. It is time to admit that we are not nearly as independent as we like to think we are.

Note this confession. First of all, in verse 6, he confesses that God is the sovereign God. Jehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, making this open confession: "And he said, O Lord God of our fathers, art not thou God in heaven? and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?"

God is not only sovereign in heaven; that sovereignty implies that he rules over all the nations, even the nations of the heathen. The truth is this: Boris Yeltsin is not in control of Russia. Castro is not in control of Cuba. God is in absolute control because he is absolutely sovereign. Jehoshaphat is confessing that God is the sovereign, omnipotent God of the universe, and absolutely no one can stand up to him.

Do you remember what Job said in Job 42, verse 2? He said, “that thou art God, and no thought can be withholden from thee.” God is so absolutely powerful that no one can withhold even the thought of God or whatever God thinks. God can do whatever He pleases, and God can make everybody think what He wants them to think. Exodus 34 tells you that in detail.

But unlike Daniel chapter 4 and verse 35, you remember what Nebuchadnezzar confessed. Nebuchadnezzar confessed that God was the sovereign God of heaven and earth, and listen to what he said: “thou doest according to thy will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay thy hand, or say unto thee, What doest thou?” What’s he saying? God, nobody can stop you. No one can stop you. No one has the right to even question you. Now think about that.

So Jehoshaphat is making a great confession. He's saying, God, you're our help. You're the sovereign. You're the omnipotent one of the universe. You're the one that is in absolute sovereign control. You're the only one that can do anything about this situation. We're helpless. So he confesses, then, that God is the sovereign God.

Now, watch verses 7 through 11, because he makes another confession. He confesses that God is the God of history. He says in verse 7, "...Art not thou our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham thy friend for ever?" He recalls that Israel dwelt there and built God a sanctuary, and that when evil came—"the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine"—they could stand before that house, cry to God in their affliction, and He would hear and help. Then he says, "And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir," whom God would not let Israel invade when they came out of Egypt, "behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit." God is the God of history. God is the one that divided the nations.

God is the one that said, "all right, Israel, here is your land. I'm giving this to you." God is not only the God of history; God is the God of geography. I remember when I was a young man, I used to despise history. I really did. I could not think, What in the world is the purpose of knowing about dead men and dates that are already past? I thought, Man, I'm not living back then.

Why should I know this? I found out that God was the God of history, and that history is nothing more than the eternal decrees of God coming to pass in time.

The word geography comes from the Greek words ge, meaning earth, and graphe, meaning writing. Geography literally means earth writing. Geography, then, is basically God's handwriting in the earth. Christian geography simply means that this earth has its origin, its end, its purpose, and its physiography—that is, its physical structure—all for God's honor and God's glory. God divided the nations exactly as He saw fit.

Deuteronomy 32:8 says, "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he

set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." When the Most High divided the nations and gave them their inheritance, God was the One who set their boundaries.

The Apostle Paul confessed the same truth in Acts 17:26: "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." Who was it that set the bounds for the nations? It was God. God, then, is the God of geography.

What is Jehoshaphat confessing in 2 Chronicles 20? "Lord, You are the One who gave this land to Israel. You are the One who gave the land that Ammon and Moab and Esau possessed. You gave it to them." In verse 10 he says, "And now, behold, the children of Ammon and Moab and mount Seir, whom thou wouldest not let Israel invade."

When God brought Israel out of Egypt, He said in Deuteronomy 2, "I'm not going to give you Ammon's land. I'm not going to give you Moab's land." Israel was not even to try to take it. God would not give them Esau's land because He had given it to them. Now Jehoshaphat says, "Lord, You gave us our land. You gave them their land. You would not let us invade them. Guess what they are trying to do now? They are coming to invade us and take the land You gave us."

Since God is the God of sovereignty, history, and geography, we may pray, "Protect us." He gave us what we have. If Russia invaded America tomorrow, I would pray, "Lord, protect this land. Protect this nation." Why? Because God gave it to us.

It is true that, because of our sins, He could dispossess us if He so pleased. But I would give the same argument Jehoshaphat gave: "Lord, this is the land You gave us. We may be sinners, and we may deserve to be defeated, and we may deserve this and all because of our wickedness; but Lord, if it please thee, deliver us and save our heritage." Certainly, that is a permissible prayer.

Jehoshaphat not only confesses that God is sovereign and that He is the God of history and geography; in verse 12 of 2 Chronicles 20, he confesses that God is the God of help: "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that

cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee."

I like that prayer: "Lord, will you not judge our enemies?" Then he confesses, "We have no might. We have no power. We are helpless in and of ourselves." If you ever want God to do something for you, you had better confess your own helplessness. As long as you think you can, God is not going to do it for you. As long as we believe that we are the mightiest nation upon the earth and can whip anybody who comes against us, God will never whip them for us. In fact, He may let them whip us just to teach us that we are not what we think we are.

You remember what the psalmist said in Psalm 121: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord," because the Lord is the God of help. He is certainly the all-powerful God. We do not know where to fight, how to act, or what to do. Lord, just help us.

A Gracious Commitment

A Gracious Commitment from God

In verses 13 through 18, thirdly, you have a gracious commitment. First, there is a commitment to encourage the people, beginning with verse 13: "And all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children."

Here the people have been fasting and praying. They have made their confession and supplication, and now they are standing there, waiting on the Lord to do something. That is what the Scripture says: "wait thou upon the Lord."

The Spirit of God comes upon Jahaziel, and in verse 15 he says: "Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the Lord unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's."

The very first thing he says is, "Be not afraid." He calms their fears. He knew that they were afraid. Then he says, "Be not dismayed." In other words, do not worry about what to do; God is

going to take care of that. Would it not encourage you if you knew that God had told you not to be afraid and not to be dismayed? You know He is going to take care of it.

Not only is there a gracious commitment on God's part to encourage the people, but there is also a gracious commitment to engage the enemy himself. For he says in verse 15, "For the battle is not yours, but God's." He says in verse 17, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle."

Let me give you an illustration. Suppose Russ came up to me and said, "Pastor Weaver, I'm going to beat you in the ground until you can't walk." I am thinking, He means it, and he can do it. But Dr. Bristow overhears him and says, "Brother Weaver, don't worry about this. I'll take care of Russ for you. I'll whip him. I'll stomp him in the ground. You just stand back and let me take care of it."

Would that encourage me? You better believe it would. I would say, "Stick him, boy, get him!"

What is God saying? God is saying, "You don't even have to fight. I don't care how great they are, how powerful they are, or how many they are. I'll take care of them." Here is a gracious commitment, not only to encourage the people, but to engage the enemy.

Now, in verses 19 through 29, there is a great celebration. It is time to celebrate. Verse 19 says, "And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel with a loud voice on high."

How was this divine intervention celebrated? The answer is, by praise.

Praise Before, During, and After the Battle

Praise is a weapon of war. You may not think so right now, but praise is a weapon of war. The Bible says in Psalm 50 and verse 23, God says, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." Praise is a weapon of war.

Notice in verses 19 through 20 that here is praise before the battle: "And the Levites, of the children of the Kohathites, and of the children of the Korhites, stood up to praise the Lord God of Israel

with a loud voice on high. And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper."

The battle has not even been engaged at this point. It is before the battle, and they are already praising the Lord.

If I knew that God was not only encouraging me but that God himself was going to fight for me, I believe I could start shouting before the battle as well. That is what they are doing: praising the Lord. This is praise before the battle. Now look at verses 21 and 22, because here is praise during the battle. Notice this: “And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever. And when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten.” I want you to notice that when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, that should praise the beauty of holiness, and they went out before the army.

Have you ever wondered about this tactic, militarily speaking? Here are two armies, drawn up to fight, and one of them sends out a bunch of singers, trumpets, and cymbals, and all they are doing is singing and praising the Lord. Can you imagine, first of all, the confusion and consternation on the enemy? Should I shoot or should I not shoot? They are not even armed as such. They are not firing at me or hurting me; they are just singing and praising the Lord. Undoubtedly, there would be some consternation. Here they are praising the Lord, not only before the battle but during the battle, and the army was led by the singers and by the praisers.

Psalm 68 gives us a war song. In fact, I love to sing this song. I cannot sing; everybody knows that. But I love to sing this song, and I sing it by myself plenty of times. “Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. As smoke is driven away, so drive them away: as wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. But let the righteous be

glad; let them rejoice before God: yea, let them exceedingly rejoice." Then he says, "Sing unto God, sing praises to his name: extol him that rideth upon the heavens by his name JAH, and rejoice before him."

Psalm 68 continues: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. He that is our God is the God of salvation; and unto GOD the Lord belong the issues from death. But God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses. The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring my people again from the depths of the sea: That thy foot may be dipped in the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs in the same. They have seen thy goings, O God; even the goings of my God, my King, in the sanctuary. The singers went before."

"The players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. Bless ye God in the congregations, even the Lord, from the fountain of Israel. There is little Benjamin with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali. Thy God hath commanded thy strength: strengthen, O God, that which thou hast wrought for us. Because of thy temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee."

"Rebuke the company of spearmen, the multitude of the bulls, with the calves of the people, till every one submit himself with pieces of silver: scatter thou the people that delight in war." What is this? This is a war song. The whole chapter is a war song. It was sung, in all probability, during battle and on their way to battle: "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered."

I would like to sing that too if I were about to go out and fight. I want God to rise up and do something for me. Here is a song of praise that they sang during the battle. Now look back in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles, because there was not only praise before the battle and during the battle; there was also praise after the battle. In verse 27 of 2 Chronicles 20 we read: "Then they returned, every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat in the forefront of them, to go again to Jerusalem with joy; for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies. And they came to Jerusalem, with

psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord. And the fear of God was on all the kingdoms of those countries, when they had heard that the Lord fought against the enemies of Israel." How did they come to the house of the Lord? With psalteries, harps, and trumpets. What were they doing? They were singing and praising the Lord for the victory that He gave them.

Praise After the Battle

SCRIPTURE READING - Exodus 15:1-14 (KJV)

War Psalms and the New Song

Let me show you how praise is indeed to be given after the battle as well as during and before. Exodus, chapter 15, beginning with verse 1. Everyone knows the story, or at least you should know the story, how the Lord has overthrown Pharaoh and the army of Egypt. They've all been drowned in the sea.

"Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.

"The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble. And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil.

> "My lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them: they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchedst out thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation. The people shall hear, and be afraid."

"Sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina. Then the dukes of Edom shall be amazed; the mighty men of Moab, trembling shall take hold upon them; all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away."

Skip down to verse 21. He is still praising the Lord: "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." Here is Miriam leading the women in praising the Lord.

Judges chapter 5 is the song of praise of Deborah and Barak. This whole passage is a song of praise: "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord: but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his might. And the land had rest forty years."

If you study the Book of Psalms closely, you will find that many of the psalms are war psalms; that is, they have their setting in the context of holy war. Psalm 7 was, in all probability, a psalm sung before the battle while the troops were still in camp.

You can see why this song would have been sung before the battle, because it asks God to rise up and destroy the enemies: "O Lord my God, in thee do I put my trust: save me from all them that persecute me, and deliver me: Lest he tear my soul like a lion, rending it in pieces, while there is none to deliver."

Now note what he is saying: "O Lord my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands; If I have rewarded evil unto him that was at peace with me; (yea, I have delivered him that without cause is mine enemy:) Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it;

yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah." If I deserve to be defeated, Lord, let it be, but please do not let it be. "Arise, O Lord, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the rage of mine enemies: and awake for me to the judgment that thou hast commanded."

"So shall the congregation of the people compass thee about: for their sakes therefore return thou on high." And he goes on, verse 8, "...the Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord." Here is a psalm asking for protection in battle: "O God in thee do I put my trust, save me from all them that persecute me."

If I were in a battle where bullets were flying, hand grenades were being tossed, and bombs were dropping, do you know what I would pray? "Save me, O Lord, deliver me. Don't let that bullet hit me. Don't let that grenade explode close to me. Let that bomb fall somewhere else."

This psalm was undoubtedly sung before the battle. All of the psalms were set to music; they were all sung as hymns of praise. Look in your Bibles to Psalm 91. Psalm 91 could have been sung either in camp or during the battle as the individual faced dangers. Notice Psalm 91.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling." And then he goes on, "...for he shall give his angels charge over thee." So here is a psalm that was sung for protection, either before the battle or during the battle.

Now, look in Psalm 98. Here is another one. This song has three stanzas. The first stanza gives thanks to the Lord for past victory. You will find that in verses one through three: “O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation. His righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” These first three verses are one stanza, and they are thanking God for past mercies and past victories.

Watch verses four through six. Here is praise for his kingship in the present: “Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Sing unto the Lord with the harp; with the harp, and the voice of a psalm. With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King.”

Now, verses 7-9 are looking forward to future judgment and victory: “...Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.” So here is, number one, praise for past blessings and victory. Here is calling upon the Lord for present help. And then here is a looking forward to the judgment that he is going to give against the enemy.

In the psalm, you see God as warrior, God as king, and God as judge. Psalm 44 gives this same exact outline. In verses one through three, there is thanks for past victories; verse four is prayer for present help; and verses five through eight look forward to future victories.

“We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them; how thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them.”

That is thanking God for past victories. “Thou art my King, O God: command deliverances for Jacob.” You did it in times past. Do it now. It is an appeal for present help. Then comes the future victory and future judgment: “Through thee will we push down our enemies: through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. For I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. But thou hast saved us from our enemies, and hast put them to shame that hated us. In God we boast all the day long, and praise thy name for ever. Selah.” In this psalm, you see God as a warrior, God as a king, and God as a judge.

All of us have sung the old hymn, “There's a new song in my heart.” The phrase “a new song” is a biblical phrase. It occurs in Psalms, Isaiah, and Revelation. The implication of the new song appears in Isaiah 42: “Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof.” Verse 13 says, “The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war: he shall cry, yea, roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.” What is the context of the new song? God prevailing over his enemies.

SCRIPTURE READING - Psalm 40:1-3; Psalm 96:1, 12-13; Psalm 98:1; Psalm 144:1, 9-10; Psalm 149:1, 5-9 (KJV)

David says, "And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." David said, "I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry." "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth." He put a new song in my mouth. What has God done for us? God has just delivered him.

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day." "Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord: for he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." "O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done

> marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory."
>
> I don't have to go any further. The new song is associated with victory. "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight." "I will sing a new song unto thee, O God: upon a psaltery and an instrument of ten strings will I sing praises unto thee. It is he that giveth salvation unto kings: who delivereth David his servant from the hurtful sword." What is this new song? It's in a context of war.
>
> "Praise ye the Lord. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of saints." What kind of new song are we going to be singing? "Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth," this is the new song, "and a twoedged sword in their hand; to execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord."

Revelation 5:9 says, “And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” Very obviously, deliverance and victory are in this passage as well, because Jesus Christ was victorious over death and hell.

Revelation 14:3 says, “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.” In practically every one of these passages, warfare is either directly or indirectly connected. The new song in the Bible is the song of victory. It is associated with warfare.

Look back quickly at Psalm 149:3: “Let them praise his name in the dance: let them sing praises unto him with the timbrel and harp.” If you read the rest of that Psalm, this verse refers to warfare. Throughout the Bible, the timbrel, the song, and the dance came

after the war was over. It was the victory celebration. Very obviously, the new song in the Bible is a concept of victory.

Applications for Believers

What in the world do you think the saints of God are going to be doing when God destroys all of His enemies and all of their enemies? What are you going to be saying? I have news for you: I would start it right now if God started cleaning the house today, wouldn't you? I would kind of like that.

Let me make a couple of applications. First of all, you and I had better learn to praise God if we are going to fight with Him in His battles, because praise is to be given before the battle, during the battle, and after the battle. Here is the next one: when God arises to fight for His people, the outcome is already settled. Victory is absolutely assured.

There is a gospel song I do not particularly like, but it conveys a truth: "I've read the end of the book and we win." We have already won in Jesus Christ. Why should we not praise Him now? I love to hear R. L. Peacock sing, "I want to see Israel marching. I want to hear that trumpet call. I want to see old Babylon fall." And, brethren, Babylon is falling and shall fall. We who belong to Jesus Christ alone will be the victors. We had better learn to praise, because praise is a principle of holy war.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to thee this day. We thank thee for your mercy, your love, and your grace. Teach us to praise thy name. Build us up in the most holy faith. In thy name we ask it. Amen.

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